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THE COSMOPOLITICS OF RACE, GENDER, AND INDIGENEITY IN KANT

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

HISTORY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

by

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September 2013

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Kant’s notion of cosmopolitanism is influential to a range of topical issues, from multiculturalism and human rights to globalization and an ethical society. Cosmopolitanism promises a conception of the rational subject not constrained by commitments to the nation or the self. The universality of this conception has been challenged by feminist and critical race philosophers. The Cosmopolitics of Race, Gender, and Indigeneity in Kant offers a new approach towards investigating these promises and limits. By examining the deep background of the production of the rational subject, it argues that that there is a political-epistemological paradox at the heart of Kant’s notion of cosmopolitanism. An impasse is generated between the pure, practical reason that motivates Kant’s critical philosophy and the empirical framing of historical reason at play in accounts of political autonomy and cosmopolitan subjectivity. I claim that this paradoxical dimension of Kant’s cosmopolitanism has not been sufficiently interrogated.

The central argument of my project is that Kant treats this paradox through a complex movement of identity and difference between the concepts of the human and humanity. I demonstrate that exclusions of race, gender, and indigeneity are needed by Kant to establish this movement as coherent. Drawing on recent scholarship that combines philosophical analysis with a historical and literary approach, the
dissertation’s arc makes this argument across a series of discourses. Chapter 1 revisits the relationship of Kant’s concept of race to his moral philosophy by placing Kant’s notion of cosmopolitan destiny alongside an original moment in the 18th century invention of the concept of race. Chapters 2 and 3 argue the centrality of gender to ideas of cosmopolitan subjectivity by examining Kant’s account of political autonomy alongside his participation in a discourse of gender in German civil society. Chapter 4 demonstrates the significance of indigeneity to Kant’s cosmopolitan vision of humanity by exploring his use of source material from an influential polemic on indigeneity in the New World. This project concludes that discourses of race, gender, and indigeneity qualify inclusion in the constituency of a future cosmopolitan society and form the horizon upon which the impasse between epistemology and politics is elaborated.
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Introduction

The promise of Kant’s critical philosophy is sublimely invoked at the conclusion of his 1802 Lectures on Pedagogy. Kant exhorts teachers that students “must [learn to] rejoice at the best for the world, even if it is not to the advantage of their fatherland or to their own gain” (AA IX 499, 485). Embedding the production of cosmopolitan subjectivity within a pedagogical project, these elegant last words of Kant, the last words published in his lifetime, figure a lifelong aim: teaching students to work in the interests of reason, rather than the interests of nation or self.

Following Nadia Urbinati’s claim that Kant’s cosmopolitan project is precisely one of “making the cosmos into a unified political space,” this study investigates the constituting political frame within which a cosmopolitan subjectivity is possible. To some extent, my dissertation worries the question of the political conditions of possibility necessary to thinking cosmopolitanism. If on the one hand, thinking is the

1 As a number of recent commentators have reminded us, in the 1800 Logic, Kant reformulates his Canon of Reason to explicitly claim that the three questions of the Canon – what can I know? What ought I to do? What may I hope for if I do what I ought – are to be subordinated to the cosmopolitan and anthropological question, What is man? See, for instance, Allen Wood, “Unsociable Sociability: The Anthropological Basis of Kant’s Ethics” in Philosophical Topics, 19:1 (Spring 1991), pp. 325-349 and David Sussman, The Idea of Humanity: Anthropology and Anthroponomy in Kant’s Ethics, New York: Routledge, 2001.

2 References to Kant in the German are to the Akademische Ausgabe, hereafter abbreviated as AA. References are to the volume, then page number, followed by page number for the translation. Since many of the English translations are in Anthropology, History, and Education, G. Zöller and R. Louden (eds), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, references in the English are to this volume unless otherwise indicated.


cognitive act that symbolizes transcendental freedom *par excellence*, on the other, changes in the mode of thinking are registered as the politically meaningful dimension of historically significant actions, indexing the progressive transformation of natural social relations into a rationally binding, cosmopolitan society. As I trace the enigmatic link that Kant claims between attaining knowledge of the world (Weltkenntnis) and consciousness of a cosmopolitan destiny, I pay special attention to the impasses generated between representing thinking as the effect of a transcendentally free and spontaneous causality and the political representation of the cultural stage of progress within which it is possible to think freely as a historically necessary phase. In short, the dissertation examines the paradoxical relationships that Kant claims between epistemology and politics.

The political promise of Kant’s cosmopolitan project resonates today. Kant’s cosmopolitan project stands as a springboard for much of the contemporary thinking and re-thinking of cosmopolitanism. There is a plethora of recent scholarship taking

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5 The peculiar and important concept “mode of thinking” (Denkungsart) is critically discussed in G. Felicitas Munzel’s monograph *Kant’s Conception of Moral Character: The Critical “Link” of Morality, Anthropology, and Reflective Judgment*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999. Munzel translates Denkungsart by “conduct of thought” and offers persuasive reasons to do so. I have retained the more prevalent translation of Denkungsart by “mode of thinking” as adequately capturing the perspectival and normative aspects of the term.

6 The most explicit and critically examined example of this is Kant’s discussion of the historical impact of the French Revolution on disinterested spectators in the first essay in the *Conflict of the Faculties*. Étienne Balibar and Pheng Cheah both explicitly claim Kant’s “decisive influence” on normative political theory and international relations. Balibar cites it in regard to the “emergence of international institutions such as the League of Nations and the United Nations.” Cheah writes, “Immanuel Kant’s vision of a cosmopolitical world order is widely regarded as the single most important philosophical source for contemporary normative theories of international relations, including accounts of global civil society and the international public sphere.” See Étienne Balibar, “Citizenship of the World Revisited” in *Routledge Handbook of Cosmopolitan Studies*, Gerard Delanty (ed.), New York: Routledge, 2012, p.291 and Pheng Cheah, *Spectral Nationality: Passages of Freedom from Kant to Postcolonial Literatures of Liberation*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2003, p.61.
their point of departure in one way or another from Kant. At a certain level of abstraction, it has even appeared possible to port Kant’s cosmopolitan project to the contemporary moment. Sometimes construed as separable from its political constitution, a cosmopolitan perspective is understood to offer a capacious (though not necessarily universal) notion of the human or humanity, an orientation often promised as an outcome of the act of physical or intellectual traveling.

In this dissertation I question this process of abstracting and the separating of a cosmopolitan subjectivity from its political moorings. I argue that the paradoxical dimension of Kant’s cosmopolitanism has not been sufficiently interrogated, and that this under-theorization has potential implications for contemporary appropriations of Kant. Joining other recent studies, I look at the terrain upon which the impasse between epistemology and politics is played out. In distinction to this literature, the central and abiding argument of this project is that the production of cosmopolitan subjectivity in Kant negotiates this paradox through the division and re-articulation of discourses of the human and humanity. I propose that the vantage point from which a moral and cosmopolitan vision of humanity is perceived is situated within a specific epistemology in which the human as natural object is constituted through race, gender, and indigeneity. By querying the epistemological and aesthetic dimensions of

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9 The positions developed by Daniele Archibugi and David Held in * Debating Cosmopolitics* are some of the more recognizable instances of a contemporary updating of Kant’s cosmopolitanism as a political ideal. Pauline Kleingeld’s recent *Kant and Cosmopolitanism* and Katrin Flikshuh’s *Kant and Modern Political Philosophy* offer specific Kantian renditions as a contemporary ideal.
the moral-political subject, I track a cleavage between the promise of
cosmopolitanism and the exclusions of race, gender, and indigeneity, showing how
this movement of division and re-articulation is used to qualify inclusion in the
constituency of a future cosmopolitan society and form the discursive horizon upon
which the impasse between epistemology and politics is elaborated.

To do so, I ask what it might mean to critically look at cosmopolitanism in
Kant’s own setting. As Frederick Beiser notes, in Kant’s moment, the ties between
nationalism and the state in Germany were weak. Indeed, the relationship between
nation and cosmopolitanism in Kant is not yet clear. Living in the century following
the Treaty of Westphalia and during the nascent formation of the modern university,
Kant’s cosmopolitan project was imagined and practiced on rather different political
and pedagogical terrain than ours. I thus consider what it might mean to imagine
Kant’s cosmopolitanism on that terrain.

The title of the dissertation invokes the way questions of race, gender, and
indigeneity are involved in Kant’s efforts to philosophize to his students the “the
cosmos [as] a unified political space.” Posing what appear to be contemporary
questions to Kant’s corpus, I claim their significance in Kant’s own thinking and
time. At the same time, many scholars believe that contemporary concerns related to
race, gender, and indigeneity can be accommodated by a more or less Kantian

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11 Pheng Cheah discusses Kant’s cosmopolitanism as pre-national in Pheng Cheah, “Introduction Part II: The Cosmopolitical - Today” in Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation, p. 24. Daniel Malachuk explores the various ways in which cosmopolitanism was figured as a project of nationalism in the 19th century in “Nationalist Cosmopolitics in the Nineteenth Century” in Cosmopolitics and the Emergence of a Future, pp.25-40.
cosmopolitanism.\textsuperscript{12} I put cosmopolitanism to the test in its own (con)texts. The emergence of Kant’s specific variety of cosmopolitanism\textsuperscript{13} is placed alongside a flexible moment in the European 18\textsuperscript{th} century in the history of race, a discourse of gender equality in specifically German civil society, and a polemic on indigeneity in the New World and its occasional involvement in a different polemic on sexual (especially homosexual) rights in Europe after the French Revolution.

For instance, there are under-theorized dimensions of the racial backdrop to the nation in Kant. Nicholas Hudson has aptly identified a change in the meaning of the term nation augured by the conception of race in the late 18\textsuperscript{th} century: the proto-ethnological travelers of the early 18\textsuperscript{th} century understood the various peoples they observed as comprising ever so many distinct nations, possessing differing customs, languages, and religions.\textsuperscript{14} These were characterized as the significant epistemological and visual cues. The emergence of a framework of race simultaneously trivialized these distinctions among non-white peoples and valorized them as politically significant among whites: linguistic, religious, or social differences among non-whites simply didn’t matter – epistemologically or visually – compared to the fact of race. Nature’s typology of races subsumed any achievements or innovations produced by these peoples. On the other hand, the concept of race


\textsuperscript{13}See Pauline Kleingeld, \textit{Kant and Cosmopolitanism}, for a discussion of the various types of cosmopolitanism circulating in Germany in the late 18\textsuperscript{th} century.

\textsuperscript{14}See Nicholas Hudson, “From ‘Nation’ to ‘Race’: The Origin of Racial Classification in Eighteenth-Century Thought” in \textit{Eighteenth-Century Studies}, 29:3 (Spring 1996), pp.247-264.Hudson notes that occasionally old words were revived, as in the use of the term tribe or such terms as stock or sort.
becomes the salient feature for emphasizing European (read white) political and historical difference as primarily national. Thus, when Pauline Kleingeld opens *Kant and Cosmopolitanism* by valorizing Kant’s self-description of Germany (a Germany she rightly notes is not an actual nation-state at the time) in his 1798 *Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View* as cosmopolitan in character, she omits passages from that section that locate the natural origin of the nation in the innate characteristics of a people, in the blood. When Kant uses the term nation or considers cosmopolitanism as resisting the demands of the nation, the concept of race that enables the significance of the nation as a salient political category needs to be accounted for. Chapter one discusses the changing significance of the term nation in racial terms. Chapters two and three show how the salience of this changed concept of the nation is predicated on a normative moment of gendering. Chapter four identifies this change within the parameters of Kant’s corpus, in the form of a narrative collapse in representations of Native Americans, as he moves from this broader notion of the nation – with its attendant social values – to a more narrow notion of the nation which is affiliated to the use of racial type – expressible in behaviors that carry no demand for narration.

Scholarship by Robert Bernasconi, Susan Shell, and John Zammito, among others, has emphasized the need to understand Kant’s philosophical principles in conjunction with the historical conditions in which they are formulated. This is not a question of the priority of philosophical determination or historical consequence. Rather, such inquiries often reveal a different picture of Kant than the received one.
By investigating Kant’s sources and the milieu within which he lived, I have attempted to imaginatively reconstruct a sense of Kant philosophizing, rather than as a philosopher.\textsuperscript{15} The latter was for Kant an impossible ideal, to be strived for but never attained. Such an approach has allowed me a glimpse into the dynamism and supple genius of Kant’s thinking across a range of fields, disciplines, and domains. Kant’s participation and influence – in varying degrees of significance – in the sheer array of debates in his milieu appears tremendous. In this regard, Kant’s texts appear not only as containers of his philosophical principles but as artifacts of popular late 18\textsuperscript{th} century debates. In the latter sense, Kant’s texts sometimes represent important moments in these discursive terrains, in which various lines of thought converge into a new innovation or in which some line of thought is particularly amplified.

Questions of figuration, representation, and frame, as well as attentiveness to rhetorical strategy have more frequently been taken up by literary theoretical studies of Kant than philosophical ones.\textsuperscript{16} In my analysis, however, I argue that ignoring such questions distorts significant philosophical moves. For instance, in chapter two, I

\textsuperscript{15} See \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (trans. and eds.), New York: Cambridge, 1998, p.694 (hereafter abbreviated as CPR) for the distinction between the ideal of a philosopher and the activity of philosophizing. All references to the \textit{Critique of Pure Reason} in English are to this translation. Citations to the \textit{Critique of Pure Reason} give the page numbers in the A and B edition followed by the page number in the English translation.

show how leaving out consideration of frame and the rhetorical strategies of Kant’s essays on universal history leads philosophers to read aporetic moments as simple antinomies, structuring the debate as if it were between two opposing positions to which arguments might be attributed. Kant’s negotiation of unavoidable impasses through the use of gender as an instrument of representing a coherent history is thus not seen. By contrast, this investigation attends to the literary dimension of Kant’s texts as important to the philosophy.

This approach has given some salience not only to moments of rigidity or stratification in Kant’s own thinking, but, given his genius, brought to the fore the ways in which troubling historical limitations can also be philosophically productive and the ways in which philosophical limits might lead to historical innovation. For instance, in chapter one, I argue that Kant’s ability to dissociate a discourse of the human from a discourse of humanity is allied to the elaboration of a philosophical distinction between theoretical and practical reason and also inaugurates an original and rather pernicious moment in the history of race.

In my argument, the constituting political frame for cosmopolitan subjectivity is thus best examined not through an analysis of the explicitly political tracts, but rather through an exploration of a series of critical historical problems, considered under the rubric of race, gender, and indigeneity, in which the boundaries of the cosmopolitan subject are elaborated and the relationships between philosophy and history are unsettled. As a limit-condition to this study, I emphasize the epistemological terrain out of which cosmopolitan subjectivity emerges over the
political institutions that make it possible. Straddling the line between the specific expertise of Kant studies and the history of science with the generalist preoccupations of a variety of disciplines, I take the political-moral questions raised by Kant’s theory of race and theory of gender as a point of departure. Here, I pay as much attention to the structure of the scholarly debates as the positions that are taken. As a consequence of my analysis, I conclude that indigeneity ought to be treated as a distinct conceptual category, overlapping with race and gender.

I also argue that in an important way Kant’s project of cosmopolitanism cannot think indigeneity. Kant’s use of the literal terms for indigenous or aboriginal (eingeboren) is infrequent. My critical approach employs the term indigenous to consider those peoples who Kant names by the term “raw human”, natural humans who have never moved from a “raw” state of nature into culture. Adhering to an 18th century distinction between the Old and New World, Kant’s use of the term “raw human” denotes the original inhabitants of the New World. The term savage (Wilden) is also used in a descriptive and normative sense to represent these peoples, whom for Kant include Native Americans, Tahitians, Australian Aboriginals, and New Zealand Maoris. Of these, the most frequent and typical example of the “raw human” is the Native American, who is used metonymically to represent all indigenous peoples. The Native American stands as a particular limit. There is a perplexing moment in Kant’s theory of race when Kant cannot decide whether Native Americans are truly a race and thus part of the human species. “Human rabble” (Menschenhaufen) is his

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17 This use of the term “raw human” can be found, for instance, in Lectures on Physical Geography (AA IX 458).
response: a figure of aggregation without discernible organization ("heap" and "pile" are also translations of Haufen). This unruly figure emerges from Kant’s philosophy to stand as a constitutive limit to Kant’s cosmopolitanism: human but barely.

The chapters are organized in terms of these three critical terms: race, gender, and indigeneity. Yet the thematic separation of these terms as a pragmatic organizing principle is contested by a framework which understands them as integrated and interrelated, not only with concepts of the human and humanity, but with each other. The normative terms of gender – “man” and “woman” – are shown to be articulated within a racial framework. The mechanism of racial development – the production of white, black, brown, and copper races – assumes the functioning of a specific and normative model of culturally gendered reproduction. The logics of race and gender depend on a moment of indigeneity to get off the ground.

The possibility of a cosmopolitan subjectivity negotiates the defining problem of Kant’s critical philosophy: that the rational agent can think but never validly know reason as a principle of motivation. The project of cosmopolitanism confronts a permutation of this problem: the political agent in history can think but never know that a rational event has occurred, is occurring, or will occur. Grappling philosophical questions of finitude, temporality, and motivation, an impasse is generated between the atemporal, non-empirical conception of pure, practical reason that animates Kant’s critical philosophy and the developmental, organic, and empirical framing of historical reason at play in accounts of political autonomy and cosmopolitan
subjectivity. Recent scholarship has expended much critical effort in understanding this impasse and the political doubt that it produces, within which the political possibility of Kant’s philosophy is lodged.¹⁸

This impasse is elaborated across an array of discourses, the most prominent of which for my consideration are two: the discussions of the human body that preoccupy the nascent science of natural history; and the debates on the politically autonomous subject of universal or progressive history, a debate which is crucially tied to the growing power of civil society in late 18th century Germany. I argue that Kant’s interventions into these discussions are a refractory site upon which the paradox between practical reason and historical reason is articulated and a possible solution presented in cosmopolitan subjectivity. Here, I contend that concepts of race, gender, and indigeneity give shape to this paradox. Knowledge of the human body as rational produces a subjective interstitial space of political possibility.

By interstitial, I mean that the philosophical inquiry into the observed body as an object of epistemology is simultaneously a project of subjective recognition. The philosophical inquirer recognizes his subjective reason by perceiving rational objects.¹⁹ In the theory of race, this process of epistemological cognition is subsequently linked to the awareness of a cosmopolitan destiny. In the essays on

¹⁸ See Loren Goldman, “In Defense of Blinders: On Kant, Political Hope, and the Need for Practical Belief” in Political Theory, 40:4 (2012), pp.497-523 for a recent account that analyzes the political hope that Kant offers in his philosophy of history as an antidote to doubt. Goldman claims that Kant’s account of political hope can be adopted without also having to take into consideration the metaphysical edifice on which this hope is premised. Chapter 2 counters that claim.

¹⁹ My claim here has a relationship to Kant’s claim in the “Analogies of Experience” in CPR that “the subjective sequence of apprehension” must be derived from the “objective sequence of appearances.” (A 193/B 238, 307)
universal history, these observations form a substrate for objectively claiming that the body contains an organic predisposition called reason. I thus ask the question, how does the epistemological cognition of humans as a natural object enable a subjectively certain moral horizon of the future?

I argue that that the horizon of cosmopolitanism is coextensive with the cognition of two objects which are neither univocal nor identical – the human and humanity. I identify a complex movement that dissociates a discourse of the human from a discourse of humanity in order to consequently re-articulate these discourses on different terms. Most frequently, the human becomes an object of epistemological cognition, whose pragmatic use is to enable a practical cognition for the philosophical investigator of his own humanity. When Kant moves to re-articulate these dissociated terms, he specifically claims, as for instance in the conclusion to the 1798 *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, that only a discrete part of an aggregate called the human qualifies for the appellation humanity.20 The qualification is made on the grounds of social and political organization. More specifically, organization for Kant is given a status as a kind of empirical proof through very specific conceptions of gender and nation which disavow their link to race. Granted little political or social autonomy, non-whites are implicitly disqualified from humanity though not the human.

20 See *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, p.423. I am translating Kant’s phrase “menschliche Geschlecht” by humanity. Kant uses this phrase most frequently to denote the species as an organized moral unit, in contrast to “Mensch”, which denotes a natural aggregate of morphologically similar beings who have the capacity to reproduce with each other. The constellation of terms associated with “menschliche Geschlecht” includes “Menschheit” – the term that most literally translates as humanity – as well as the Latinate “Humanitat.”
In order to overcome political doubt, then, Kant turns to this concept of humanity to offer hope in a *possibly* coherent history. As I argue in this dissertation, the production of the special Kantian concept of humanity grounded in dignity is dependent – in indirect and tacit ways – on grounding rational subjects in a specific epistemological terrain on which the human as natural object is constituted by concepts of race, gender, and indigeneity. On this terrain, some humans can only be perceived as natural objects – types and abstractions – to whom social and ethical relations can be refused.

The possibility of the refusal of social and ethical relations allows for the premise upon which the horizon of cosmopolitanism is produced. The actions and behaviors of the human as an epistemological object are cast in terms of a natural temporality, understood only as an imperceptible and natural teleology of reason. The taxonomy of race attempts to grasp this temporality. As the possible moral unit of humanity, political subjects articulate this natural temporality with the temporality of a progressive history, within which rational actions are intertwined in a network of social relations. A normative process of gendering enacts the process that refuses rational social relations (or historical time) to non-whites, and incorporates this doubled temporality within a politically gendered civil society for whites: within this social structure, the cognition of woman through a natural teleology of reason simultaneously opens a space for non-natural, rational actions by the politically
autonomous male citizen subject. As Sarah Kofman has clearly shown\textsuperscript{21}, the moral relation of respect at the basis of social relations in Kant’s moral philosophy is a relation between normative men; by contrast, women are only accorded a relation of comparative respect. In my argument, I suggest that any possible relation of respect can only occur within the intertwined temporality of historical time. In short, the possibility of extending moral relations across differences of race and gender in Kant depends on revising the epistemological structure by which this doubled mode of temporality is produced. Moreover, the moral differences of gender are inextricably linked to the differences of race and indigeneity.

This doubled temporality is harnessed in Kant’s explicit attempts to articulate a structure of philosophical transmission from himself to a possible heir. Here, Kant casts the horizon of an ineluctable cosmopolitan society in a natural temporality, occurring in an imperceptible future. Simultaneously, there are moments of conviction that claim that the philosophical historian who will write the history that underwrites the belief in this future will appear in the near horizon, whether in the composition of the unfulfilled transcendental history of reason that concludes the \textit{Critique of Pure Reason} or the philosophical history of freedom suggested in “Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View”. Kant’s legacy is thus to promise an heir in the proximate future who will harness the temporality of nature to

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convincingly secure the belief in an imperceptible future. Throughout this dissertation, I trouble the assumption that such perspectives and structures of transmission are independent of the frame from within which they are produced.

The dissertation tracks the normative project of producing cosmopolitan subjectivity insofar as it animates a series of popular texts – occasional pieces, competition essays, lecture advertisements, and so on – many of which are published contemporaneously to the critical philosophy. These forays into the philosophy of history, the science of natural history, anthropology, and political philosophy are Kant’s attempts to reach a popular audience: reader-students as an ideal constituency of future world-citizens. Consequently, my analysis reads not only the content of these texts but reading itself as a figure, noticing the subtle and not so subtle ways in which a pedagogical relationship between the philosophical narrator and the implied reader is constructed. I analyze the structural relationship within which the implied reader is addressed, identified, and sometimes included as part of a constituent “we” with the philosophical narrator. I thus attend to the figure of Kant philosophizing, drawing particular attention to the scopic gestures – the glances backwards; the self reproaches for not attaining a sufficient height for perspective - that characterize this figure.

Here, a central historical circumstance animating questions of cosmopolitanism makes itself felt in my chapters, one involving a change in the historiographical production of truth in the European 18th century. Within
historiography of the Americas, the figure of the philosophical traveler in the middle of the century becomes an important conceit, producing a framework in which metaphysical concepts of nature become the final arbiters of truth over and above the credibility of individual travelers. Cornelius de Pauw’s *Recherches philosophiques sur les Américains* and William Robertson’s *The History of America* are considered to have inaugurated this new genre of historiography, whose hermeneutic of truth through metaphysics also produced a new mode of calculating rational time. Within this hermeneutic of truth and calculus of time, what is seen takes a back seat to the organizational framework it supports. Chapter three ponders de Pauw’s influence on Kant and a figural shift in the visual mode of inquiry from “observer” to “philosophical investigator.” Throughout the dissertation, I pay attention to the figure of the philosophical investigator as a kind of cosmopolitan traveler in the narrative production of “truth.”

If the three Critiques establish the boundaries of the cognitive faculties, and the borders between epistemology, practical philosophy, and aesthetics, the popular texts locate themselves at the limits. Rhetorically proclaiming themselves as “risks”, “wagers”, “conjectures” and “speculations”, their very status has been disputed and dismissed. Through a careful reading of these essays, I focus on how Kant claims that certain philosophical principles can only be given *empirically* – irreducibly tied to

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23 As Anthony Pagden discusses in the *Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, what is seen is never a universal perception by an innocent eye.
some moment of experience. This is not to say that the principles that can only be
given in the empirical are therefore empirical principles. Instead, those moments in
which philosophy becomes available empirically are enigmatic – usually in the
elaboration of principles of teleology – drawing and redrawing the lines between
epistemology and morals, empiricism and metaphysics. This drawing and redrawing
sometimes involves a temporary crossing or blurring of the lines. Readers of Kant
have often read these moments as “mistakes”. In much of what follows, I interpret
moments of apparent transgression as not only cases of Kant contravening his own
philosophical principles, but also moments in which the relationships between
philosophy and historical circumstance might be thought anew. The most pertinent
find of this dissertation is the ways in which Kant’s own historical limitations are
simultaneously enabling and dangerous, philosophically productive and troubling.

At the same time, I also show that what readers of Kant understand to be
anthropological and empirical in Kant – the references to historical sources,
travelogues, and novels – often turn out to have undergone rather heavy refashioning
in Kant’s use. Indeed, Kant’s references to empirical sources evince, upon
examination, his intent to draw certain kinds of links between the metaphysical or
rational and the empirical rather than evidence of that kind of link obtaining. As
readers, then, these are difficult moments to grasp, in which Kant’s own efforts at
reference - footnoting, quoting, and citing – are as open to critical examination as the
content.
What becomes clear in these moments of productivity is that the coherence of Kant’s cosmopolitan project is never firmly established, dependent on Kant’s readers to fill in the gaps. Thus, the reader assumes a prime philosophical importance. As is well-known, Kant imagined a lively and critical reading public (Leserwelt) as the participants in any public use of reason. Kant’s popular texts are full of solicitations to the reader, particularly in Kant’s efforts to instruct his reader as student to take on the position of world-citizen.

In this regard, I also claim that contemporary readers are complicit with Kant. In chapter one, I show that critics and defenders of Kant interpret him to have formulated a more or less coherent concept of race, in line with Kant’s own understanding. By contrast, I demonstrate that such a contemporary understanding can only perceive Kant’s concept as coherent by excluding any scrutiny of the place of Native Americans and other indigenous peoples in his theory of race, for a literal reading of these accounts identifies significant difficulties to understanding Kant’s concept of race as coherent on its own terms.

The effort to read Kant literally does not escape the dangers of complicity; yet, it attempts to foreground transgressive moments. Utilizing Jacques Derrida’s notion of aporia24, a careful reading of these moments offers no way out that is not troubling: it is not possible to appreciate the philosophical concept of inalienable dignity without also being complicit in the historical innovation of race; it is not

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possible to uphold the ideal of political autonomy and self-determination without also utilizing a specific – and always historically limited - cognition of woman; it is not possible to feel one’s own humanity without also casting the indigenous as barely human. What I thus claim is that there is no easy way to oppose Kant’s abstract principles of dignity and humanity against his specific views on race, gender, and indigeneity. I affirm Sankar Muthu’s thesis that Kant, alongside Diderot and Herder, might represent an anomalous moment of anti-imperialist thinking in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, but want also to claim that the notion of humanity as cultural agency (to use Muthu’s phrase) that founds this thinking is itself dependent on a pernicious notion of race and gender.\textsuperscript{25}

Against scholarship that would either dismiss these moments or dismiss Kant, the intent of this study is not to argue for a dismissal but rather for a closer look at cosmopolitanism, reading these moments in Kant’s texts as places to inhabit critically. At the same time, I do not want to discount the troubling aspect of these moments. Ultimately, the cosmopolitan vision that emerges from Kant’s texts is a scary one. I show that the concepts of \textit{humanity} and the \textit{human} turn out neither to be coextensive nor able to be re-articulated without exclusion on the grounds of race, gender, and indigeneity. Instead, Kant’s cosmopolitan society is a white society comprised of members whose political autonomy is gendered in very specific ways. This society can take on board questions of sexual freedom, but only in terms of rights. On my reading, such a vision of racial purity and gender normativity is the

\textsuperscript{25} Sankar Muthu, \textit{Enlightenment Against Empire}, p.7.
condition of possibility for the vantage point of cosmopolitanism: seeing the expansive humanity in oneself in contrast to the mere humanness of others.

Consequently, what appear to be contemporary questions, anachronistically posed, turn out to be foundational to the formulation of cosmopolitanism. Taken as an inseparable vision and political project, I claim that theoretical knowledge of race, the practical assumption of gender, and the silent exclusion of queer indigeneity are central to constructing the representation of a motivated politically autonomous historical agent laboring for a cosmopolitan humanity, a representation most significantly idealized in Kant’s efforts to instruct his reader as student to take on the position of world-citizen.

The dissertation stages the question of the relationship of philosophy to history, then, as a philosophical problem of reading. Each chapter animates this question differently, operating on different registers and varying discursive terrains, and elaborating its own provisional philosophy of reading. The aim here is not the development of a hermeneutic that more adequately approaches some “truth” of Kant’s texts. Rather, a practical focus on what might be called the “historical” and the “literary” is used to broaden our sense of Kant’s texts, extended here to include his milieu and his reception, in order to investigate the production of that “truth.” Ultimately, my goal is not establishing lines of historical influence but constructing thick scenes of Kant philosophizing to his readers as students.
If on the one hand each chapter compels a different philosophy of reading, my
general methodological approach has been to read more marginal – though often quite
popular – texts of Kant’s, written contemporaneously to the three Critiques, against
the critical philosophy. Thus, the background of each chapter is one of the Critiques.
In this regard, each chapter also explores one of the three questions of Kant’s Canon
of Pure Reason. The first chapter takes up the question of race in Kant’s three
published essays on race against the *Critique of Practical Reason*\(^{26}\) and the canonical
question, what ought I to do. The moral hero of the second Critique is affiliated with
the epistemological investigator of the essays on race. The second and third chapter
consider gender in Kant’s essays on universal history and the *Anthropology From a
Pragmatic Point of View* against the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the question, what
can I know. Here, the epistemological philosopher of the first Critique is linked to the
politically autonomous historical agent. The fourth chapter focuses on indigeneity in a
variety of Kant’s texts against the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*\(^{27}\) and the
question if I do what I ought, what may I hope for. The unified subject of judgment of
the third Critique is placed against the anthropological – and cosmopolitan –
subject/object of Kant’s anthropology.

The project engages the field of Kantian studies, but in line with its critical
orientation to race, gender, and indigeneity, also draws on scholarship from critical
race studies, Native American studies, history, feminist theory and philosophy, queer

\(^{26}\) Kant’s *Critique of Practical Reason* is collected in a Cambridge edition titled *Practical
Philosophy*, Mary J. Gregor (trans.), New York: Cambridge University Press 1996. References to
works collected in this volume are hereafter abbreviated as PP.

\(^{27}\) *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (trans.), New York: Cambridge
University Press, 2000. Hereafter abbreviated as CPJ.
studies, history of science, history of philosophy, political theory, literary theory, and psychoanalysis. Organized by these three critical terms and as a problem of reading, my approach attempts to consider how a philosophical inquiry might fruitfully engage with these disparate fields. Kant’s influence is broad; yet most scholarship on Kant stays fairly well-contained within disciplinary borders. If the dissertation itself engages with an interstitial space of politics in Kant’s critical philosophy, its location is similarly interstitial, attempting to establish one locus around which these divergent fields might intersect.

Why study Kant in this way? At stake in this project is my sense that the complex separation of a discourse of humanity from a discourse of the human – a separation that at times seems slight or thin – nevertheless governs our inheritance of Kant’s cosmopolitanism, however updated it might be. This difference between the two – instituted in a movement of separation and re-articulation on different terms – is mobilized in casting the political constituency of cosmopolitanism, a constituency that can never simply be humanity. My argument in the final instance is that the very vantage point from which a cosmos becomes a political entity is itself always and necessarily aporetic. What I suggest is that the very success of the Kantian notions of moral respect, dignity, and liberal autonomy entail the refusal of social and ethical relations to some humans. The interstitial and cross-disciplinary approach that I employ attempts, by looking at Kant in this way, to raise a warning to contemporary appropriations of Kant’s cosmopolitan project.
Chapter one introduces a key philosophical movement of the dissertation by investigating the concept of race in Kant’s philosophy. The preeminent question occupying philosophical discussions of Kant’s concept of race concerns the relationship of race to the moral philosophy. The growing consensus on Kant’s originality in formulating a coherent concept of race has troubled the assumption that the extension of Kant’s moral philosophy – and *ipso facto* the concept of a human that bears rights – is universal. The vigorous discussion has taken pains, at times polemically, to defend or deny a link between the theory of race and the moral philosophy. At stake in this debate is the question of conserving a radically egalitarian position drawn from Kant over against the hierarchies of racial inferiority, a debate complicated by the lack of an explicit textual connection in Kant’s published material between the racial differences of the human and the moral person. Chapter one intervenes on this debate by reexamining Kant’s place in the 18th century European discourse of race. Considered against his contemporaries and predecessors, I claim that Kant’s *success* in formulating a concept of race has to do with his ability to dissociate a discourse of the *human* from a discourse of *humanity*. Casting race as primarily an epistemological project that separates the *human* as a natural object of knowledge from *humanity* as a metaphysical concept of morality, I reformulate the salient question by which to investigate the relationship between Kant’s theory of race and the moral philosophy as follows: how is Kant able to “see” some humans as purely natural or “racial” without any recourse to social values? Tracking the relationship between the philosophical investigator and the observed racial object, I
claim that this project of separation produces an epistemological terrain upon which
the subjective (and moral) rationality of the philosophical investigator is recognized
precisely by refusing or denying social and ethical relations to those humans classed
primarily as natural objects, casting them instead in terms of an abstract racial
taxonomy of types. Consequently, I argue that the viability of Kant’s moral person
depends on its independence from any concept of race. Paradoxically, this
independence institutes an original and sinister moment in the history of race. I
conclude that it is the very separation of the moral philosophy from a theory of race
that is at issue, rather than the uncovering of hidden or occluded links. I thus go some
way in this chapter towards unraveling the link between the attainment of knowledge
of the world and the consciousness of a cosmopolitan destiny.

Chapters two and three show how a normative theory of gender negotiates the
paradox between epistemology and politics in Kant’s essays on universal history and
the Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View. Feminist debate on Kant has
focused on the resourcefulness and the possibility of revising Kant’s moral
philosophy for feminist concerns. Unlike the textual lacunas in the questions of the
racial composition of the moral person, Kant explicitly claims that the normative
woman is a passive citizen, weaker civilly and naturally to the normative man. The
intensity of the debate is evident, for instance, in Barbara Herman’s remark that Kant
is the “philosopher feminists find most objectionable” or Sally Sedgwick’s title “Can
Kant’s Ethics Survive the Feminist Critique.” This focus on the moral philosophy, however, leaves untouched the sex-gender system that founds civil society as a historical achievement for Kant. Whereas chapter one deliberates on the epistemological separation enacted by the theory of race, these two chapters considers the problems of historical sequencing that are at the heart of political autonomy. An impasse is generated in the essays on universal history and the Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View in the attempts to represent the radically unconditioned origin of rational action. A paradoxical demand governs these attempts: on the one hand, Kant tries to represent the atemporal, spontaneous causality of transcendental reason as an origin; on the other hand, the essays on history track an unconditioned rational beginning to history empirically, striving to represent the emergence of reason in the political decisions by which humans in a state of nature become consciously aware rational agents. Neither empirically verifiable nor fictional, Kant’s essays stage the possibility of the truth of reason’s appearance in complex rhetorical and argumentative strategies which enact this impasse as a question of


29 This impossible spontaneity is described as a possible spontaneity of thinking in the Critique of Pure Reason (AA III 123) and a possible spontaneity of the subject in the Critique of Practical Reason (AA V 99).

30 Alenka Zupancic in Ethics of the Real: Kant, Lacan, London, Verso: 2000, p.21-42, frames this impasse, following Jacques Lacan, in terms of an itinerary in which the ethical subject must experience herself as radically helpless, as always already determined by nature, in order to attain rational and ethical self-recognition. Within this itinerary, volition is always constrained by natural determinism. Zupancic foregrounds the libidinal dimension of the subject but assumes that it can just as easily be feminine as masculine. In my argument, the possibility of recognition is always already gendered.
articulating a teleological reason of nature with consciously aware and autonomous action.

By affiliating three such moments in Kant’s essays, as the rhetoric and logic of the passages invite the reader to do, I show how the paradoxical possibility of political autonomy is reliant on a specific and normative model of gendering. In contrast to the Kant scholarship which, by casting this paradox as an antinomy, dismisses moments of transgression negotiated by gender, I read it as a series of aporias. I demonstrate that gender is the instrument of abstraction for representing a possibly coherent history to which a cosmopolitan society is its ineluctable outcome. Gender negotiates the impossibility of narrative sequencing so as to articulate a positive history. Indeed, in “Conjectural Beginning to Human History”, Kant links the book of Genesis to universal history in order to represent thinking at its origin as thinking sexual difference, out of which political discourse as a potent act of transformation emerges. On my account, the normative moment of gendering is represented as the rational decision by which natural relations between humans in a state of nature are transformed into binding relations in culture and subsequently civil society. Ultimately, the capacity of a politically autonomous male historical agent to engage in a coherent and politically effective discourse is related to the ability to cognize “woman” in civil society. In chapter three I extend the argument to claim that the possibility of normative gendered roles is circumscribed within a tacit discourse of race, wherein monogamous marriage in white civil society is cast as a historical and teleological achievement. The narrative here depends on characterizing non-
whites as defined by antecedent historical and natural configurations of gender. I conclude the chapter by showing how Kant’s doctored lifting of an anecdote from Captain Cook’s third voyage provokes and refuses the possibility of social (albeit brutal) relations between peoples who are differently gendered in this way: a gallant (cultured) English sailor, rather than violently attempting to save a (natural) Tahitian woman, refuses to intervene. This refusal simultaneously affirms the regulation of gendered violence that constitutes the achievement of civil society and sustains the discursive difference that casts non-whites as only epistemological objects.

Chapter four begins by drawing attention to a significant change in Kant’s representations of Native Americans from the 1764 Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime to the 1772 Lectures on Anthropology. Linking this discursive shift to a changed notion of the sublime in Kant’s philosophy, this chapter identifies and analyzes a peculiar conjunction: the exclusion of indigenous peoples is almost always followed by a confident survey of the world by the philosophical investigator in Kant. 31 The chapter follows up on the ways in which indigenous people paradoxically figure as a racial exception to the theory of race and as a pre-gendered origin to normative accounts of gender. Querying the lack of scholarly attention on questions of indigeneity in Kant, the discussion draws from Jack Forbes’ landmark Africans and Native Americans: The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples to attend to this enigmatic and paradoxical conjunction through

the rhetorical opposition of Native Americans and Africans. Through such attention, I draw together the insights from the previous chapters to articulate how the separation of the discourse of the human from a discourse of humanity is reconciled in an aesthetic judgment of the sublime, a judgment which makes most evident the affective attachments of the politically autonomous cosmopolitan subject. Kant’s use of his sources is revealing on this score. Not only does Kant refashion his sources, the silent exclusion of the queer indigenous enables a representation that portrays the indigenous as sexual indifferent, possessing a useless bravery, cruelty, laziness, wild freedom, and honesty. In the final instance, Kant claims that the character of humanity is evident in the capacity to lie. By withholding this capacity from some humans, the irreducible difference between the discourses of humanity and the human is sustained, a difference that allows the cosmopolitan subject to feel his own humanity by representing the indigenous as barely human.
1. The Cosmopolitan Future of Race

Introduction

The emergence of a general discourse of race in the 18th century has been widely linked to colonialism, the slave trade, imperialism, changing forms of political and economic organization, and class division. The hierarchical, classificatory, and aesthetic divisions at stake in a discourse of race are inseparable from these institutions. Within this discursive field, a “scientific” theory of race appears late in the 18th century, inaugurating the new “sciences of man”, which in their disciplinary shapes become anthropology and geography, and, somewhat later, biology. The vicissitudes of the theoretical formation of race, particularly evident in the attempts to give the term a consistent semantic content, do not obviate common theoretical concerns. Where they do differ is in the practical implications of such “knowledge”, namely the ethical question of how to treat racially different others. In this regard, scholars have long been puzzled by the conjunction in the 18th century of the

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32 See Michel Foucault, Society Must be Defended, Ann Laura Stoler’s reading of Foucault’s History of Sexuality in Race and the Education of Desire, and Mahmood Mamdani, When Victims Become Killers, for discussion of these links. Ivan Hannaford’s Race: The History of an Idea in the West is a general account of the construction of the race idea. Francois Bernier’s Nouvelle division de la terre par les différentes espèces ou races qui l’habitent, 1684, is considered to be the first text to use race as a mark of human divisions. See Hannaford, p. and Bernasconi and Lott’s introduction to Idea of Race.

33 Mamdani locates the foundational significance of the discourse of race in French thinking of class divisions in the 1800s, particularly in Comte Arthur Gobineau. Larrimore and Eigen claim that the scientific discourse of race originates in the last four decades of the 18th century in Germany, a claim supported by the various essays collected in The German Invention of Race, p.1. See John Zammito, Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology for an account of Kant’s foundational significance to the discipline of anthropology. For Kant, anthropology was a philosophical study of the human, which prefigures without being identical to the contemporary discipline of anthropology. Chad Wellmon’s Becoming Human: Romantic Anthropology and the Embodiment of Freedom, University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press 2010, discusses Kant’s anthropology in a different contextual setting.
powerful – occasionally militant – proclamations of liberty and equality, whose philosophical expression is found in moral theories from Hobbes and Locke to Kant and Hegel, alongside an endorsement of race by some of these philosophers, and sometimes the most successful practical project of race, namely the slave trade. In the case, for example of Locke, philosophical propositions for freedom and equality are espoused by someone who, in his policy writing, advocates the slave trade.

Kant’s thinking presents a particularly pronounced instance of this puzzle. Kant’s moral philosophy is premised on a deep respect for the dignity of humanity, formulaically presented in the various iterations of the Categorical Imperative. Foundational to contemporary theories of human rights, his moral philosophy seems patently opposed to the divisions of race. Yet Kant develops such a philosophy contemporaneously to what has been heralded as the first “scientific theory of race.” Kant’s theory of race is connected to a hierarchy of racial inferiority, somewhat noticeable in the published works and amply evident in unpublished material consisting of lecture notes, handwritten reflections, and student transcriptions of lectures. Understanding the relationship, then, between Kant’s moral and racial doctrines might be instructive not only towards better understanding Kant’s

34 Susan Buck-Morss invokes this puzzle in “Hegel and Haiti” in Critical Inquiry, 26:4 (Summer 2000), pp.821-865.
35 See Robert Bernasconi, “Will the Real Kant Please Stand Up” for a discussion of Locke’s seeming contradiction.
philosophy, but may also shed light on the puzzle occasioned by Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment thinkers on the seeming disparity in their use of the term “human.” Whereas the promises of Enlightenment reason have been thoroughly critiqued, the rational connection to race has yet to be fully accounted for.

The significance of Kant’s theory of race in the history of ideas is well established. The three essays Kant wrote on the topic of race generated a good deal of discussion at the time of their publication. Kant first essay on race was the 1775 “Of the Different Races of Man”. This essay, along with its 1777 revision, the 1785 “Determination of the Concept of a Human Race”, and the 1788 “On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy”, form Kant’s explicit writings on race. Popular during his life (as evidenced by frequent reprinting), the influence of these texts has been considerable, not only on the nascent biologists and natural scientists of the day including Johannes Blumenbach and Christoph Girtanner, but also on subsequent theorists of race.  

Bernasconi has argued on the basis of these essays and their reception that Kant deserves the heuristic title “inventor” of the scientific concept of race. This means “one who gave the concept sufficient definition for subsequent users to believe that they were addressing something whose scientific status could be debated.” Unlike the inconsistent and varied use of the term, for example, by Buffon – from whose system Kant borrows heavily – Kant’s formulation renders it possible to have scientific debate. Race in other words becomes an

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38 See Bernasconi “Who Invented the Concept of Race?”  
39 Ibid, p.11.
epistemological object, capable of generating a discourse. In this regard, Kant’s first essay on race and Lord Kame’s *Sketches of the History of Man* are generally considered among the founding documents of the scientific discourse of race, prominently elaborating opposing positions on debates on the origin of the human.

In contrast, the significance of Kant’s theory of race to his moral philosophy remains controversial. That the essays are written contemporaneously to the first and second Critique and presage the theory of natural teleology in the third Critique has puzzled commentators. Questions have been raised about the universal applicability and attribution of Kant’s notion of moral personality. Is Kant’s moral philosophy restricted by race? Emmanuel Eze’s controversial claim that race is a transcendental concept for Kant has been subject to much criticism, yet it does highlight the unresolved status of the relation of race to the critical philosophy.

In part, the puzzle has amplified because the term race rarely appears in the major texts of the critical philosophy. Nor has a consensus been reached on any obvious lacuna or proxy that indicates race in these texts. Various defenses of Kant have thus been given that posit a fundamental incompatibility between the critical philosophy and the theory of race. Whatever the reasons behind Kant’s theory, the

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40 Michael Banton disagrees on this score, that there was a “scientific concept” of race that Kant could be said to have invented in “The Vertical and Horizontal Dimensions of the Word Race” in *Ethnicities*, 10:1 (2010), pp.127-140. Robert Bernasconi has shown Banton to be misreading Kant on the concept of race in “Defining Race Scientifically: A response to Michael Banton” in *Ethnicities*, 10:1 (2010), pp.141-148.


moral philosophy supposedly remains unscathed by these considerations. The incompatibilist argument conjectures that Kant’s sentiments of racial inferiority are thus a case of Kant not understanding the abstract insights of his own moral philosophy.43

Philosophers of race have convincingly located in Kant’s corpus the tremendous frequency of sentiments of racial inferiority. The unpublished note 1520 of the Reflexions is the most notorious: “All races will be exterminated (the Americans and Negroes cannot govern themselves. Serving therefore only as slaves), only not that of whites. The stubbornness of Indians with their customs is the cause, why they do not melt together in one people with the Whites.” (AA XV 879)44 Yet, the published essays on race do not, by and large, explicitly express these sentiments. Indeed, the changes, additions, and retractions in the published work show a dynamic thinking of race, which seems to oscillate, rather than move towards an appeal to racial prejudice. It is not yet clear how to interpret the relation between Kant’s published work and the unpublished sentiments of racial inferiority. Thus, when Charles Mills argues that Kant’s notion of moral personality is tacitly raced, his argument is weakened by uncritical recourse to the unpublished lecture notes.45

In the latest commentary, Pauline Kleingeld has argued a synthetic account of these positions.46 She grants the issues raised by Kant’s theory of race as significantly

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44 In Chapter 3, I analyze this note in relation to a cosmopolitan future.
questioning the extension of Kant’s moral philosophy. Yet she also claims that these issues are important only until 1792-3, at which point Kant’s relative silence about race in his published texts indicates the concept is no longer of importance. For Kleingeld, the introduction of a robust notion of universal *cosmopolitical* right during this time period, alongside statements Kant makes about the sovereign rights of Native Americans and “Hottentots”\(^{47}\), explains Kant’s silence as precisely one in which the incompatibility between the moral philosophy and race is so great that race drops out. Larrimore and Bernasconi read this silence differently, suggesting that the frequent reprinting of the earlier essays of race in the 1790s and the continued discussions of race in the unpublished lectures demonstrate that race has not dropped out of Kant’s thought.\(^ {48}\)

That Kant might be considered, in anachronistic terms, a proto-racist seems obvious on the basis of the unpublished material. Despite the critical commentary, though, neither the *ad hominem* charge nor the identification of the theory of race with racial inferiority evinces an explicit connection to the moral philosophy.\(^ {49}\) Written contemporaneously to the critical philosophy, yet without any apparent textual or conceptual connection, the theory of race thus remains a controversial puzzle to commentators.

\(^{47}\) Hottentots was the term used to refer to the Khoi-Khoi people of South Africa.

\(^{48}\) Robert Bernasconi, “Kant’s Third Thoughts on Race” in *Reading Kant’s Physical Geography*. Specifically, he shows that the evidence supporting Kleingeld’s claim, namely, Kant’s denunciation of the slave trade in a draft of *Towards Perpetual Peace*, neither contradicts his theory of race nor does it sufficiently explain Kant’s references to race in the student notes on the Lectures on Physical Geography during this time period.

\(^{49}\) In the *Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argues that race is a necessary exclusion for Kant to come to the subject as a moral being. Along these lines, claiming that Kant is a proto-racist does not sufficiently explain why race is necessary.
How then to approach this puzzle? What connection might the moral philosophy have to Kant’s theory of race? How are we to understand why Kant could think a universalist moral philosophy alongside race?

In what follows, I outline a novel approach to these questions by situating Kant’s concept of race within two discursive moments of racial crisis. This chapter has two parts. In the first, my argument enhances and reframes contemporary understandings of the origins of race in the European 18th century. Scholars have already established Kant’s importance to the emergence of a concept of race, yet they have not identified the reason Kant’s concept is successful. I claim Kant’s success in this regard because of a hitherto unnoticed dimension, namely that Kant is the first person to successfully publicly dissociate a discourse of nature from a discourse of society. By situating Kant within two general discourses of nature and society, I also claim a new way of approaching the puzzle between Kant’s theory of race and his moral philosophy. I will suggest that the very possibility of understanding Kant’s moral philosophy and his theory of race as distinct is part of the problem. I shall argue, moreover, that the emergence of a theoretically robust concept in Kant’s philosophy has as much to do with the philosophical structure he is elaborating as the historical moment he lives in.

The second part of the chapter turns to a reading of Kant’s texts on race. The descriptive summary I give follows, to a large extent, a well-established body of scholarship on these essays. My attention to questions of translation, terminology, and rhetoric, particularly as Kant moves from German to Latin and back to express racial
difference, however, casts this summary in a different light, and orients it to emphasize the role of the philosophical investigator. I thus investigate the meaning of Kant’s concept of race in his texts, particularly as it relates to a shift in perspective. From this vantage point, I show moments in Kant’s theory of race when the identity of the observer and the observed are rendered distinct. By way of this new approach, I reformulate the salient question in investigating Kant’s theory of race as the following: how is Kant able to “see” humans as purely natural or “racial” without any recourse to social values? I argue that contemporary understandings of Kant assume Kant’s success in this regard. In contrast, I shall argue that: 1) Kant never quite is able to “see” race successfully; his essays indeed reveal moments of failure; and 2) these failures are instructive in allowing the reader to see a connection between race and the moral philosophy. I thus show how Kant’s attempts at dissociating a discourse of nature from a discourse of society never fully succeed, relying on moments of contradiction.

By attending to the movement between Latin and German, I am attempting to do what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has described as grasping the writer’s presuppositions and thus entering the protocols of the text. Here, I try to access Kant’s presuppositions as he is developing his concept of race. Spivak has consistently noticed the ways in which the movement between languages is necessary to the development of the philosophical argument in various philosophers and particularly within German philosophy, including Kant and Marx. See, for instance, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak” in Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture, Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds.), Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois, 1988, pp.271-313 and “Translating into English” in Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation, Sandra Berman and Michael Wood (eds.), Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005, pp.93-110.

In this chapter and the next two, I examine the various ways in which concepts of nature and culture are never fully determined in Kant’s philosophy, taking up different meanings in different texts. The discussion, for instance, in Section II of the Groundwork for a Metaphysics of Morals, titled “Transition from popular moral philosophy to metaphysics of morals” consistently draws a boundary between the ends of nature and the ends of freedom, claiming a rational being that is freed from any anthropological considerations. Yet, the concept of nature used in this section in distinction to the pure rational being changes. I track in these chapters the various kinds of concepts nature that Kant uses. See AA IV 406-445, PP 61-93.
I return in the conclusion to the following questions: What does troubling our racial past do to our contemporary sense of a racial future? In what ways does the contention that the perception of race, and the meanings associated to it, has always been both troubled and produced, change our own perception of race? Is race itself a concept that has always been in crisis, punctuated in the 19th century by a brief and brutal moment of hardening?\(^{52}\) Ultimately, the question becomes, how might we see our racial future differently? What discourses of nature and society are needed to effect this difference?

I. Crisis

In “Race and Racism: Towards a Global Future”, Howard Winant distinguishes between the past and present of the “race-concept.”\(^{53}\) In order to sharpen the reader’s sense of a moment of crisis, he sketches a historically fixed past, which he subsequently contrasts with the flexible present:

Race was once thought to be a natural phenomenon, not a social one. It was considered eternal, not transient. While its meaning might have varied in practical terms (among nations and empires, say, or over time), the concept of race retained its character as an essence. The supposed naturality of race, its

\(^{52}\) In the 19th century too, Robert Knox’ spectacularly racist claim in *The Races of Men: A Fragment*, “that human character, individual or national, is traceable solely to the nature of that race to which the individual or nation belongs” (7) is linked to a rhetoric of crisis. See *The Races of Men: A Fragment*, Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1850. This footnote can be expanded indefinitely.

givenness, was barely ever questioned. Race was understood as an ineluctable and natural framework of difference among human beings.\(^{54}\)

This historical perception of race as a natural given punctuates the present (“That was then; this is now”) and affords a collective, and new, cosmopolitan perception of crisis: “the perception (but it is not only mine) of a developing worldwide crisis in the meaning and structure of race.”

Roughly two hundred years earlier, in the 1774 *Sketches of the History of Man*, Lord Kames also perceives a crisis, at the moment of race’s emergence, claiming race against those who hold it as a given of soil and climate:

In concluding from the foregoing facts that there are different races of men, I reckon upon strenuous opposition; not only from men biassed [sic] against what is new or uncommon, but from numberless sedate writers, who hold every distinguishing mark, internal as well as external, to be the effect of soil and climate. Against the former, patience is my only shield; but I cannot hope for any converts to a new opinion, without removing the argument urged by the latter.\(^{55}\)

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\(^{54}\) Ibid, p. 986.

I situate my chapter between these two moments of crisis. In each case, the crisis in meaning occurs between a fixed, sedate past and a contemporary innovation: the purportedly incorrect perception of human difference as a natural given shapes the recognition of an emergent moment of truth in race. Of course, for Kames, the concept of race is the innovation of truth; whereas for Winant, the change appears related to the perception of race as socially constructed and mobile (“it partakes of a certain flexibility and fungibility that was formerly rare”).

I link these two moments of crisis, because I want to trouble Winant’s sense of race as an unquestioned natural given. I am instructed by Snait Gissis’ astute observation that there is a tendency to project “modern usage onto that of the past” in discussions that wish to construe the 18th century concept of race as more robust than it was. The scholarship on the history of race clearly shows a hardening of the concept in the 19th century. In contrast to that hardened concept, the contemporary moment might appear more flexible. Yet, to perceive the present as the most troubled time in the concept of race is to occlude its origins in the 18th century.

By assembling a range of visual and textual material, Gissis makes the bold thesis that the emergence of race in the 18th century occurs at a moment when two hitherto intertwined discourses are collapsed into one: the first is a discourse concerning society, civility, and civilization; and the latter is a discourse of natural history. Gissis employs the terms discourse of society and discourse of nature to refer to the two. The guiding question for Gissis is a question of perception. He brilliantly

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identifies a changing trend in visual representation during the 18\textsuperscript{th} century. He examines how various images of non-European peoples, often drawn from the same source, shift over the course of the century. In the early part of the century, they are marked by emblems of society, including the depiction of flags, the measured comportment of peoples, and dwellings. By mid-century, the emblems of society are replaced by scales of civilization: hierarchies of courage, comportment, and dress. By the late 18\textsuperscript{th} century, another visual change becomes prominent: the scales of civilization are displaced by an effort to depict non-European peoples as natural objects, represented as types. There is an emphasis on precision, yet precision here has to do with conformity to underlying analytical frameworks, not visual accuracy. The stabilization of race as a concept thus has to do with identifying natural markers of type: skin color, hair, and bone. Indeed, the very “visibility” of race becomes a matter of an epistemological methodology: one has to know how to look in order to look. The question of seeing race as a bound concept of nature has to do with perceiving in an oriented and specific way.

On this schema, color is a rich, scientific complex. Indeed, I suggest that the use of single colors as markers of difference – white, black, yellow, copper – is a tell-tale sign that in the first instance race is not about visual accuracy but about type. Thus, the success of the “visibility” of race has to do with achieving such a high level of epistemological abstraction that the presence of color immediately signals this framework of types. In contrast, early 18\textsuperscript{th} century observers simply could not “see” color as type. In this regard, the later re-association of race with scales of civilization
in the 19th century is working with an already sedimented and established epistemology of race.

The aesthetic of race as connoting values of beauty and morality thus shifts in the 18th century to a scientific aesthetic of precision.57 The aim of these efforts is to produce the natural human as a type of abstraction. The apogee of these efforts might lie in the abstract tables of classification, no longer relying on visual demonstration.58

In this chapter, I follow up on Gissis’ thesis of the change in discourse from society to nature in relation to Kant’s theory of race. As a number of scholars including Gissis have claimed, Kant formulates the first theoretically robust concept of race. In distinction to Gissis, however, I want to suggest that the collapse of the discourse of society into the discourse of nature is in actuality a dissociation: in other words, what appears at the end of the 18th century are two distinct discourses, whose philosophical grounds are relatively independent of each other: a discourse of humanity as a universal ideal independent of “nature” (discourse of society); and a discourse of the human as a naturally abstract type which is knowable (discourse of nature). The contemporary puzzle about the incompatibility between discourses of humanism and race is thus not a consequence of abstract insight outrunning empirical or political interests,59 but rather based on the possibility of the separation of one from the other. As the “inventor” of a coherent concept of race, Kant has a privileged standing in this dissociation.

58 See Gissis, “Visualizing ‘Race’ in the Eighteenth Century”.
59 Wood, Kantian Ethics, pp.8-9.
On this basis, I argue that Kant’s theory of race is successful because he is able to dissociate a discourse of the human (the discourse of nature) from a discourse of humanity (the discourse of society). In contrast, Kames’ concept of race does not survive its moment of crisis because of its inability to effect this separation. His valorization of cross-racial instances of courage and hospitality, as paradoxically the signs of racial difference, shows that his concept is caught in an intertwined discourse of society and nature. What is compelling about Kant’s concept of race in his own milieu then, as distinct from De Pauw, Maupertuis, or Kames, is precisely the fact that Kant’s concept of race is legible without any associated values of courage, hospitality, or propriety. The culmination of these efforts is found in the anatomical and physiological aspects of Blumenbach’s later theory of race and the early 19th century discourse of race of Blumenbach, Camper, and Cuvier.

To understand the difference more fully, consider the following. For Kames, race circulates varying values of valor, hospitality, industry (to some extent), sexual inclination, and beauty. Race names a mobile difference, which in being posited as natural, means neither accidental nor customary. On his theory, the “sexual frigidity” of North Americans is as much a sign of racial difference as the prevalence of the trait of cross-racial courage or the inclinations of “kindness towards strangers”. Nature thus means something like innate tendency: indeed, Kames attempts to argue for

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60 See Kames, p.23. Snait Gissis seems to understand this “kindness towards strangers” as Kames distinguishing race on the basis of attitudes towards the white race. He does not provide page numbers in Kames or further discussion on this topic. The claim is plausible but not yet convincing.
racial difference by pointing to the difference in instincts between varying species or races of dogs as evidence that there is an analogous phenomenon in human beings.

As Kant develops his theory of race, he attempts to restrict the values that race can circulate to those that can be linked to a clearly defined concept of nature. Kant thus increasingly restricts race to size, figure, color, and other morphogenetic features. Yet the focus on morphology in his argument also leads to a priority of genealogy over morphology: the importance of generational types over observable classes. On this basis, Kant forms a natural concept of race without recourse to social values.

This natural concept of race is in actuality a composite of two prevailing kinds of uses of race: 1) the imprecise use of race, sometimes synonymously with species, kind, stock, and lineage, to designate observable, inheritable differences within animals unified by the same term: dogs, horses, sheep, and so on; 2) the use of race, often in conjunction with nation, religion, or, earlier, nobility, to connote some human grouping, either intra-national or international, based on aesthetic or moral values, typically beauty or courage. A natural concept of race has in some sense to combine these two senses if applied to humans. Here, the emerging discourse of natural history is the domain within which observable differences are coupled with the displacement of aesthetic and moral value into a new type of natural value, namely natural purpose. These composites rely to some extent on shared analogies with animal races, and to a much greater extent on botanical frameworks of organization, while at the same time positing some uniquely human dimension of race. Various attempts to develop a
science of natural history of the human in the late 18\textsuperscript{th} century are thus often attempts at narrating a natural purpose to the existence of humans. In Kant, the concept of race is intertwined with the effort to distinguish a new science of natural history.

The hypothesis of a dissociation between nature and society also explains the strange distance between the two kinds of histories Kant writes in the 1780s: a natural history of the human, in which his theory of race is elaborated; and a universal history of humanity, within which gender has a privileged moment in establishing the human as a moral creature. Kant’s two histories appear more or less distinct: the natural histories of race scarcely mention freedom or volition; the universal histories never mention race. By contrast, Kant’s contemporaries, for instance, Herder’s \textit{History of Mankind}, contain an intertwined natural and universal history. Scholars, as well as Kant’s peers, have sometimes read Kant’s various essays on natural and universal history together; yet, for Kant, it appears possible to posit these histories as distinct.

In my analysis in this chapter and the next, I suggest that the discursive distance between the two testifies to the success of the dissociation between a discourse of the \textit{human} and a discourse of \textit{humanity}, a dissociation certainly not in place in the pre-Critical texts.

When Raphael Lagier claims in \textit{Les Races humaines selon Kant} that “[i]t appears therefore necessary to simply disconnect the anthropological hypotheses of Kant from their ‘moral implications’…that there is no militant dimension in Kant’s texts on races…that Kantian raciology never produced a scandalous thesis, never
revealed a ‘non universalist Kant,’” (4-5, my translation)\(^6\) his observation is correct, as long as the success of Kant’s dissociation is assumed. The implications that Lagier wants to infer from this disconnection need this assumption as their basis. In my argument, how one can perceive race as a concept designating simply “anthropological hypotheses” without a “moral implication” is precisely the problem that Kant intends to solve. Along similar lines, Thomas Strack identifies a gap between the two discourses, but assumes that Kant’s efforts to present race solely in terms of natural science is a sign against the racism of Kant’s theory, a position that other scholars have also adopted.\(^6\) In my argument, a more conventional “racism” – tying moral values to natural types – would have been less pernicious than the purely natural theory of race that Kant is proposing.

I call Kant’s process a dissociation in order to emphasize the constructedness of a natural concept of race, as well as to highlight the hidden social values never fully excluded from race, or for that matter, the natural values never fully excluded from the moral philosophy. The questions concerning the connection between the moral philosophy and Kant’s theory of race might well be reformulated to ask the question: how is Kant able to see/invent human beings as purely natural without any

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\(^6\) *Les Races humaines selon Kant*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 2004 is the first book-length study of Kant’s theory of race. Lagier claims, “Il semble donc nécessaire de simplement déconnecter les hypothèses anthropologique de Kant de leurs ‘implications morales’, pour en entreprendre l’étude dépassionnée. Étant donné, enfin, qu’il n’y a aucune dimension militante dans les textes de Kant sur les races, ce qui les différencie notablement d’écrits de contemporains explicitement orientés vers la défense de l’esclavage, cette évaluation de la raciologie kantienne ne produira en outre aucune thèse scandaleuse, ne révélera pas ‘un Kant non universaliste.’” (4-5)

recourse to social values? What level of aesthetic and epistemic dissociation needs to be in place in order to have this perception? Kant’s project of race here marks a difference from early 18th century observers who simply could not see “race” in purely natural terms.

Here, I should note, in line with Gissis, that the thinking of race as natural does not replace the linking of non-European peoples to scales of inferiority. Rather, two modes of discourse and representation exist side by side. Within Kant’s own corpus, such a parallel might be identified in the differences in the changing descriptions of race in Kant’s Lectures on Physical Geography and his Lectures on Anthropology: in the 1791 (the date is not certain) Bergk Lecture Notes on Geography, the term race is described mostly in terms of a discourse of nature; whereas the Reichel Lecture Notes on Anthropology63 in 1793-4 describe race by way of scales of inferiority. Such a parallel may well explain some of the discrepancies between the scales of inferiority found in the unpublished texts and the largely “natural” terms used in the published essays. I want to claim, though, through my analysis of Kant that the establishment of a “pure” discourse of natural history institutes a more sinister form of race thinking: in the possibility of effacing any and all markers of society and civilization, whether in the form of comparative signs or hierarchies, it is possible to conceive the human without any recourse to explicitly shared social values between observer and observed. In my argument, the production

63 Bergk, Lecture Notes on Physical Geography, 1791. The extant notes of Kant’s various cycles of his Lectures on Physical Geography have been made available online by Werner Stark. They will be published in a forthcoming volume of the Akademische Ausgabe. Similarly, the University of Marburg has made available online extant notes of Kant’s various cycles of his Lectures on Anthropology.
of these two distinct discourses does not only entail some possibly radical, substantive disconnect between human and humanity. Rather, the cognitive move of dissociation by which these two discourses can appear distinct enables a pernicious logic of race, whose application can be seen in the 19th century: the association of emblems of society or scales of civilization on an already dissociated and underlying discourse of “natural” types makes the possibility of shared social values fragile and precarious. The dissociation is felt most strongly in the distinction between observer and observed. In this schema, the unified racial and social value of the observer is never contested. In contrast, the social values of the observed are never settled, overlaid as they are on a racial classification of “types”. This ambivalence is based on the fact that the capacity to see humans in purely “natural” terms raises the possibility that there are humans who can only be “seen” in these terms, without any recourse to explicitly shared social values or a shared social concept of humanity. On this dissociation, freedom, hospitality, and propriety can only ever appear as accidental or contingent traits – rather than intrinsic – for those peoples who fall under the category of race. To be black or yellow or Native American and free is thus always a precarious (usually empirical rather than metaphysical) philosophical relation under this dissociation. When the visible difference between “black” and “white” that so perplexed European intellectuals and scientists over the course of the 18th century thus takes two forms by the end of the century – a question of natural “types” and a question of brotherhood – it is precisely the appearance of this distinction that is troubling.
Another way to formulate this relationship is as follows. The production of
typologies of race as meaningful only within a natural narrative of racial production
leads to the consequence that non-whites are never given a narrative in universal
history. Since their meaningfulness is constrained to natural history and the typology
of race as the only product of a change over time, they have no narrative possibility in
universal history, no place in which to garner a meaningfulness through autonomous
actions over time. The lack of a future postulated to non-white races takes its place in
this schema. The fact of typology consequently omits any need to place non-whites in
a universal history. Hence, a narrative collapse can be identified in the change in
description of non-whites between the *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful
and Sublime* and the development of the theory of race.

Within the limits of Kant’s philosophy, the distinction between theoretical and
practical reason seems well-suited towards distinguishing between a largely
epistemological concept of race and a practical concept of universal history. As I will
argue in this chapter and the next, these concepts are presented in terms of such a
distinction: yet, the distinction is actively drawn. Identifying the connection between
the two would thus entail identifying those moments when Kant is not able to
dissociate between the two discourses and establish a limit between epistemology and
the practical philosophy. Within his theory of race, those moments are most in
evidence in Kant’s attempts to determine the semantic content of race. Throughout
his essays, Kant is preoccupied with establishing a meaning to race. Yet, as I will
show, Kant never successfully produces a coherent concept of race in his own terms.
Our understanding of Kant as successfully producing such a concept might thus say more about how we as readers are filling in Kant’s gaps than about Kant’s concept.

The question of meaning is best approached not only by investigating the content of Kant’s concept of race but also its intended audience. Here, Gissis’ pithy conclusion emphasizes the change in perspective that I analyze in this chapter:

The scientific concept of “race” that emerged at the end of the [18th] century seemed stable to contemporaries. However, when considered *qua* the investigator, rather than *qua* the investigated, “race” becomes an unstable, hybrid, contextual category operating within the various sciences at the interface of the social and biological.64

Kant’s essays on race emphasize the role of the philosophical observer, and to some extent stage the dissociation of society and nature in the difference between the student as philosophical observer and the categories of race. Whereas Lagier’s disconnection makes sense if our object of study is Kant’s categories of race, it is precisely this disconnection that is at stake for Kant’s philosophical observer. Kant’s attempts to link the philosophical observer of race to the education of the world-citizen give us some hint of how successfully dissociating race as a discourse of nature from a discourse of society might be related to Kant’s larger project of cosmopolitanism. The contemporary possibility of an ideal of humanity that is

64 See Gissis, p.103.
independent of nature, not simply abstract from it, is a testament both to the success of Kant’s project of humanity and also his project of race. In other words, the contemporary notion of humanity as independent of all considerations of nature testifies precisely to the success of a project of race. Kant’s “racism” is embedded in his ability to produce a concept of humanity as based on dignity. Our capacity to accept Kant’s formulation of humanity – a formulation perhaps not so readily accepted by Kant’s predecessors – thus might indicate how our contemporary understanding is complicit with the success of Kant’s dissociation between nature and society. Indeed, the production of a notion of humanity as only social vitally depends on a concept of the human as only natural. This dissociation is still in existence and is a part of the generalizing ideology of modernity.

II. The Development of the Theory of Race

The Origins of Race in Kant

Kant’s first essay on race is the 1775 “Von den verschiedenen Racen der Menschen zur Ankündigung der Vorlesungen der Physischen Geographie im Sommerhalbenjahre 1775 von Immanuel Kant der Log. und Met. Ordentl. Prof” ("Of the Different Races of Human Beings to Announce the Lectures on Physical Geography of Immanuel Kant, Professor Ordinarius of Logic and Metaphysics")65, 

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65 I follow the translation of the title of the 1775 essay given in the “Editor’s Introduction” to the 1777 essay in Anthropology, History, and Education, p.82.
revised and reprinted in 1777 as “Of the Different Human Races” (“Von den verschiedenen Racen der Menschen“) in Johan Jacob Engels Philosoph für der Welt. The essay itself can be understood as both Kant’s first essay on race, but also as part of an ongoing project of race, whose development can be traced at least to the initial Lectures on Physical Geography given in 1759.\textsuperscript{66} In those early lectures, the Holstein notes suggest that Kant’s use of race seems akin to Buffon: of the six uses of the term, five refer to animal species. The sole reference to humans speculates on the causal possibility of a white race by analogizing to the production of a white race of chicks by hens. The striking aspect of these lectures is the fact that Kant presents a long discussion on the formation (Bildung) and color differences of humans without explicitly calling it racial. Only this single reference to the white race occurs in this section. At this point, climate and soil are the reasons given for difference in color. The proportion of references of race steadily changes from non-human to human animals in subsequent years. The 1763–4 Lectures, notated by Herder, show the primary reference of the term race is to humans, including the positing of a “human race.”\textsuperscript{67} Of the seventeen times race is used, five are to non-human animal races, three are to the human race (Menschenrace), and the remainder to seemingly discrete human races. Yet, racial difference, although now tied to color, also refers to differences of nation and religion (a Danish race and a Jewish race). The 1770 Lectures are noteworthy because they show Kant’s theory of race in a near complete

\textsuperscript{66} Holstein, Lecture Notes on Physical Geography, 1759.
\textsuperscript{67} Herder, Lecture Notes on Physical Geography, 1763-4.
form. At this point, the association of race with color is firmly in place. The Lectures are also of interest because Kant briefly attempts to analogize races of humans with races of non-human animals. As the reference of race is displaced from animals to humans – in these lectures, only five of the twenty six times race occurs are the references to animals – Kant tenuously posits a link between human and non-human animals. The analogy is soon dropped, as the use of race, when referring to humans, names a specifically human difference. The 1774 Lectures contain a recognizably complete Kantian theory of race, as it appears in the 1775 essay. On the basis of these Lectures, a textual “origin” to Kant’s use of the term race might be attributed to the 1759 Lectures. The conceptual “origin” of race can be given, depending on criteria, to the 1763-4 and 1770 Lectures. In any case, it appears clear, that Kant’s theory of race forms sometime between 1764 and 1770.

The 1770s are also distinguished by Kant’s first Lectures on Anthropology, given in 1772. One can see in the various cycles of the Lectures on Geography and Lectures on Anthropology a progressive shift in values, such that by the 1790s, the Lectures on Geography contain a “natural” concept of race, whereas the Lectures on Anthropology describe various racial groups in terms of scales of inferiority. Here, the student notes on the last Lecture cycle of Physical Geography, the Dohna notes, present something of an anomaly, as Kant appears to resort to scales of inferiority in those Lectures on Geography. Despite this, there is a discernible trend towards two

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68 Hesse, Lecture Notes on Physical Geography, 1770.
69 Werner, Lecture Notes on Physical Geography, 1774.
70 Philippi, Lectures on Anthropology, 1772.
kinds of concepts: a natural concept of race and an anthropological description of race as character. In other words, this trend indicates the inauguration of what will become the human and humanity.

Kant’s first essay on race thus appears shortly after the introduction of Lectures on Anthropology in 1772, and as an accompaniment to his Lectures on Geography in 1776. The aim of the essay is thus precisely the development of a science of natural history to which a theory of race is the paradigm case. Kant intends for his potential students to “see” in “race” the dynamism of nature.

“Of the Different Races of the Human”

The essay is only one of two publications during the silent years of the writing of The Critique of Pure Reason. It is composed of four parts, three of which echo the title in their formulation: “Of the Difference of Race in General”; “Of the Immediate Causes of the Origin of These Different Races”; and “Of the Occasioning Causes of the Founding of Different Races.” The section headings give a sense of Kant the scientist constructing race as an epistemological object to be examined from all sides. John Zammito has suggested that Kant is at this point an armchair scientist, not coming into his own until 1788.71 The essay bears this out. Kant speculates on the natural cause of skin color in iron, considers the role of bile, and wonders about malady. The essay has an inconsistent and sometimes overly certain tone. Kant’s

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71 John Zammito, Private Communication (May 2008) and in Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology.
tentativeness throughout can be discerned too. The intent of the essay, given only in its concluding line, is the “wager of a natural history.” Yet the term natural history is first introduced late in the essay in a footnote, when Kant distinguishes between natural history and natural description.

I call brief attention to the introductory and closing paragraphs of this essay, dropped in 1777. The 1775 essay is an advertisement for Kant’s lectures on physical geography. The introductory paragraph announces the investigation of race to be “like a play of the [understanding] than a deep inquiry.” Dropped in the subsequent revision and in future essays on race, this disclaimer nonetheless bears some attention. It signals both Kant’s tentativeness in approaching race and also prefigures the description of the cognitive interaction at work in teleological judgments of nature in the third Critique. There, the play of the understanding in conjunction with the faculty of reason fashions teleological principles which take on the status of supplementing otherwise incomplete empirical principles of knowledge, turning knowledge of nature from a haphazard aggregate (Kant calls these aggregates rhapsodic) into a system.

The closing paragraph explicitly announces the geography course, which Kant calls “a preliminary exercise in the knowledge of the world.” (AA II 43, 97, Kant’s emphasis) Kant orients this knowledge towards what he calls a “pragmatic element…by means of which…the accomplished apprentice is introduced to the stage of his destiny, namely, the world.” (ibid) The aim of not only geography but the theory of race, which in the Lectures is folded into the course on geography, is
precisely the self-cognizance of the investigator of race as having a destiny unfolding in the world, a prefiguration of the world-citizen announced at the beginning of Kant’s 1798 *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. Here, Kant divides geography and anthropology as a “two-fold field…namely, *nature* and the *human being*.” The two parts must be seen “cosmologically, namely, not with respect to the noteworthy details that their objects contain…but with respect to what we can take note of the relation as a whole in which they stand and in which everyone takes his place.” (ibid)

The pragmatic aim of the essay on race is thus given as *cosmological*: here, some element in the knowledge of the world given by race has a practical dimension; through knowledge of race, the reader can also temporally (“destiny”) cognize *his* purpose in the world. The discourse of human and the discourse of humanity thus is given a distinction here between the apprentice reading the essay on race and the groups described therein.

The essay proceeds to determine a meaning of race by developing an epistemological framework of types based on non-human animals and plants, and subsequently adducing a purpose for the appearance of race in humans. As I will demonstrate shortly, Kant is on safe grounds when he is considering the epistemological framework. He falters at the moment at which he attempts to adduce a purpose for race. In other words, if Kant is able to supply a natural, epistemological framework for race in this essay, the attempts to supply a teleological purpose of
nature (natural history) fail. Thus, ultimately, Kant’s attempts to determine a uniquely human meaning to race in this essay also fail.

Nonetheless, the conceptual framework of race that is developed here is comprised of four elements that stay remarkably consistent throughout his essays: 1) the use of skin color as a necessarily heritable trait of race, knowable not through morphology but through the law that Kant calls the law of half-breed generation\textsuperscript{72}; 2) the assumption of a singular, unified origin to the human species; 3) assigning the natural purpose to race in the possibility of species adaptation to all climates and soils; 4) and the development of a kind of theory of preformation\textsuperscript{73} to provide the physical explanation for the adaptation of peoples from origin to the population of the globe.

Kant begins the conceptual explication of race by turning to a distinction between a morphological and genealogical understanding of nature. Here, the debate between Linnaeus and Buffon is reformulated as a quarrel between a system of classification found in the schools, suitable only for memorization, and “a natural system for the understanding.” (AA II 429, 84) Kant alleges that Linnaeus’ system is simultaneously too abstract (titles for memorization) and too concrete (dependent on


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visual observation). In contrast to what he sees as an unruly and artificial system, Kant’s emphasis is on discovering the proper cognitive link between visual observation and the production of a system of classification. He thus wants to bring the cognition of creatures “under laws.” The unity of the species is not to be found, Kant writes, in “resemblances” but in “relationships in terms of generation.” To bring creatures under “laws” one needs a genealogical conception of nature. The priority of genealogy over morphology is staged by asserting Buffon’s rule “that animals which produce fertile young with one another (whatever difference in shape they may be) still belong to one and the same physical species.” This Buffonian rule overrides any morphological difference, positing unity in terms of a “common law of propagation,” according to which “the unity of the species is nothing other than the unity of the generative power that is universally valid for a certain manifoldness of animals.” (ibid) Such a prioritization sets up a number of polarities in which morphology, namely what is immediately visible to the eye, is called into question as invalid without the genealogical relation that morphology might point to.

The distinction between morphology and genealogy produces two distinct kinds of abstractions. The classificatory taxa of Linnaeus are for Kant nominal, whose importance lies in the visible differences they point to. The nominalism of the abstraction also produces a need for memorization, for the names do not contain any inherent significance or conceptual bearing. In contrast, the genealogical names of Buffon are substantive, whose importance lies not in concrete, visible differences, but in singular laws of generation contained in the name as concept, which organize the
extension of the concept. These two abstractions also produce a distinction between two kinds of science late in the essay, called respectively, “natural description” and “natural history.” (AA II 434, 89) Whereas natural description remains beholden to the eye as the final arbiter of meaning and difference, natural history organizes difference into a system of meaning.

On this schema, morphology becomes a complex site of meaning-making. At stake is the question of the meaning of nature. The attraction here of particular morphological features – especially skin – as the variable surfaces upon which certain kinds of significations of nature took hold was already part of the discourse of natural history in the late 18th century. Was morphology an expression of nature’s internal intent? Did it signal an adaptation to external nature (climate and soil)? Was morphology – the putative exterior of the body – the site of interaction (sometimes construed as metabolic, for instance, in the case of perspiration) between nature outside the human and nature inside the human?

For Kant, morphology becomes a different kind of threshold by which to make meaning of nature: morphology becomes understood as a composite between the laws of a given material nature (mechanism) and discernible changes in time attributable to nature as a kind of providence (teleology). The possibility of the adaptation of an organism or a species to a different environment is an example of the latter. The essays on race, particularly “On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy” are preoccupied with properly distinguishing the two meanings of nature. To some extent for Kant, this is a matter of perspective, whether differences in
nature are viewed temporally or spatially. By and large, though, the question of perspective rests on the difference between a rational understanding of nature as the systematic (teleological) bedrock or substrate to all other considerations of nature as given (mechanism) or the indistinguishable blurring of the two kinds of understanding, as evident in the following:

We generally take the designation description of nature and natural history to mean the same. Yet it is clear 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…would transform the school system of the description of nature, which is now so extensive, into a physical system for the understanding. (ibid)

For Kant, a presentist view of morphological difference multiplies the number of differences by which to cognize nature. The task then is to combine teleology and mechanism in a way that privileges teleology without discounting morphology. To do so, what appears in the empirical – the visible – must be interpreted in a different way than in terms of resemblance and difference. Buffon’s rule of generation allows for a temporally oriented system within which the visible would always need to be related to the possibility of reproduction. Consequently, the importance of morphology is for
the hidden dimension that the morphological particularity points to, rather than some obvious or visible difference in and of itself.

For Kant, this move also organizes temporal difference and unity in a way that is philosophically appealing. Using a variation of Occam’s razor, which states that philosophical principles need not be multiplied unnecessarily, Kant argues not only for the unity of the species in terms of reproductive capacity but also for “adducing only a single natural cause for the unity of the natural species.” (AA II 429-430, 85) That is, the common reproductive capacity of a species is used to infer the monogenetic claim that the species originated from a single phylum. The thrust of the argument has to do with asserting a difference between the category of kind (Art) and the category of race. Unlike the polygenist, who understands kind as semantically equivalent to race, for Kant, the term kind references a genetic origin equivalent to his notion of species (Gattung). Indeed, Kant’s aim is to propose a system in which the denomination of kind has no meaning.

The strategy to negate the meaning of kind (Art) is rhetorical and logical. In proposing his own classificatory system – and it is perhaps worth considering that Kant’s terms here may be a satire on the memorization needed for the school system – Kant uses a lexicon in which various technical terms are based on variations of kind: sub-species (Abartung), degeneration (Ausartung), regeneration (Nacharten), adaptation (anarten), and sports (Spielart). Each term takes meaning from its

74 McLaughlin refers to Kant’s terminological classification as – oddly using the troubled metaphor of the jungle and thus echoing the nature that Kant is trying to classify - as a “complicated and basically untranslatable jungle of special terms.” Mensch also refers to the use of terms here as a “dizzying array.”
divergence from a rationally constructed unified origin. By the end of the essay, the reader has seen the terms used so often that Art no longer automatically links to a difference of origin, but rather is associated with divergence from a unified origin.

The organizing principle of this system is a law of heredity in which the trait of skin color is understood as persistent through its transmission from one generation to the next. The test for this is the production of unfailing, visibly noticeable, “half-breed” children. This persistence is understood as necessity. The classification and understanding of the manifold is dizzying. The natural division of an originally unified human species can be divided into sub-species (Abartung), which can further be divided into regenerations (Nacharten), which agree with “their point of origination” and possible degenerations (Ausartung) (this second type is in the subjunctive) which “could no longer provide the original formation of the phylum.” These regenerations can further divided into four types: those that “persistently preserve themselves in all transplantings (transpositions to other regions)”, and “which always beget half-breed young in the mixing with other variations of the same phylum”, namely, races; “those which persistently preserve the distinctive character of their variation in all transplantings and thus regenerate but do not necessarily beget half-breeds”, which are called sports (Spielarten); “those which regenerate often but not persistently are called varieties”; and “that variation which produces with others half-breeds but which extinguishes gradually through transplantings is called a particular (besonderer) sort (Schlag).” (AA II 430, 85)
This complex schema of differences classifies the effects of nutrition and climate into contingent kinds of morphological differences. In order to determine race as a uniquely natural and necessary category, Kant turns to a botanical theory of preformation. This theory of preformation grounds a series of binary distinctions: outer or contingent and inner or necessary nature; chance-mechanism and teleology; and accident and essential destiny. Privileging the second term in this series of distinctions, the theory of pre-formation allows Kant to ground an inner nature to the species, which in its interactions with outer nature, mechanical laws, and accidents, forms the human as a racial object.

The language above already rhetorically links the classificatory system with botanical metaphors of generation (“transplantings”). Race is causally organized according to a theory of preformation. Under this theory, germs and predispositions are postulated as existing in an original stock of humans, out of which all necessary purposive characters will necessarily develop over time. Interestingly, a language and theory of preformation underlies both Kant’s theory of race and his normative history and anthropology. Yet the technical senses of germs and predispositions vary. In the latter, Kant writes of a germ of good and evil as well as a natural predisposition of reason. In the essays on race, the exact nature of these predispositions is never specified. Instead, they are listed as causal elements in the formation of race. Germs are “the grounds of a determinate unfolding which are lying in the nature of an organic body (plant or animal) which concerns “particular parts.” (AA II 434, 89) Natural predispositions concern “the size or the relation of parts to one another.”(ibid)
Kant uses this theory of preformation to assert an original unity to the species out of which spring sub-species necessarily inheritable traits.

It is from within this theory of preformation that Kant adduces a singularly human purpose for race. In non-human animals, all predispositions and germs develop in each member of the species. In humans, they equip an originally unified species for “all future circumstances.” Intended for the change in climates, germs seem to occasion visible morphological difference, whereas predispositions occasion a change in the size or relation of parts. Natural predispositions seem to be more gradually developed than germs. This theory of preformation grounds the explanation of race, and postulates two kinds of nature. Nature is distinguished between nature as climate and soil, an outer nature which “can well be occasioning causes but not producing ones” (AA II 435, 90) and a teleological definition of nature based on the initial equipment of germs and predispositions (in potentia) to adapt for the purpose of preservation in all climates and every soil. (ibid) The natural purpose to be derived from this theory of preformation is the articulation of an original human species as destined to populate the world. Thus, Kant associates the development of primary skin colors – white, black, brown, and copper – as original expressions of predispositions. Over time, climate and soil can effect contingent, non-permanent, changes to produce the varying skin colors that are actually observed. Under this schema, climate and the soil are occasional causes of race, occasioning the development or restraint of germs and predispositions. The immediate cause is the germs and predispositions. Kant institutes a relative dynamism to the theory of race,
stating that, “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.” (AA II 442, 96) This relative dynamism, in which the original germs and predispositions are in an original group (in potentia) and subsequently developed or restrained means that the cognition of race is, in some senses, the cognition of an artifact. Race is the only example in Kant’s philosophy of a teleological process that is achieved.

This theory of preformation consequently allows Kant to posit a rational necessity to the concept of race, unrelated to non-human animals, in contrast to the prevailing theories of the time. What Kant attempts to rule out with this theory of preformation – and an associated concept of progressiveness – is the possibility of degeneration. True degeneration in this scheme is not possible because “foreign intrusion” would remove “the creature from its original and essential destiny.” (ibid) On this basis, Kant formulates the teleological purpose of race, thus completing the concept:

The human being was destined for all climates and for every soil; consequently various germs and natural predispositions had to be ready in him to be on occasion either unfolded or restrained, so that they 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. (AA II 435, 90)
Indeed, Kant moves to extend the meaningfulness of race as a condition of possibility for the human being to appear as such – for morphology as such - thus related in the first instance not to the preservation of life (adaptation) but rather to something more primary that governs all morphology and movement: “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.” (AA II 436, 90, Kant’s emphasis) Here, the possibility of understanding the varying shapes and movements of the human species are dependent on a cognition of race. Kant then invites his reader to survey the globe, cognizing each peoples in terms of their purposive and natural causes, ordering an itinerary from a unified origin in terms of a concept of race:

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. (AA II 435, 90)

The use of the first person plural pronoun “us” makes it clear that this is a point of intersection for Kant and his reader, who, as philosophical observers, are now ready to survey the globe – a world philosophized in terms of a unified human species – and through this survey locate their own destiny. Kant’s conceptual framework is being put to the test against the various accounts of peoples who inhabit the globe.
The very promise of his concept of race – to understand humans in terms of natural types – is put to the test here. Central to this project is the ability to convincing explain migration from a single origin across the globe – a demand for any theory of monogenesis – without resorting to causal mechanisms residing in human volition. If Kant’s theory of race is to be successful, the movement of migration needs to be explained in natural terms, accounting for in terms of typologies rather than narratives of volition.

At this point the precisely ordered conceptual framework begins to perform a moment of transgression. Kant’s application of his theory of race does not adhere to his conceptual framework. The transgression of and in the text permits the figuring of the philosophical investigator as possessing rational needs and compulsions. In other words, the philosophical investigator is figured as naturally rational, rather than operating out of choice. These are the moments when the racial “Anlage” of whites are represented as unified with the rational “Anlage” that Kant attributes to humanity. Thus, this essay of Kant’s is marked by the fact that it contains two related but distinct schemas of race, a listing of base races that Kant writes one is “compelled to assume” (AA II 432, 87) out of which all contemporary races can be derived as pure, mixed, or incipient and a schema of races based on the occasioning cause of climate and classified in terms of skin color. Larrimore has called this concept of race a palimpsest, representing layers of thinking in Kant. The second schema is added in 1777. However, Kant does not remove the first one. I will focus on the second schema, which Kant’s cognition of the globe leads him to from the first.
Kant’s survey of the world moves from the Arctic circle, the 18th century listing of names marking geographic and political landscapes. In 1775, Kant omits any consideration of the white race. In 1777 they are added. Not only the terminology of classification but the assumption that there is a purposive movement from an origin to a location is challenged by the survey.

In 1775, the dynamism of nature as progressive had not been clearly stated. Kant repeatedly wonders if Native Americans are a half-degenerate race. As the theory of race develops, the principle that nature cannot degenerate becomes important. Thus, Kant is never certain of how to characterize Native Americans. As he traces their itinerary, it becomes clear that his classifications do not quite apply. He finally cognizes the Native Americans as a half-adapted race whose natural predisposition indicates a “half-extinguished life power.” (AA II 438, 92)

The cognition of the whites is similarly non-racial. Kant decides in 1777 to speculate on the color of the original phylum. Deciding that this phylum must be the brunette Whites, he writes that the blond Whites including the Germans are the closest to come to this group. The origin is white from which all others are deviations. Kant’s cognition of the whites calls them a Geschlecht, a sort, and finally “an approximation of the effective (wirklichen) races.” (AA II 441, 95, trans slightly modified) Kant’s schema of four races consists of one half-adapted race, an approximation, and two legitimate races.

In the 1777 essay, by the time Kant comes to the conclusion, his statement that the Native Americans are a race that “degenerated” from “the phyletic formation”
(AA II 442, 96) shows that the framework has opened into a moment of transgression. Kant has spent a considerable part of the essay arguing against any kind of degeneration. The cognition of race is based on the purposiveness of nature. That he cannot help but return to degeneration indicates that the cognition of race is not complete. The promise of race, that the “wager (wagen) of a natural history” (AA II 443, 97, trans slightly modified) would “transform the school system of the description of nature, which is now so extensive” into a “physical system for the understanding” (AA II 434, 89), that it would take the spatial, morphological, and theoretical cognition of nature and rationalize it through the construction of a dynamic, teleological, spontaneous origin has failed. A concept for Kant is a rule, a principle by which to unite diverse representations. Cognizing one race as an incomplete race, and one as an approximation, shows the insufficient explanatory power of Kant’s concept. While Kant’s concept of race seems to stand on its own as a natural concept, when it is connected to human beings, the rational cognition fails. The aim of the teleology of race at the level of content is to account for movement across the globe from a single origin without addressing the human reasons for this movement. The splitting of the discourse of humanity from a discourse of the human depends on the possibility of accounting for human movement in solely natural terms. The intertwining of the two discourses, in associating Africans with a scale of inferiority on the basis of laziness, in the speculative conjecture on the beginning of *humanity* in Tibet (AA II 438, 93), and in the various difficulties in using race as...
precisely the category by which human existence over the globe is explained shows that Kant has not given race a proper signification, a problem he returns to in 1785.

“Determination of the Concept of a Human Race”

In 1785, Kant publishes “Determination of the Concept of a Human Race.” In the intervening years, The Critique of Pure Reason and a number of popular essays have been published. The defensive tone of the essay is apparent from the start. Kant responds to criticisms of his previous concept of race, particularly its application to actual races, by disclaiming the application as a subsidiary matter (Nebenwerk) to the more philosophically – and empirically – important matter of formulating a robust concept of race. Thus he begins by emphasizing the epistemological frameworks necessary in order to conduct any observation at all: “It is of great consequence to have previously determined the concept that one wants to elucidate (aufklären) through observation before questioning experience about it; for one finds in experience what one needs only if one knows (weiss) in advance what one ought to look for (suchen soll).” (AA VII 91, 145) Here, the very place of the empirical is in question: experience cannot elucidate any concept lacking a prior philosophical determination. The function of observation – as a modality of experience – is to elucidate (aufklären) a previously determined concept, to seemingly give some kind of visual representation to an already determined concept. Conceptual determination here, though, is linked to some kind of epistemological framework (“one knows”). In other words, if for Kant some link to the empirical is necessary for knowledge –
though not for thought – then the conceptual determination of race – prior to observation – is already in some fashion tied to an empirical moment. This is not a case of thinking the concept of race to which the visual representation of race provides the means by which the concept can acquire full meaning. In some crucial way, Kant is suggesting that the meaning of race can be determined prior to any observation. These defensive words thus seem to carry an element of disingenuousness: if the epistemological promise of race is precisely the capacity to sufficiently explain changes in time – for Kant, the movement from a single origin to global inhabitation – naturally, without the need for a human narrative, how is it possible to determine a concept of race that applies to experience without observation? In what does the link to the empirical by which race can be determined rest, if not in observation?

What opens up in the space of the essay is precisely a distinction between the philosophical investigator as a rational subject and the object of epistemological observation as natural. In treating the inconsistencies of the first essay, race is cast as a discourse of nature without any recourse to social values. Consequently, there are no claims of racial inferiority in this essay. Chief among these corrections, and indeed important enough to conclude the essay, is the claim that whites are clearly a race and not the original phylum whose skin color is unknowable. The designation of an incompletely adapted race for the Native Americans is removed too. Neither degeneration nor the notion of half-adaptation is in play. The dizzying lexicon of
terms is also dropped to focus only on race. The conceptual framework Kant produces is thus precise.

Kant takes particular aim at skin color as the empirical feature through which this distinction is instituted. Unlike the observer with an insufficiently determined concept, Kant argues that to see “race” requires an underlying epistemological framework. He writes that skin color signals neither a difference of origin (ontology) nor an ornament of nature (aesthetics) and is not potentially attributable to climate. He notes acerbically that understanding various differences of color among whites to justify a difference in natural class is insufficient, likening such differences to the “Spanish peasant from La Mancha” dressed in black wool. In place of readily observable visual differences, Kant emphasizes the importance of an underlying rational concept in determining the significance of visible differences. Kant calls the four colors a “natural livery”. (AA VIII 94, 147) The metaphor of livery implies a husbandry of nature in the production of race and indicates that the meaning of color is in what it symbolizes in terms of distance from a unified origin, not the morphological similarity. The color names of race, “white, yellow, Negro, and copper-red” name thus not the visible skin color but the “trace of this diversity of the natural character.” (ibid)

On this basis, skin color is the necessary trait that adheres not to a concept of the species, but rather shows the dissemination of the species over the globe into distinct groups. The thrust of the argument is to show that skin color is passed on unfailingly from generation to generation and is thus a necessary, hereditary
particularity.\textsuperscript{75} Kant bases the argument on the formulation of a “law of half-breed generation.” (AA VIII 95,149) The original skin colors inevitably produce half-breed children. The test of race then is the fact that, the color of the child – when color is understood only in terms of the original four colors, not some shading or tinting due to climate – is mixed.

The theory of preformation is again the principle by which the purposive development of the human, of which the organization of the skin is the trace\textsuperscript{76}, occurs. Predispositions now are the activating principles of germs in the “first period of its propagation.” (AA VIII 98,151) Taking an original phylum that is not known, the concept of race takes the unfailing heredity of skin colors to cognize racial difference. Kant even conjectures a purpose for the difference in skin color. He claims that perspiration and the difference in waste between skin colors shows nature’s foresight because the creature can populate in all regions and “persist in a way least needy of art.” (AA VIII 93,147) Here, the emphasis on surviving without art shows that for Kant the population of the globe needs to be explained without recourse to social values. The theory of preformation is reiterated as the basis for this claim of purpose. Kant also assumes an original phylum from which all races descended.

\textsuperscript{75} The translation misses the rhetorical play between anarten (propagating on) and anerben (necessarily hereditary), by running the two terms together as hereditary. Indeed, Kant’s argument is that the necessarily hereditary traits are propagated on.

\textsuperscript{76} In “Sign and Trace” and “Tracing the Skin of Day” in An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization, Cambridge: Harvard, 2012, pp.484-508, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak comments on visual material that works with the shuttling from trace to sign: from a possibly meaningful “bit” to the determination of a meaning. In this chapter, I track Kant’s attempts to make rational meaning (“race”) of a possible “bit” which can only be grasped as nature’s intention.
The stabilization of this concept of race though rests on a claim that is never given proof. The assumption of racial differences among humans is derived from the fact that “we know (kennen) with certainty of no other hereditary differences of skin color than those of the whites, the yellow Indians, the Negroes, and the copper-red Americans.” (ibid, Kant’s emphasis) It is thus the fact of hereditary color – colors that are themselves proof of an epistemological schema – that is necessary to this seemingly stable concept of race. Moreover, Kant’s use of the plural personal pronoun “we” here identifies him (and his readers perhaps) as part of some epistemologically informed group. When in the next section, he writes, “among us whites”, it is clear that the declared identity of the philosophical investigator – and Kant’s readers - is as an epistemologically informed white, as opposed to a generic member of natural scientists. Whereas elsewhere, Kant uses the impersonal third person pronoun “one” (man) and refers to whites objectively (“the whites” for instance), here is a moment of declared identification. In this section, Kant recognizes whites as the preeminent source and basis for all other racial classification. Unlike the previous essay, questions of heredity and mixed race children are given an account by taking the whites as an exemplar of race as a scientific category. In other words, whites provide the empirical knowledge by which travelers can observe other races. Thus, neither the racial nor social values of whites are ever challenged in this essay. On this basis, the white investigator can epistemologically observe other non-whites as races, whereas whites are always the preeminent epistemological basis for race and also the community of epistemological investigators.
When Kant thus claims the determination of the concept of race in the subjective reason of this community of epistemological investigators around the question of hereditary color, it should be remembered that the philosophical investigator has already been explicitly identified as white. Figuring this dispute as a quarrel between the subjective reason of a community of philosophical investigators, the resultant slightly comic scene features Kant deliberating over maxims. The tone of the passage and use of the ever hyphenated vigilant “maxim” suggests that “Kant” knows this is a necessary yet impossible (and perhaps less than serious) stance. The text continues to lay itself open for readerships to come.

It is an awkward undertaking to make out *a priori* what brings it about that something which does not belong to the essence of the species can be hereditary; and in this obscurity regarding the sources of cognition the freedom to form hypotheses is so unrestricted that it is a great pity for all the effort and labor spent on refutations in this matter, since every one follows his own head in such cases. I, for my part, look only at the particular maxim of *reason* from which each person departs and according to which he generally manages to find facts to favor it; and afterward I seek out my maxim, making me incredulous of all those explanations even before I manage to make clear to myself the counterarguments. (AA VIII 96,150)

Here, this dispute over cognitive sources is solved by a proto-teleology of nature, in which the assumption that all natural species are “preserved unchanged”
(AA VIII 97,150) is used as proof that race can only be an *a priori* concept that explains the knowledge of hereditary skin color. Kant’s main appeal is again to Occam’s razor: he argues against those whose source of cognition seems to be either the imagination – or too narrowly the understanding – in order to show race as an articulation of the understanding with reason. This is the moment in this essay when the text opens itself up for us. For these are not rigorous arguments, and Kant suggests that the reader might venture their own maxim.

Yet he falls short of testing his determination of the concept. When Kant does venture an application, he disclaims it straight away calling it “artificially constructing hypotheses” of “little comfort to philosophy.” (AA VIII 104, 158) In this essay too, Kant introduces the difference between natural history and natural description only in a footnote, the term natural history appearing only in the remark that appends the six propositions that comprise the body of the text. Kant has yet to provide a cognition of race – one that can join the concept with a plausible account of observation. Natural history therefore is lacking.

Moreover, the essay concludes with a normative statement in which the apparent dissociation between nature and society is blurred. Kant states that, “currently existing races could no longer go extinct if all their mixing with each other were prevented.” (AA VIII 105, 158) He thus ties the epistemological cognition of race with a moral imperative against miscegenation. For Kant, races ought to be kept in reproductive isolation, so that the pure predispositions of whites are not extinguished. The imperative is nonetheless peculiar in an essay that otherwise does
not reference explicit or tacit scales of inferiority. Thus, although the cognition of race is once again not coherent in terms of the conceptual framework that it elaborates, the pragmatic task of race for the philosophical investigator as world-citizen – namely the task of pursuing racial purity (a task that is most clear in the 1798 Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View) – starts to become perceptible. As the rhetoric makes available scenes of subjective philosophizing, the pragmatic task for the reader to undertake is to cognize race as coherent.

“On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy”

The 1788 “On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy” is the last essay Kant publishes on race, in part a response to Georg Forster’s criticisms of Kant’s “On the Determination of a Concept of a Human Race” and “Conjectural Beginning to Human History” in “Noch Etwas Uber Menschen Rassen. An Herrn Dr. Biester”. The essay brings the concept of race and the science of natural history into a rigorous and systematic structure. The style of the essay is noticeably philosophical. The theory of race is here confidently stated, a confidence perhaps attributable to Kant’s ongoing friendship with Johannes Blumenbach and perhaps also to the fashioning of a theory of natural teleology, culminating in the third Critique published in 1789.

This essay more than the previous ones emphasizes both the dissociation of a discourse of nature from a discourse of society as well as emphasizing the role of the reader as philosophical investigator. From its opening lines, the essay is concerned
not only with situating race in terms of teleology – as the title might suggest – but also clearly elaborating two distinct lines of teleology – theoretical and practical – whose reconciliation is to be found in a concept of nature. On the basis of a possibly unified understanding of nature – “the sum-total of all that exists as determined by laws, taking together the world (as nature properly so called) and its supreme cause” – the theoretical cognition of race is given proximity to the practical cognition of God: Kant claims a “similar warrant” for both. The cognition of nature thus becomes the site at which the subjective investigator is distinguished from the racial objects of cognition precisely in the ability to harness teleology to epistemology – race – and morality – God.

Much of the essay is written in a reason-personifying language. Thus, the warrant for teleological cognitions is an unsatisfied need of reason, felt by the investigator at the limit of theoretical reason. At this limit, satisfying the needs of reasons necessitates a turn to practical reason and teleology. Called a supplement, teleology satisfies reason but is no way a “substitute” for the deficiency of theory. With race, the limit of theoretical reason requires a shift in point of view so that a principle is determined in advance by which to observe, a theme that carries from the previous essay. (AA VIII 161, 197) Here the figure of the philosophical observer is specifically placed between the mere empirical traveler, whose narrative cannot be turned into a coherent cognition because it lacks a guiding principle, and the rash reasoner, who imports his ideas into the observation. Kant charts a path between the
figures of mere “empirical groping” and the fiction of seeing what one wants to see. This “guiding principle” (Leitfaden) of reason is analogical.

With the development of the notion of natural teleology, the concept of natural history enters into the body of the text, able to be discussed. Moreover, Kant is clear that natural history cannot provide a narrative: instead, natural history – and thus race – substitutes an analogical hypothesis for either a natural or human narrative. The science of natural history, as Kant writes, cannot exceed the limits of reason. Hence there is no possibility of a “narrative of events in nature” (AA VIII 161, 197) that reached back to a first origin. What natural history does do is to trace 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 effective (wirklich) causality.” These laws are derived “from the powers of nature as it presents itself to us now.” (VIII 161-2, 197, trans slightly modified) The conceptual determination of race takes “certain present day conditions of the things in nature”, namely the unfailing inheritability of skin color and derives its necessity from a theory of preformation derived from the observations of plants and animals. The concept of the human species is determined in terms of its status as an animal species and thus postulated in terms of a common reproductive capacity in

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77 Chad Wellmon’s *Becoming Human: Romantic Anthropology and the Embodiment of Freedom*, University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press 2010, is an insightful reading of Kant’s theory of race. Yet Wellmon sometimes has an inexplicable habit of citing Kant so that Kant ends up saying exactly the opposite of what the text indicates. Writing about natural history, Wellmon cites Kant as claiming that “It is the ‘narration [Erzählung] of natural events where no means of reason can reach.’” (VIII 161, 197) Kant in fact asserts the opposite, that natural history needs to use analogy precisely because it cannot narrate the natural events of an origin. Writing on “Of the Different Races of the Human”, Wellmon states of race that “only ‘true degenerations [Ausartungen] are brought forth [and] perpetuate themselves.’” Kant’s theory in that essay is against the possibility of degeneration.
accordance with Buffon’s rule. The cognition of race shows a necessity in the human species not directly attributable to the preservation of the species for which the purpose is again postulated as suitability to all climates and soils. The analogy stops at an original unity of the species in which the germs and predispositions have not been developed.

Yet the analogical determination of the concept of race does not only depend on the conception of the human species as a type of animal species. Contrasting race in humans and the law of half-breed adaptation to variety in animals, Kant states that the traits which ought to be called variety in animals are “subject to half-breed adaptation; and this would seem to contain an objection against my distinction between races and varieties if one considers the human being, according to the analogy with animals (with respect to procreation), as is only fair. To judge the matter, writes Kant, one “needs to assume a higher standpoint for the explanation of this arrangement of nature, namely the standpoint that non-rational animals, whose existence can have a value only as a means, already had to be equipped in the predisposition in different ways for different uses.” (It might be noticed that Kant continues to inhabit the language of need and compulsion.) This is contrasted to humans, for whom “the greater uniformity of the end in the human species did not demand such great difference of adapting natural forms.” (AA VIII 167-8, 203) The concept of race then is also determined in analogy to the human as artist, nature bringing forth an idea the way a human wills an idea, in which the existence of the
object does not only have value as a means. Race is thus the natural phenomenon that distinguishes rational from non-rational animals.

Here, the capacity to see race is what precisely distinguishes the philosophical investigator as a rational agent who has the need to reason. Like the earlier essays, Kant resorts to a vocabulary of needs and compulsion to figure the rational agent as naturally rational. In these moments, the distinction between the volitional subject of Kant’s moral philosophy and the racial object of Kant’s natural philosophy is really undone. When Kant writes in the following passage of race, that it is “not unskillfully conceived,” the reader should take note. For the teleological purpose of nature of the human species in the essays on history is culture (Kultur), which is marked by the acquisition of skills. Thus for Kant to call this determination not unskillful reflects a judgment he makes about the teleological development of the philosophical investigator. Kant also claims that the concept of race is grounded in the reason of each observer. The cognition of race marks the development of that reason. Yet, as with the previous two essays, the cognition of race runs into difficulties. Kant rehearses the determination of the concept of race, though with added precautions in this text. Kant writes that

the name race, as a radical particularity…is not unskillfully conceived. (nicht unschicklich ausgedacht) I would translate it through subspecies (progenies classifica), in order to distinguish a race from the degeneration (degeneration s. progenies specifica) which one cannot admit because it is contrary to the law of nature (in the preservation of its kind (Spezies) in unchangeable form).
The word progenies indicates that races are not characters that are originally distributed through so many phyla as kinds (Spezies) of the same species but rather characters that develop only over the course of generations, hence not different kinds but subspecies, yet so determinate and persistent that they justify a distinction in terms of classes.” (AA VIII 163-4, 199, trans slightly modified)

The term character suggests both the letters of the name “race” and the law of nature evinced in the concept of “race.” In either case, the term character has a connection to teleology, either in the construction of signs which may connect the past to the future or in the expression of a natural law by which a causal chain from past to present can be cognized. Kant may thus be speaking of both the development of characters as letters – here the change in lexicalization in German from the French import “race” to the German “Rasse” could be suggested as well as the development of races over time. The use of the term character links then to changes in nature over time, namely, to natural history. We are of course, and also, speaking of racialized personality types. In a striking series of sentences, the difference of natural history that grounds this concept of race is asserted in Latin and then quickly translated into German. As I will show elsewhere, Kant’s procedure is to take recourse to Latin, and then use the process of translation to grasp an otherwise ungraspable difference in

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78 See Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View, particularly the sections titled “On the Faculty of Using Signs (fīculas signatrix)” and “The Character of the Races”, for this dual use of the term character.
German. Here, not only the racial difference itself but the linguistic difference established by the term “radical particularity” is translated and re-translated to try to grasp the original difference that constitutes race. Of the difference in the condition of things that is the basis for the distinction between natural history and natural description, Kant writes

This difference is grounded in the constitution of things, and I demand nothing new thereby but merely the careful separation of one business from the other, since they are entirely heterogeneous (ganz heterogen)...I have become totally convinced that through the mere separation of what is heterogeneous (Ungleichartigen) and what previously had been left in a mixed state, often a completely new light is cast upon the sciences – which may reveal quite a great deal of paltriness that previously was able to hide behind heterogeneous knowledges (fremdartige Kenntnisse), but which also opens up many authentic sources of cognition where one would not at all have expected them. (AA VIII 162, 197-8, trans slightly modified)

The recourse to the Latin *heterogen* here, given textual emphasis, is an attempt to postulate the incommensurability between two kinds of knowledge. Yet, Kant’s attempt to grasp this difference runs into its own problem with incommensurability, elided in the translation. Heterogen is translated by dissimilar (ungleichartigen) and then strange-kinds (fremdartige). The question at hand is about how to distinguish
what appears indistinguishable, which in the context of race, has to do with the difference between variety and race.

The determination of race thus is attempted through this process of translation from Latin to German and back, signifying race as traveling between languages in its attempt to capture a difference which “the linguistic difficulty in distinguishing cannot suspend (aufheben).” (AA VIII 163, 198, trans slightly modified) The strategy leads to the “removing (Aufhebung) of this speech disunity (Sprachuneinigkeit).” (AA VIII 168, 203, trans slightly modified) On this basis, Kant repeats the conceptual framework of race that he has already formulated in the previous essays alongside the theory of preformation. The purpose of race is reiterated as the population of the world.

As in the first essay, it is with the cognition of the Americans that the racial cognition in the text transgresses against itself. Explaining the itinerary of Americans as caused by violent revolutions that interrupt a first period of propagation in which the germs and predispositions of race develop, Kant assigns a racial designation to this group. This race is presented as one that is neither naturally nor morally purposive. The purposiveness and suitability that characterize race are

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79 This notion of the meaning of race occurring in the traveling between languages is drawn from see Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s “Politics of Translation” in *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, New York: Routledge, 1993, p. 180. She writes, “Yet language is not everything. It is only a vital clue to where the self loses its boundaries...in translation, where meaning hops into the spacy emptiness between two named historical languages, we get perilously close to it.” It is precisely in this emptiness, where the differences between race are drawn that Kant is attempting to make coherent the meaning of the term race. These are also the moments in which the line between philosophical investigator as subject of study and object of investigation are blurred and an identity drawn between the philosophical investigator and a specific race.
absent. Instead, a normative evaluation is presented as the empirical “fact” of race, over and against skin color. Kant states,

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 race. (AA VIII 175-6, 211, Kant’s emphasis)

I investigate the reasons for this transgressing cognition of the Native American more fully in Chapter 3. Here, the counter-teleological cognition of the Native Americans – mobilizing a principle to explain unpurposiveness – seems to be the condition of possibility by which race becomes legible and the difference of race grasped in German. The cognition of race is thus a failure again on its own terms. The only way to understand this concept of race as successful is to exclude the cognition of Native Americans.

Later in the essay, the proximity of theoretical and practical reason lead to a moment of self-recognition by the philosophical investigator, precisely around the concept of the organism – an argument that Kant will develop in the Critique of the Power of Judgment. The philosophical investigator of Kant’s theory of race is thus
revealed – in the self-cognition of grounds of determination rather than in the analogy of natural products to human art - to be the moral hero of his Critique of Practical Reason. Analogizing to the teleological relation of reciprocal cause and effects in an organism, Kant writes,

We know such powers, in terms of their ground of determination only in ourselves, namely in our understanding and will, as a cause of the possibility of certain products that are arranged entirely according to ends, namely that of works of art…In us understanding and will are basic powers. (AA VIII 181, 216, Kant’s emphasis)

On the basis of the unity of the investigator and moral hero, Kant can both articulate the two kinds of teleology while at the same time distinguishing nature from freedom as an epistemological and practical problem. For Kant, the line that distinguishes nature from freedom is that reason in nature is empirically conditioned. This move to claim that only ends of nature are empirically conditioned is part of the dissociation that I am tracking in this chapter.

Now ends are either ends of nature or ends of freedom. No human can know (einsenhen) a priori that there must be ends in nature; however, he can very well know (einsenhen) a priori that there must be a connection of causes and effects in nature. Hence the use of the teleological principle with respect to
nature is always empirically conditioned. Things would be the same with the ends of freedom if the objects of volition had to be given to the latter antecedently by nature (in needs and inclinations) as determining grounds of freedom, in order to determine through reason, merely by comparing those grounds among each other and with their sum, what to take for our end. Yet the *Critique of Practical Reason* shows that there are pure practical principles, through which reason is determined a priori and which thus indicate a priori the latter’s ends. (AA VIII 182, 216-217)

Kant’s concept of race has generally been understood as successful, as dissociating nature from society. In my analysis, this success has as much to do with readers ignoring the subject-position of the implied reader and filling in the gaps in Kant’s account as its success. Kant never quite determines the meaning of race, nor do his concepts of race ever quite account for the peoples that he is extending it towards on his own terms.

Race figures in Kant’s philosophical system in two ways. First, it allows Kant to posit a natural concept of the human, distinguishable from the moral concept of humanity and also distinguishing humans from non-human animals. Second, thinking the natural teleology of race allows the philosophical investigator to simultaneously cognize a practical teleology of humanity. These discourses are, far from being distant, indeed parallel, a parallel that depends on the success of a project of race. To think the dignity in an other, without any recourse to natural considerations, is
dependent on being able to “see” humans in only a natural dimension. These discourses have always had a certain proximity figured in terms of a masculine discourse of brotherhood: assertions of racial inferiority and countermanding claims of human fraternity are never far from each other.

The instruction perhaps to be learned here is that a discourse of humanity that can be rendered independent of race is nonetheless dependent on race, as the hidden constitutive outside by which humanity as a universal ideal is rendered plausible. It is only by taking into account the observers of Kant’s theory of race that these occlusions become evident.

Returning to Winant, how does this troubling of a racial past impact our imagination of the racial future? I want to suggest that reconceiving the history of race as the history of a problem might afford a new perspective. To understand the natural concept of race as actively produced interrupts any narrative of race which would understand the past as one in which race was a natural given and a present within which there is some degree of consensus regarding race as a social construct. In its place, we might imagine race as always already in crisis as a philosopheme. The dilemma for the contemporary present, then, might have to do with not assuming as successful the dissociation of race as a natural concept from social values. In this case, how might we interrupt discourses which attempt to portray humanity precisely in its flexibility? In other words, the lesson may well be how to interrupt discourses which attempt to see the human as either devoid of social values or devoid of natural values, whatever the social and natural may be.
The next three chapters continue the theme of dissociation. My argument throughout is that a discourse of the human – which can in some way only be given in the empirical – and the discourse of humanity – as transcendentally grounded – are dissociated in Kant’s philosophy and then re-articulated in terms of very specific notions of an anthropological being. At times, the difference that I pursue is minute and almost imperceptible, a thin difference. My analysis will push this difference – and amplify it – in order to make apparent this movement in Kant between the transcendental and the empirical.
2. Using Gender for Universal Humanity

Introduction

Questions of sexuality, gender behavior and roles, and sexual practices\(^{80}\) formed an influential terrain of conversations in late 18\(^{th}\) century German civil society, expressing a complex relationship between the legality of sexual matters, the nascent formation of a politically independent civil society, and the emerging modern state.\(^{81}\) This terrain was one site in which the newfound power of civil society to affect the state was exercised, and thus a site in which the shifting boundaries between civil society and the state were being negotiated. That Kant imagined sexuality and gender in legalistic and liberal terms, as largely a question of rights, showed that his theories of gender and sexuality was in line with this changing political situation from absolutism to the modern state. In her exploration of Kant’s contribution, Isabel Hull notes that “Kant was tugged in two directions,” postulating a kind of egalitarian standard in his moral considerations yet emphasizing the normative differences of gender as socially necessary and cohesive in his reflections on society.\(^{82}\) His specific comments on women – in line with typical German thinking

\(^{80}\) See Isabel Hull, *Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in German 1700–1815*, Ithaca: Cornell University, 1996, for an account of Kant’s place within German thinking of the time, particularly chapter 8, “Pre-Napoleonic Liberals and the Sexual Determination of Rights”. Masturbation was a prominent topic of discourse. Kant’s views on masturbation, condemning masturbation as worse than suicide, read somewhat comically today. For a modern-day defense of Kant’s condemnation of masturbation, see Charles Kielkopf, “Masturbation: A Kantian Condemnation” in *Philosophia* 25, April 1997, Springer Netherlands, pp. 223-246.

\(^{81}\) I follow here Hull’s line of thinking about the relationship of what she calls the “sexual system” to the state and civil society, p. 1.

\(^{82}\) See Hull, p. 302. This dual tugging resembles in some ways the debate between feminists and gallants that Barbara Taylor describes in “Feminists versus Gallants: Sexual Manners and Morals in Enlightenment Britain” in *Women, Gender, and Enlightenment*. Stressing the differences of the
of the time— are dismissive and generally sexist, ranging from the caricature of scholarly women with beards in the *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, the dismissal of Maria von Herbert’s philosophical and intellectual aspirations in his letters, the description of women as immature and in need of guardianship in *What is Enlightenment*, and the stipulation of the status of women as “passive citizens” in the *Metaphysics of Morals*. Scholars have regretted that Kant’s proposals never explicitly attain the egalitarian quality of his friend Hippel. Kant’s comments on women are thus understood to stand in tension with his egalitarian principles. In his moral considerations, a notable feature of Kant’s theory is its framing of (hetero)sexual relations in terms that are “cold”. Kant’s view is contractual: a question of mutual and reciprocal appropriation of sexual organs within the contract of monogamous marriage for the purposes of pleasure.

Much of the feminist debate on Kant has formed around the “dual tugging” identified above, taking shape in the following kinds of questions: Are resources available in Kant’s philosophy by which to revise, correct, or update his theories of moral personality and political citizenship so as to be more egalitarian, egalitarian
genders as occasioning a differentiated code of courtesy and propriety, moral gallants in Enlightenment Britain presented an ideal of gender relations in a kind of civilized discourse of politesse. For prominent feminists of the day, including Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Hays, such a code was male condescension by other means, to which claims for equal rights were opposed. Although Taylor does not emphasize it, both positions operate within a framework that prioritizes civil society: for moral gallants, a civilized discourse within which sexual passions could be safely expressed distinguished civil society in contradistinction to barbarians and savages. For the feminist position, the guiding assumptions of Enlightenment civil society, namely egalitarian rights for all humans, are the basis for making their claims.

84 See Hannelore Schröder, “Kant’s Patriarchal Order” in *Feminist Interpretations of Kant*.
85 See Hull. Barbara Herman uses Kant’s contention that sexual relations rely on objectification to draw parallels between Kant and Catherine McKinnon.
here referring to some means of being gender inclusive? Does Kant’s moral philosophy prioritize, in a gendered way, the value of “cold” reason over affect? In sum, the debate has largely turned on the question of whether Kant’s egalitarian moral considerations – perhaps in a less “cold” framing – might establish a different (more inclusive) articulation of civil society.

By and large, this debate leaves untouched the model of sexual difference that founds Kant’s notion of political autonomy in civil society. It is well-known that Kant imagines political autonomy for members of civil society in discursive terms, assuming that the establishment of public institutions and practices of writing and reading in civil society will guide the decision making of the state. The impact of all political action is, in the last instance for Kant, a matter of registering a difference in thought. As a normative ideal for Kant, political autonomy – the capacity to act discursively towards a rationally meliorated social organization - confronts a

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86 Barbara Herman has remarked that Kant is the philosopher feminists find most objectionable in “Could It Be Worth Thinking About Kant On Sex and Marriage?” in Louise Antony and Charlotte Witt, eds., A Mind of One’s Own: Feminist Essays on Reason and Objectivity (Boulder, Colo: Westview, 1993). This remark characterizes a recurrent concern among feminist scholars of Kant with whether Kant’s ethics can survive a feminist critique, to echo Sally Sedgwick’s title, “Can Kant’s Ethics Survive the Feminist Critique?” in Feminist Interpretations of Kant, R. Schott, ed., University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University, 1997.

87 Sally Sedgwick’s “Can Kant’s Ethics Survive the Feminist Critique?” and Marcia Baron’s “Kantian Ethics and Claims of Detachment” in Feminist Interpretations of Immanuel Kant, Robin May Schott (ed.), University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997, pp.145-170 are two prominent works that frame the debate in this way.

88 Jacques Derrida’s reading in Glas, John P. Leavey Jr. and Richard Rand (trans.), Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980 and Sarah Kofman’s in Le Respect des Femmes (Kant et Rousseau), Paris: Galilée, 1982; trans. as “The Economy of Respect: Kant and Respect for Women” are two notable exceptions. Much of my reading in the last section of the chapter in the Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View follows theirs.

89 I am taking Loren Goldman’s sense that political action in general is “practically unthinkable without some hope for social melioration” and extending a revised notion of it to political autonomy in
permutation of the gap between theoretical and practical reason that defines Kant’s critical philosophy. Political autonomy thus has a complex relation to the attempts to articulate a convincing historical teleology as a source of motivation and meaningfulness, most often elaborated in terms of a belief in progressive history.

Recent scholarship in Kant studies has focused on Kant’s philosophy of history to understand better this aspect of political autonomy⁹⁰, filling a long-standing lacuna in the field.⁹¹ Two essays in particular – the 1784 “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim” and the 1786 “Conjectural Beginning to Human History” - have merited attention. These essays connect historical teleology to natural teleology and establish political hope in the relation of the subjective aspirations of a political autonomous agent to an imperceptible posterity in cosmopolitan humanity.⁹² Yet, it is striking that the critical commentary on the natural teleology that grounds this hope in posterity in these two essays never discusses questions of gender and sexuality, although in at least one of them, gender is explicitly central to the human’s self-

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⁹² Goldman aptly characterizes political hope as a species of “practical belief in the possibility of progress” that is “requisite for collective endeavor” (499), without which “political action would appear pointless.” (511)
recognition as autonomous. In contrast to Kant’s moral philosophy, which permits a debate to form around the extension of the moral person, in this chapter, I propose in this chapter the centrality of gender, in particular the cognition of “woman,” to discussions of political autonomy and history.

On the one hand, the historical dimension of autonomy in Kant has always appeared problematic, revealing a permutation of the gap between theoretical and practical reason that is at the center of Kant’s critical philosophy. As a species of rational action, political action confronts this gap in terms of the defining paradox of Kant’s practical philosophy: the agent can think reason as a causal force but not know it. The possibility of rational action is thus epistemologically fractured. The political agent is barred from any true knowledge of reason as motivation or cause, which includes the possibility of self-knowledge, in political and moral deliberations). The agent thus acts on the promise of the possibility that actions might emanate from reason. Unlike the pure moral philosophy, which offers a rational conception of a moral world in the afterlife and an immortal soul as incentives, the essays on history and anthropology are forced to turn to more mundane incentives to transform the doubt that arises into certainty. Using a series of complex rhetorical strategies, the essays on history and anthropology that I examine enact both the paradox and promise of Kant’s practical philosophy, staging both the gap between knowledge and action – the epistemological fracturing – and the promise of a solution within its discursive framing. Since in the last instance, political autonomy is only indirectly
linked to the awareness of a human agent, the aim and promise of these essays, if attended to, is to allow reason itself to “speak.”

History is thus the discursive space in which a complex structure of political action is represented as coherent for the purpose of producing political hope. As I argue in this chapter, gender is the instrument of abstraction – particularly through the cognition of normative woman – to articulate history and political action as coherent. I claim in this chapter that the problems engendered by political autonomy and history are best grasped in troubling moments that appear in the transition from nature to culture and the corollary cognitive transition of a coming to consciousness of reason. These transitions are representations of the decisions by which natural humans become consciously aware or autonomous rational agents.

In order to develop a contrasting approach, I will briefly comment on the interpretive decisions taken in the reading of “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim”. In “Idea”, Kant connects political autonomy with an appeal throughout the essay to an empirically knowable causality of nature called reason, or natural teleology. Anglo-American Kant scholars have roundly dismissed this appeal as a “mistake.” Through this act of dismissal, the critical commentary on this essay has generated two readings which stand in an antinomical relationship to each other: either the essay is primarily theoretical and epistemological with some practical implications or it is practical and normative with some theoretical dimension. For instance, the scholarly deliberation on the status of the idea in “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim” grapples with this problem. Because the idea
cannot be simultaneously theoretical and practical without violating the limits of the critical philosophy, the question is raised as to whether the idea of universal history is preeminently a theoretical “idea” of a (possible) universal history, a position taken by Allison, Kleingeld, and Wood, or a practical idea for a (possible) universal history, following O’Neill. In other words, is the “idea” in Kantian terms a regulative idea of theoretical reason, a heuristic principle by which to represent history coherently and systematically for epistemological purposes, i.e., an idea that future historians can use to produce a philosophical history? Or is the idea a regulative idea of practical reason, a postulate by which to represent history coherently and completely in order to motivate a political agent to accomplish the goals of universal history, i.e., to realize the possibility for a universal history? That Kant seems to claim both aspirations – an idea for future historians and an ideal for political agents – seems to be part of the reason commentators are obliged to treat the question as an antinomy rather than a matter of simple choice, to prioritize one or the other conception, rather than claiming the idea is solely theoretical or practical.


94 Thus, Kleingeld acknowledges the motivational dimension of a theoretical idea of universal history, and O’Neill suggests that Kant’s essay bridges the gap between a theoretical idea of nature as teleological and a practical idea of history as rational.
In contrast to this antinomical discourse of choice, I want to suggest that the “mistake” in this essay is inevitable, sheltering an aporetic moment, given in the form of a mistake. By stitching together three origin accounts of the emergence of rational autonomy, I attempt to linger in various moments otherwise generally dismissed. The aporia generated by the borders between epistemology and normative action manifests in various ways in the three texts that I read. In “Idea for a Universal History,” the aporia appears as a dilemma about the inscrutable link between the knowledge of appearance as naturally determined and a metaphysical concept of the will. The essay promises to transform the doubt of the reader into the certainty of the philosopher. Although gender is never mentioned in the essay, I locate a number of unanswerable and enigmatic gaps in the account of political autonomy in that essay, which can only be answered with an account of sexual difference. In “Conjectural Beginning to Human History”, the foregoing dilemma shades into a question about the possible “truth” of a non-verifiable but nonetheless empirical knowledge of origins through conjecture in “Conjectural Beginning to Human History.” The *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* further develops the dilemma of the first two essays, offering in the cognition of a normative woman a type of solution to the problem of political autonomy. Throughout the various stories of the emergence

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95 My use of aporia comes from Jacques Derrida's *Aporias*. For Derrida, aporias are not quite an impasse but rather the experiences of non-passage. The reading of Heidegger delicately stages various aporias in the discussion of death. Philosophical antinomies are in this discussion downstream from aporias.
of reason, the decisions by which natural humans become consciously aware rational agents are partially represented: “hints” and “steps” left to the reader to ponder.

What becomes clear is that gender allows Kant to represent reason as constitutive of universal history. History can be momentarily and impossibly thought of as a coherent whole, long enough to satisfy belief or political hope but not long enough to become an object of knowledge. By investigating these moments, I suggest that these might be strategic toeholds for feminist philosophers: a place to inhabit critically Kant’s texts that neither affirms nor excuses him.

Following this logic, I analyze three moments which individually represent the “decision” that marks the cognitive transition from raw nature to culture. I stitch these moments together to show that the true, simple, and rational discourse of normative man in civil society is placed against a countervailing and heterogeneous discourse of normative woman. This normative treatment of gender identifies the cosmological place of the polis in German civil society. I argue that the political autonomy of the historical agent is explicitly revealed as the interiority of a normative “man” in civil society, able to know himself and his actions as rational by cognizing a normative “woman” and her behavior (as opposed to actions) as only ever the products of a teleological reason of nature, weakly rational in the volitional and civil sense. Overall, I demonstrate that the critical activities of the political subject – thinking and discoursing – are always implicated in a thinking of sexual difference. As I will establish, the very possibility of male citizens in civil society discoursing
about the status of women’s rights presupposes – on this Kantian account – a prior thinking of gender.

What also becomes clear is that not only is the political discourse of “man” intertwined with the knowledge of “woman”, but that these are supported by a silent racial substrate: throughout these essays, it becomes clear that Kant’s notion of epistemology rests very much on race, although he never mentions it. Towards the end of the chapter, I examine a moment in which, fabulating Cook’s so-called Sandwich Islands for his Tahiti, the possibility of a brutal social relation between an Englishman and a Tahitian woman is briefly entertained and then refused so as to claim that the truth of the encounter is purely epistemological. As I will show by the end of the chapter, the possibility of a simple, true, and rational political discourse in civil society depends on both a countervailing, heterogeneous, and knowable discourse of normative woman and the refusal to consider non-whites in any form of non-epistemological relation.

I. The Philosophy of History and Unsociable Sociability

The 1784 “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim,” comprised of an introduction and nine propositions, is Kant’s fullest articulation of a universal history. The essay is most pointedly about a possible representation of reason as a

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96 In *Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argues that the necessary exclusion of race is discontinuous with the argued dismissal of woman. In this chapter, I follow up on this argument through an examination of the ways in which normative woman is figured in terms of a discourse of excess language, rather than the absence of speech that characterizes Kant’s exclusions on the basis of race.
kind of agency, singularly broached in questions about the appropriate subject or bearer of reason, the transmission and reproduction of the possible subjectivity of reason through a grappling with finitude, and lastly, and most importantly, the construction of an origin (which at the same time guarantees an end) of rational autonomy. The problem of knowledge and politics is powerfully presented in the opening line in the inscrutability between the metaphysical and apparent cause and effect of human actions: “Whatever concept one may form of the freedom of the will with a metaphysical aim, its appearances, the human actions, are determined just as much as every other natural occurrence in accordance with universal laws of nature.” (AA VIII 17, 108, Kant’s emphasis)

The task of the essay is to unravel this inscrutability in such a way that the affect associated with history changes from doubt to a motivating reassurance. To do so, Kant employs a variety of strategies, most prominently changing the dominant image of history from a sequence (for instance, of individual events) to a pattern – from a “stage” upon which “one sees doings and refrainings” (AA VIII 17, 109) to a tangled weave within which “everything…is woven together out of” what appear to be vices and passions: “folly, childish vanity…childish malice, and the mania to destruction.” Kant writes that “there is no other way out for the philosopher” than to try to “discover” in this aggregate an “aim of nature” which might serve as a “guiding thread” out of which a historian will compose a universal history. (AA VIII 18, 109) In using a language of discovery rather than presupposition or revelation, we might interpret Kant to mean that the philosopher must tread the path of epistemology here.
In other words, there is something that can only be given empirically, on the basis of which the philosopher must proceed to weave a weave that matches the “aim of nature.”

A second, predictable strategy, associated with the first one, is a shift in scale from individuals to an aggregate. Considering actuarial tables and weather conditions, Kant notices that what appears chaotic to the individual eye attains a certain kind of organization – a predictable pattern – at a sufficient level of aggregation. Thus, no matter how arbitrary or autonomous actions of the human appear (“the play of the freedom of the human will”) it becomes possible to detect a progressive constancy and regularity in actuarial tables of marriages, births, and deaths just as much as weather conditions on the whole foster growth. Kant thus ascribes the pattern to an aim of nature that persists regardless of any awareness of its existence by those it affects. It is at these deep patterns that persist rather independent of any conscious intention that Kant wants to aim. Consequently, Kant’s focus is not on actions of some historical individual or set of individuals but rather some “action” that can be ascribed to the human species. Part of the task of the essay is to establish a concept of species as subject that articulates the natural concept of the species with some grouping of free wills.

Intimately related to this articulated concept of the species is the question of its reproduction. Reproduction forms an important – although almost always implicit – figure in this essay. Various kinds of reproduction and the production of posterity are figures that either further or defer the epistemological scrutiny of history: the
cultural reproduction of reason (enlightenment) as a solution to the problem of finitude; nature’s production of a future historian to write the essay for which Kant is going to find a guiding thread (AA VIII 18, 109); the physical reproduction of the human; the production of a posterity that might be brought closer through the actions of a rational agent.

Part of the production of posterity is thus wagered on the promise of the essay that the philosophical discovery of a deep pattern of nature will motivate individual readers towards acting to bring about an imperceptible future. The coming to “philosophical consciousness” of the immanent plan of nature assumes a special status, creating, in Yovel’s words, “a new historical situation.” This promise, as I will remark shortly, is staged in proposition four, which articulates the transition from raw nature to culture. To reiterate a point made earlier, the emphasis in Kant’s essay is on a cognitive transition: that the decision/mistake of the philosopher that constitutes the representation of the cognitive transition that marks the transition from nature to culture potentially leads to a cognitive transition on the part of the reader.

It is perhaps no surprise then that the weaving of the weave – the unraveling of inscrutability – occurs at the level of philosophical description. The last proposition explicitly claims that philosophical description might itself be an action that furthers the plan for a cosmopolitan future. As Rüdiger Bittner astutely shows, the promise of the historicity of Kant’s critical philosophy – that reason might be a causal force – is instantiated at the level of philosophical description. On this formulation, philosophical description is rational (and thus for Kant political) praxis.
How Kant describes history as leading towards a cosmopolitan future is at the same time a possibly rational political action leading towards that cosmopolitanism. The problem of knowledge and politics is thus staged in the writing and reading of the essay, in the production of a philosophical description as an act of knowledge that simultaneously becomes an act of knowing in the reading.

Two discourses are interwoven in order to discover a guiding thread, within which an emergent political autonomy is described\(^{97}\): 1) a natural, epistemological discourse of preformation, epigenesis, and organicism taken from Kant’s essays on race, although race is never mentioned in the essay on universal history. Reason is here presented as the goal of unspecified natural predispositions of the human (the only explicit human predispositions Kant countenances at this time in other essays are those of race), whose perfectibility is sometimes given in a language of inevitability; and 2) a social and normative discourse of political development from a state of nature to culture and civil society, typically narrated in terms of rational solutions to social antagonisms. Kant unites an account of reason as a natural predisposition with its development in cultural terms: “attempts, practice and instruction.” (AA VIII 19,109) The development is given in a language of compulsion and inevitability rather than volition. The intertwining of the two is also clear in Kant’s consideration of finitude, as he writes “nature perhaps needs an immense series of generations, each of which transmits its enlightenment to the next, in order finally to propel its germs in

our species to that stage of development which is completely suited to its aim.” (AA VIII 19, 110) Here, the very syntax and grammar of the sentence interweaves these discourses, casting a personified conception of nature as a subject, cultural processes (enlightenment) and natural organs (germs) as objects, acted upon by such ambiguous verbs of desire and motion as needs, transmits, and propels, which implicitly allude to a figure that unites natural and cultural reproduction. This intertwining is also evident in the frequency of sentences in the imperative mode, the “must” uniting practical obligation with natural necessity. It is through this syntactic weaving at the level of philosophical description that the philosopher attempts to discover a guiding thread by which to read the tangled threads of human motivation that comprise the weave of history. In other words, Kant’s very sentences perform the inquiry and quest that the essay pursues, the attempts by the philosopher to find a way out through the empirical.

Not only do the grammar and syntax of the sentences interweave a natural and social discourse, the referent for the term “nature” changes, sometimes within the same sentence. For instance, over the course of the first three propositions, Kant claims that the “natural” difference of the human to non-human animals depends on “natural” predispositions of reason, which, unlike the animal, can only develop through culture yet are perfectible in accordance with a “natural” theory of epigenesis. Nature assumes three primary meanings: 1) a sometimes personified principle to which patterns visible at a level of aggregation are attributed; 2) some given or starting condition in terms of environment and psychology; and 3) some
morphological or anatomical characterization of perfectible predispositions and germs that humans share with non-human animals. It is clear that the terms nature and culture are instable, circulating in varying ways and taking up meanings momentarily, only to shift again.

The philosophical description given in the first three propositions by and large effaces the role of the human agent,\(^98\) using instead a discourse of nature to delimit the natural difference of humans from non-human animals. Primary among them is the attribution of the perfectibility of predispositions only in the species, not in the individual, and the assumption that the animal part of the human was so measured as to be barely necessary for some original situation, out of which the use of reason would commence. This determination of human “nature” draws on theories of preformation and epigenesis. In proposition three, a personified conception of nature is added so as to cast human “nature” in a teleological light, always already expressing nature’s desires. The phrase “nature has willed” or that nature “gave the human…freedom of the will” shows this to be the case. This means that any surpassing of nature can at the same time be attributed to nature.

The emergence of rational autonomy is described in propositions four and five, in the transition from nature to culture and the onset of civil society respectively. These descriptions locate origins in nature out of which social and political organization arises. The philosophical burden of articulating the emergence of

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\(^98\) Barbara Herman suggests that this effacement is one of the puzzles of the essay in “Habitat for Humanity” in *Kant’s ‘Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim’: A Critical Guide*, Amelie Rorty and James Schmidt (eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 151.
autonomy falls on these propositions. Commentators have often accorded a special status to the onset of civil society in proposition five, and indeed, towards the end of the essay, Kant identifies a guiding thread to history in a history of constitutions of civil society. Yet the turning point of the essay is clearly proposition four. After this proposition, all the problems that Kant formulates – including that of civil society – are political problems for autonomous agents. The burden of articulating an epistemological discourse of nature and normative discourse of culture so as to offer a convincing philosophical description of autonomy is proposition four, precisely in the establishment of the notion of unsociable sociability. Unsociable sociability is the philosophical notion that is intended to effect the transition not only from nature to culture but also from a predominantly epistemological discourse to a predominantly normative discourse.

As philosophical presupposition or behavioral truism, unsociable sociability for the most part has been accepted by Kant scholars as expressing an easily established fact about human behavior. The adage “I can’t live with you or without you”, if extended to the species, would be a variation of unsociable sociability. Allen Wood suggests that Kant takes the phrase “unsociable sociability” from Montaigne’s claim in “La Solitude”, that “There is nothing so unsociable and sociable as man, the one by his vice, the other by his nature.”

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Although Kant’s definition bears resemblance to Montaigne’s – and the coupling of the two is clearly from Montaigne – its usage is in a more explicitly political discourse than Montaigne’s reflections on retirement and solitude (which are perhaps no less political, but certainly more indirect). Sociability as a topic can be located in a political discourse stretching back to the Epicurean Lucretius and the Stoics. The modern discussion of sociability forms around a cluster of natural law theorists and their critics, including Grotius, Pufendorf, Hobbes, Mandeville, Hutcheson, and Rousseau. The position of human sociability as grounded in either human nature or as a learned behavior is a key feature of the discussion: is the human sociable by nature or is sociability best considered an imperative in response, for instance in Hobbes, to a primary affect of fear? Is sociability a result of the self-interested desire for pleasure or the self preserving – and sometimes good – desire for security? Is sociability a result of vice – the desire for ambition, honor, and status (Mandeville’s position) – or does it reflect the behavior of a personified nature, as Hutcheson claims against the natural law theorists? Such discussion also considers the function of unsociable behaviors. For Pufendorf and Grotius, unsociability puts up obstacles to the achievement of a perfect society. Kant’s notion of unsociable-sociability emerges out of this discussion.

The beginning of proposition four shows this to be the case:

The means nature employs in order to bring about the development of all its predispositions is their antagonism in society, insofar as the latter is in the end the cause of their lawful order. Here, I understand by ‘antagonism’ the unsociable sociability of human beings, i.e., their tendency to enter into society, which however, is combined with a thoroughgoing resistance that constantly threatens to divide this society. (AA VIII 20, 111)

The proposition unites nature’s teleology, its predispositions, and antagonism in society as a single process: nature fulfills its desires through social antagonism. Or better and left unspoken: the philosopher is beginning to find a principle of ordering in which he might write or read social antagonism – the chaotic mix of vices described in the beginning – in terms of natural teleology. Kant then begins his philosophical description of the human as a social being:

The human being has an inclination to socialize (zu vergesellschaften) since in such a condition he feels himself more a human being, i.e., feels the development of his natural predispositions. But he also has a great tendency (Hang) to individualize (isolate) himself from the unsociable property of wanting to direct everything according to his own way, and hence expects resistance everywhere because he knows of himself (er von sich selbst weiss) that he is inclined on his side toward resistance against others. (AA VIII 20-21, 111, my emphasis)
Like Montaigne, sociability is inscribed in the nature of the human, whereas unsociability seems to be a consequent behavior. What is much less clear though is how many humans there are in this original situation. How many humans are needed to think the species as subject in an original condition? Is it two, three, four, or more? Nor for that matter is it clear what sociability in this original situation consists of: is Kant postulating some original sexual relation, some relation of friendship, or, perhaps, a contractual relationship? Nor from this perspective is it clear what kinds of distance pertain among this non-singular number that comprises the species.

Kant does not give grounds here to support the liberal reading that free-standing individuals are both attracted and repulsed from each other. All we can say is that unsociable sociability entails that this non-singular aggregate prioritizes the seeking out of proximity over the tendency to singularize (another translation of vereinzelnen rather than individualize), and consequently (parenthetically remarked), to isolate.  

If the priority is on the inclination to socialize, it is the unsociable tendency to individualize that is the key moment in the entire essay. It is the first autonomous action of the human out of a natural situation. Yet, Kant places its cause in a peculiar self-knowledge, writing that the human “knows of himself that he is on his side inclined toward resistance against others.” Since Kant does not grant any possibility

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1 It seems clear that the inclination – an innate impulse or drive – is superordinate to the tendency – a learned habit or behavior, a reading supported by the moral psychology given in the *Metaphysics of Morals*. Wood’s characterization of unsociable sociability as an “unsociable (that is antagonistic, competitive, or conflict-ridden) form of sociability (that is, mutual dependency)” supports this priority.
of innate knowledge – all knowledge has an inextricable relation to experience – and
since the proposition places itself in some beginning moment of human experience,
what exactly is going on? How is the human aware of resistance towards others? The
self-knowledge implies some prior moment from which it is drawn. As I will show in
a moment, this moment of knowledge is the crucial juncture of the essay, on which
the success of the articulation of natural teleology and human volition hinges:
unsociable sociability takes nature’s intention and a discourse of epistemology and
intertwines it with human volition and a normative discourse of culture. In short, this
articulation and its awareness by the reader are the moment of political autonomy in
the essay.

In this essay, these questions are left unanswered. I return to them in the next
section. The term “know” is performative: the emergence of political autonomy is
successful because the term know acts on the reader’s belief that it means what it
says, that it is true. On this basis, the two sentences that follow narrate the transition
from nature to culture, and it becomes possible to write history. First, the resistance
that is the object of this self-knowing also furnishes a principle of writing that
describes the overcoming of an origin moment: “Now it is this resistance that
awakens all the powers of the human being, brings him to overcome his tendency to
indolence, and, driven by ambition, tyranny, and greed, to obtain form himself a rank
among his fellows, whom he cannot stand, but also cannot leave alone.” (AA VIII 21,
111, Kant’s emphasis) The use of the temporal deictic “now” (“nun”) for the first
time in the essay to start the next sentence underlines the fact that an origin has
commenced. The change in discourse to a predominantly normative discourse will lead to the detailing of a series of problems that Kant claims are also contemporary or problems now.

The origin is then described in a spectacular sentence in which the rational subject of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* is spelled out in the syntax of the sentence: “There occur now (Da geschehen nun) the first true steps from rawness toward culture, which really consists in the social worth of the human being; thus all talents come bit by bit to be developed, taste is formed, and even, through progress in enlightenment, a beginning is made toward the foundation of a mode of thinking which can with time transform the rude natural predisposition to make moral distinctions into determinate practical principles and hence transform a *pathologically* compelled agreement to form a society finally into a *moral* whole.” (ibid, trans modified, Kant’s emphasis)

First come the intuitions of the Transcendental Analytic – “there (space) occurs now (time)” after which the categories derived from the Transcendental Deduction by which any knowledge as truth is conditioned follow: “the first true steps.” If the reader believes the self-knowing offered earlier, then in this sentence it is as if reason itself is “speaking.”

The discursive action of the term *know* is based on knowing some possibly prior action of resistance. In the next section, I will suggest that *know* shelters an aporetic moment. Out of this moment, autonomy springs. On this basis, Kant reads the weave of human history, using this knowledge to narrate an overcoming of an
original tendency to laziness. This rhetorical move has a relationship to the moment in “Determination of the Concept of a Human Race” analyzed in chapter one in which Kant is offering subjective maxims and falling into a different kind of discourse. Whereas the Kant scholarship would interpret the use of the term “know” as a “mistake”, I read it as also a moment in which Kant has to utilize a subjective maxim. In this essay, this subjective maxim permits a move from an epistemological discourse of nature to the articulation of a series of political problems for conscious political agents.

The beginning enables the double layered narratives of human actions: on the one hand, all manifestations of culture, of non-natural actions, can be reduced to nature’s teleology; on the other, through this illusion, in which a raw beginning – characterized by a tendency to laziness – is constantly overturned is the only way to “fill the void in creation in regard to their end as rational nature.” (AA VIII 21, 112) Here, the lack of overturning is linked to the possibility of an abyssal lack of purpose.\textsuperscript{102} History is thus double-sided: on the one hand, the emergence from a violent origin can be understood as the human descent into vice and evil (“ambition, tyranny, and greed”); on the other hand, this emergence is given an underlying rational direction towards the teleological end of history.

The possibility of culture, civil society, and a future cosmopolitan society are all premised on this principle of unsociable sociability as an explanatory principle. This narrative paradigm structures the subsequent emergence of civil and

\textsuperscript{102} In Chapter 4, I investigate the abyssal images that form when Kant thinks of the origin.
cosmopolitan society as repetitions of this original overcoming. The overcoming comes through in Kant’s emphasis that the “need”\(^{103}\) for civil society arises because humans’ “own inclinations make so that they cannot long subsist next to one another in wild freedom.” (AA VIII 22, 112) Later in the essay, Kant writes of a cosmopolitan commonwealth that “nature has therefore once again used the incompatibility of human beings”, an incompatibility arising from “the same unsociability that necessitated human beings to this [civil society].” (AA VIII 24, 114) In each situation, some happy, free condition is interrupted, at first sporadically and then increasingly, by violence – an incompatibility of desires, which drives individuals, then, cultures, and lastly states, to seek a peaceful condition by legislating freedom under ever widening circles. The problem with these antagonistic relations is always one of distance, of fulfill social desires without impinging on the freedom of another. In civil society and a projected cosmopolitan commonwealth, the use of coercion in the formation of laws produces the “greatest freedom” in conjunction with “the most precise determination and security.” (AA VIII 22, 112)

The implication of a prior “tendency to laziness” is the only tendency to touch on a moment prior to the beginning described here to human history, a beginning that Kant briefly construes in this essay in terms of the “highest needs of an initial existence.” Readings of Kant tend to gloss this prior origin. Interpreters in general have been puzzled by the status of unsociable sociability and Kant’s claim that it is empirically obtained knowledge, without critically interrogating this passage. Indeed,

\(^{103}\) See pp. 102-3 for a discussion of the intertwining of a language of “needs” with a discourse of autonomy.
the appeals to the principle of unsociable sociability are a significant part of Kant’s claims throughout the essay that natural teleology is an empirical phenomenon rather than a regulative principle.

Towards the end of the essay, Kant explicitly states this claim, in a rare use of the first person singular. Most of the essay is in the generic third person with the occasional use of the first person plural. He writes: “It all depends on (Es kommt nur darauf an) whether experience reveals something of such a course as nature’s aim. I say: it reveals a little.” (AA VIII 27, 116, Kant’s emphasis) Wagering the essay in the doubt implied in the first part of the passage, the confident response – the narrator philosopher/Kant/reason speaking – assumes the success of the philosophical description.

The antinomical readings of Kant use different strategies to dismiss these kinds of moments in the essay, when Kant appeals to natural teleology as empirical: Yovel claims that these moments are “dogmatic mistake[s]”, endorsing the reframing of the principle of natural teleology as a regulative idea in The Critique of the Power of Judgment. O’Neill’s reading of this essay as furnishing a practical concept of history understands these as unnecessary “intimations”, encouraging but not decisive.\(^{104}\)

In contrast, I read these signs, furnished on the basis of the empirical moment in unsociable sociability, as necessary, “mistakes” that shelter an aporia of knowledge and politics. These “mistakes” undo the binaries between truth and non-truth,

\[^{104}\text{Onora O’Neill, p.534.}\]
epistemology and poetry. In order to scrutinize this moment further and pursue the
questions raised in this section, I turn now to another origin story. It is clear from the
“Idea” that the only two attributes that can be presumed as primary to human nature
are the impulse to socialize and the decision to individualize. I examine these
attributes by returning to the two beginnings of history, to the overcoming of laziness.
If Kant does not touch the initial existence of humans in this essay, his 1786
“Conjectural Beginning to Human History” declares its efforts as a “conjecture about
its [human history’s] first beginning insofar as nature makes it.” (AA VIII 109, 163,
Kant’s emphasis)

II. The Fig-Leaf and the Book of Genesis

In this section, I take up the questions I had raised in the previous one about
who or what comprises the species in an original situation, the kinds of relations that
found sociability, and the question of the enigmatic self-knowledge that links
sociability with unsociability.

“Conjectural Beginning to Human History” has been primarily read as either
one of Kant’s essays on race, although race is never mentioned in the essay, or as
primarily a satire on Herder.105 Even when cast as satire, the essay has not been read

105 See Chad Wellmon Romantic Anthropology and David Sussman The Idea of Humanity:
Anthropology and Anthroponomy in Kant’s Ethics, New York: Routledge, 2001.. Their reading repeats
Georg Forster’s. Race is never mentioned in Kant’s essay. Its logics mirror those pertaining to
universal history in “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Point of View”, not the natural
history that Kant is constructing in his essays on race. Only by reading Kant as if he was Herder, who
does indeed unite universal and natural history in his Philosophy of History, is this contention
plausible.
in that generic mode: that is, in terms of satire’s ability to baldly reveal the truth of its intended subject. Indeed, much of the scholarship has used the appellation of satire and Kant’s own self-description of the essay as a “mere pleasure trip” (ibid) as a literal disclaimer. The critical scholarship has thus missed the extraordinary construction of this essay, which delicately mimics both histories based on documented records and conjectural histories. For instance, “mere” and “pleasure” are equivocal terms: one of the signal difficulties of moral feeling is that the moral pleasure associated with upholding duty is indistinguishable from sensible pleasure. Moreover, Wood’s translation of “ich hier eine bloße Lustreise wage” as “here I am venturing on a mere pleasure trip” elides the element of risk or daring that the German verb “wagen” connotes. Kant’s narrator is here risking a mere pleasure trip. Consequently, to describe the essay as a “mere pleasure trip” is on the one hand to suggest that no labor is involved; at the same time, though, written in the mode of conjecture, Kant is trying to catch a “truth” otherwise inaccessible to epistemology, a “truth” which in the absence of any specific object of knowledge (as resistance that would lead to labor) risks everything on the “mere pleasure” – the possibility that the mere pleasure elicited by the essay might be a moral instead of aesthetic pleasure – of an acting (in this instance, playing) of the cognitive faculties operating out of the causality of reason.

The essay uses the popular 18th century genre of conjectural history to narrate a potential beginning to human history, “a history of the first development of freedom
from its original predisposition in the nature of the human being.” Here, the problem is between the truth and non-truth of the knowledge Kant is after, taken up in a mode that promises knowledge but also risks straying into invention. He worries that these conjectures “appear not to be much better than to make the sketch for a novel” and so “not be able to carry the name of a conjectural history but a mere poetic piece (Erdichtung).” Kant claims that the distinguishing line between a possible truth (conjecture) and invention can be given empirically: “For that beginning must not be invented by fiction (erdichtet) but can be taken from experience.” The translation misses the active sense of this distinction: erdichtet here is the active verb for the creative invention that might lead to poetry or fiction. In terms of cognitive faculties, the term for Kant indicates a play of the faculties that never extends beyond the understanding and imagination into reason. The risk of such straying is most prominent in subjective moments which require the assumption of an unverifiable hypothesis for the purposes of knowledge or belief. Here, Kant claims that this beginning can obviate this risk because it can be taken out (“kann…hergenommen werden”) of experience. But, this beginning drawn empirically is based on a precondition: “if one presupposes, that the latter [experience] was not better or worse than what we encounter now: a presupposition that conforms to the analogy of nature and does not bring anything venturesome with it.” (ibid) Here the conjectural action of drawing an empirically based beginning of history can neither bring anything

107 The classical text for the distinction between the invention of Erdichtung or Dichtung and truth is Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s autobiography Aus Meinem Leben: Dichtung und Wahrheit, Leipzig: E. Wartig, 1881.
venturesome from the understanding (conjecture is a “a power of the imagination, accompanying reason”) yet cannot also avoid a link to the understanding – the faculty governing cognitions of experience. It is this enigmatic link to the understanding on which the aporia between knowledge and fiction is staged and played. Conjectural play is neither inventive nor serious, but something else, risking everything, again, on a feeling of “mere pleasure.” Crucial to this play is the connection of the essay to the Book of Genesis, a connection on which a “guiding thread [is] attached by reason onto experience.” (AA VIII 110, 163) If on the one hand, the conjectural history is “wholly other than the history of freedom in its progression, which can be grounded only on records,” on the other, there is a methodological link to the latter. The historiography of Kant’s time produced the “truth” of history by comparing testimonies and other records to a metaphysical concept of nature; in this way, a true history could be written. The connection to Genesis mimics this process.

The essay invites the reader to check the essay with the book of Genesis, chapters 2 through 6, parenthetically inserting chapter and verse number at various points. It is noteworthy that none of the Anglo-American scholarship on the essay takes up Kant’s invitation.108 The layout of the essay consists of the narration of four steps of reason, occurring within what Kant labels an epoch of society, and the subsequent narration of a further two epochs, all signposted by the Book of Genesis and interspersed by two sections of remarks. Each step narrates a crucially significant

step in the emergence of reason by way, largely, of chapter 3 of Genesis, the story of
the Fall. The resulting double narrative shows a peculiar, sometimes forced, relation
between Kant’s story of the emergence of reason and the story of Genesis. Kant omits
crucial scenes and distorts others in his attempt to recast the Fall as the rational
emergence of reason.\(^{109}\) The reliance on the book of Genesis here is not simply a
“playful allusion to biblical history” or an unproblematic “reconstitution of biblical
history.”\(^{110}\) The mode is indeed that of play, yet the distortions and changes to
Genesis are central to the history that Kant is conjecturing, particularly as Kant seems
to garner philosophical propositions from Martin Luther’s attempts to play on terms
in translating the Hebrew Bible. Insofar as Kant invites his readers to check his essay
alongside the Book of Genesis, we must assume that the distortions and changes are
part of the structure of this essay. Indeed, we might assume, then, a little more boldly,
that in making distortions and changes Kant might be using a concept of nature to
“correct” the Book of Genesis in order to produce the “truth” of the conjecture.

The first instance of this method of conjecture shows Kant to be oscillating in
his efforts to find a “first beginning insofar as nature makes it”, to conjecture an
origin that neither strays into fiction nor risks labor – here labor might be understood
as not only the cognitive labor of representation or judgment (documented history)
but as also including the representation of labor, i.e., human actions that move against
instinct or impulse. The distinguishing line is located in “the existence of the human:”

\(^{109}\) In many ways, Kant anticipates Hegel’s appropriation of the Fall to narrate the positive emergence
of reason. See Lectures on the Philosophy of History and his Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion
for his interpretation of the Fall.

\(^{110}\) See Allen Wood, “Unsociable Sociability: The Anthropological Basis of Kant’s Ethics”, p.330 and
Unless one is to enthuse in conjectures, the beginning must be made from that which is capable of no derivation by human reason from previous natural causes: thus with the existence of the human being, and indeed in his fully formed state because he must do without maternal assistance; in a couple (Paar), so that he can propagate his kind; and as only in one single couple, so that war will not arise right away, when human beings would be so near and yet so alien to one another, and also so that nature should not be blamed for depriving them, by the difference of ancestry, of the most suitable arrangement for sociability as the greatest end of the human vocation; for the unity of that family from which all human beings were to descend was without doubt the best contrivance (Anordnung) for this. (AA VIII 110, 164, Kant’s emphasis)

The emphasized words serve to highlight an origin in the existence of the human being, given specific shape in a peculiar logic that determines the original appearance and number of the species. The species appears as a reproductive pair. The origin of reason can neither start in the difference between a mother and child and the asymmetric relationship of dependence that exists within that difference. Nor can the origin of reason start with multiple pairs, because for Kant, multiple pairs would imply a situation in which an original condition of proximity would harbor too much difference (“so alien to one another”), and consequently lead to war. The single pair is proximate without a difference that threatens war. That this pair is consistently
given in the singular by the pronoun “he” also suggests that in some way the couple adheres more to a logic of sameness than a threatening difference. In Martin Luther’s translation of the Book of Genesis, he translates the indeterminate first human creature Adam, prior to the creation of Eve, by the term human (der Mensch).

The long sentence that comprises this origin is given its teleological justification in the final clause. A single pair – a monogenetic origin – is “without doubt the best contrivance” (Anordnung of course carries within it the sense of an ordering or arrangement) for sociability as the “greatest end of human vocation. (“dem größten Zwecke der menschlichen Bestimmung”) The judgment (“the best contrivance”) about human vocation or determination is spoken in the language of conviction (“without doubt”) and based on the assumption that the reasons justifying a single pair somehow handle the objection raised about why this pair would not be squabbling. I will address this objection a little later. Here, the issue of tautology or begging the question appears strongly, as it must in statements of conviction: in the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* and *Metaphysics of Morals*, the form of monogamous, marriage is given as a rational achievement of civil society; here, a kind of de facto monogamous arrangement is taken as the best conjectural starting point for a rational narrative, as the best arrangement or ordering for sociability. In conjunction with “Idea”, it becomes clear that the occluded steps out of which unsociable sociability forms are being given shape in this essay. A moment of experience is needed to disrupt the tautological proposition offered in the language of
conviction and turn it into a conjectural “truth”. This moment of experience will come from the book of Genesis.

Having thus shaped human existence, Kant locates it spatially in a garden and then oscillates again over a temporal starting point. It is no longer raw nature per se that he starts with but rather the raw nature of humans. Kant thus places a “mighty step” to cover this gap between an original start and some later start in the raw nature of humans. This gap is comprehensible not through some conjectured sequence of time but can be seen in the teleological development of skills which prefigure the origin from which he is commencing. This step – and the skills that cover it – traverses over an abyss.

And what is still more, I consider this couple only after it has already taken a mighty step in the skill of making use of its powers; thus I do not begin with the completely raw state of its nature (gänzlichen Rohigkeit seiner Natur); for if I undertook to fill up that gap, which presumably comprises a long duration, the conjectures would become too many for the reader, but their probabilities too few. (ibid, trans modified)

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111 This oscillating movement bears some resemblance to the “sliding” Jacques Derrida identifies in Of Grammatology, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (trans.), Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976, between two apparently discrepant origins in nature in Rousseau’s Discourse and Essay on the Origin of Languages. Derrida shows that the apparent discrepancy can be explained by a bi-directional inter-textual sliding, which serves to frame the “transition” from nature to culture in Rousseau as simultaneously long and abrupt, “instantaneous and interminable.” The apparent discrepancy is attributed to the differing senses of nature that Rousseau wants to emphasize, differences made continuous by the motion of sliding. The way Kant places the contradictory moments of the origin in an unfillable gap, seems derived from Rousseau. Unlike Rousseau, Kant does not treat the contradiction of the origin through a sliding motion. Rather, the origin constructed in this essay seems to be circumscribed within the origin mapped out in “Idea for a Universal History.”
As Kant delineates the skills that this first human possesses, the interpolations from the book of Genesis start, as a way to cover the abyss.

The first human being could, therefore, stand and walk; he could speak (Genesis 2:20), even discourse, i.e., speak according to connected concepts (Genesis 2:23), hence think. These are all skills which he had to acquire for himself (for if they were innate, then they would also be inherited, which, however experience contradicts); but I assume him now already provisioned with them, merely in order to consider the development of what is moral (Sittlichen) in his doing and refraining, which necessarily presupposes that skill. (AA VIII 110-111, 164, Kant’s emphasis)

Kant explicitly philosophizes the unfillable gap as an experience of contradiction (“experience contradicts”). Skipping the creation account offered in book 1 and the first part of book 2 to start at Genesis 2:20, he links the acquisition of speaking to the scene of Adam naming the cattle, the birds, and the beasts. At the end of this scene of naming, the Bible elliptically notes that “but for Adam there was not found a help meet for him.” We might thus conjecture that Adam has stalled at self-naming, which is not possible without “a help meet” (eine Gehilfen in Luther’s translation). That Kant begins here in the book of Genesis shows, alongside a scan of all of his interpolations, that his use of the book of Genesis stays away from the more
mythic or fantastic aspects of the story: Kant’s desire to present a conjecture that does not stray into fiction carries into his use of the book of Genesis.

The possibility of naming is for Kant also the possibility of inter-subjective speech or discourse (“ja reden”). The moment of inter-subjectivity is linked to Genesis 2:23, the consequence of which is thinking. Wood’s omission of this crucial interpolation seriously undermines the translation of the essay and the sense in which Kant is conceiving of thinking. Genesis 2:23 is the scene of Adam naming man and woman. Martin Luther’s translation catches at a word-play in the Hebrew not caught by the King James translation:

There spoke the human [Luther’s translation for Adam]: It is from the bone of my bone and from the flesh of my flesh; one (man) will call her she-man (Männin), because she is taken from man.

Da sprach der Mensch: Das ist doch Bein von meinem Bein und Fleisch von meinem Fleisch; man wird sie Männin nennen, weil sie vom Manne genommen ist.

Luther uses the improbable cognate Männin, which I have translated as she-man, to catch at the word-play in Hebrew between Ish and Ishah, man and she-man respectively. At this point, woman, as in some visible way fundamentally different

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112 I thank Professor Nathaniel Deutsch for discussing the Hebrew with me in the book of Genesis.
from man, has yet to appear in chapter 2 of the book of Genesis. The Hebrew Bible and Luther’s translation point to an enigmatic difference within a movement of corporeal identity (“bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh”) and near linguistic identity (“one will call her she-man because she is from man”), captured on the basis of awkward cognates of man (Ish or Mann). These cognates precede Adam’s cognition of himself in both the generic “one” (man) and as “man” (Ish or Mann). In the order of exposition, it is on the basis of this difference, signaled by feminine suffixes in Hebrew and German, that Adam identifies (or cognizes) himself as man (Ish), and thus as the conceptual origin and corporeal cause (“because”) of she-man (“she is taken from man”).

What then is it about this act that involves pointing towards some kind of difference of the she-man – not yet woman – that enables Adam or der Mensch to identify himself as man, to think himself as man in terms of an abstraction? What is clear from this line in the Bible is that the difference that is constructed here is not a corporeal difference, or one of differing embodiments, but something altogether different. Or, in a somewhat different fashion, perhaps the corporeal embodiment here transfers from Adam (from the Hebrew Adamah, “earth creature”), to the two flesh and bone beings. Flesh here is connected to the earth or soil. Adam is simultaneously man (a flesh and bone embodiment opposed to she-man) and human (some abstraction). Or, perhaps again, the linguistic difference of the feminine Männin is precisely the difference that enables both the corporeal embodiment to be cognized
and then done away with, such that man can be *thought* (and can thus think) without the embodiment.

For Kant, the pure act of thinking arises precisely through this awkward and enigmatic movement of sexual difference. The thought of the abstraction human arises from an inter-subjective discursive moment of naming some kind of difference that is not yet the difference of man from woman, but rather man and she-man.

This thought of abstract difference is an essential assumption to representing the “human being” as in some sense first (“the first human being could”), even if not chronologically the first “human being” in terms of experience. On this basis, Kant conjectures a rational origin to human history located in the emergence of some kind of representable practical reason: “in order to consider the development of what is moral (Sittlichen) in his doing and refraining,” a practical reason to which the naming of she-man and the self-recognition of man are prior. The thinking of sexual difference thus appears also prior to the abstract representations by which practical reason operates.\(^{113}\)

Another way to conceptualize this origin is as at the cusp of human labor, right before reason emerges in the content of the narrative, and before reason emerges in the structure of the narrative to turn the play of conjecture into the labor of epistemology. If read in conjunction with the “Idea,” this is the moment of unsociable sociability. In this essay, Kant narrates four steps of reason alongside, predictably, the Fall, chapter 3 of the book of Genesis.

Kant’s links his conjectural origin to the book of Genesis in order to fashion a reading principle in which what appears to be sin can at the same time be read as a progressive moment of the emergence of reason, if read according to a “guiding thread.” Consequently, the emergence of rational autonomy (“reason soon began to stir”) is placed alongside verses 6 and 7 of chapter 3, namely the scene of eating fruit from the tree of knowledge, and the sequential moment of adorning fig-leaves. “Reason soon began to stir” into erection, as it were. This scene of reason’s emergence has an uncanny aspect. For subjective reason is possibly operating in the representation of a pre-rational time before reason’s stirring. Placed alongside a primary instinct of nutrition and sex, the resulting story details the emergence of rational choice (freedom to choose) and then the ability to choose independently from nature (freedom to be rational).

The temptation of the snake is linked to the early stirrings of reason, which through the use of multiple senses and the cognitive action of comparison seeks to “extend his knowledge of the means of nourishment beyond the limits of instinct (Genesis 3:6).” (AA VIII 1111, 165) The opening of the faculty of choice is placed alongside verse 6, the scene of she-man or woman (Luther has replaced Männin with Weib) eating fruit from the Tree of Knowledge and then giving the fruit to the man. The first stirring of reason is thus presented in the context of a shared repast.

114 It is rare for Kant to name the two functions necessary for the concept of an organism as instincts (Instinkt). We might understand by this use Kant’s appeal to a kind of given nature. The phenomenal manifestations of these forces are given the name of drives (Trieb) and impulses (Antrieb), Kant’s favored terms when considering his moral psychology.
The true moment of the emergence of reason is placed in the next step, the instinct to sex. There are oddly two interpolations to verse 7 of chapter 3. The origin of reason is thus placed within the movement of a single verse. First, Kant details the consequences of the opening of the faculty of choice.

Now the harm might have been as insignificant as you like, yet about this it opened the human being’s eyes (Genesis 3:7) He discovered in himself a faculty of choosing for himself a way of living and not being bound to a single one, as other animals are. Yet upon the momentary delight that this marked superiority might have awakened in him, anxiety and fright must have followed right away, concerning how he, who still did not know (kannte) the hidden properties and effects of any thing, should deal with this newly discovered faculty. He stood, as it were, on the brink of an abyss; for instead of the single objects of his desire to which instinct had up to now directed him, there opened up an infinity of them; and from this estate of freedom, once he had tasted it, it was nevertheless wholly impossible for him to turn back again to that of servitude (under the dominion of instinct). (AA VIII 112, 166)

The emergence of reason in the expansion of objects of choice leads to a stalled moment of terror rather than sublimity in the face of an abyss. The pair is faced with the appearance of an infinity of objects, perceivable only at the level of
appearance and not in any depth. In the Martin Luther translation, the first part of verse 7 reads, “Then the eyes of them both were opened, and they were aware that they were naked.” (“Da wurden ihnen beiden die Augen aufgetan, und sie wurden gewahr, daß sie nackt waren”) Kant places the edge at the brink of an abyss and the instinct to sex in the conjunctive “and” between the opening of the eyes and the awareness (warden gewahr can also mean awakened) of nudity, between being the objects upon which to be acted upon (“their eyes were opened”) and conscious subjects (“they were aware”), in other words between the possibility of the theoretical capacity to choose and the practical possibility of avoiding shame.

For Kant, as for a certain line in classical anthropology, sex and nutrition, the two “hierophanies” have a close relationship. In the Metaphysics of Morals, Kant presents the fulfillment of sex in alimentary terms: carnal enjoyment is eating the object of one’s desire. In the use of each other’s genital organs, “each is a res fungibilis to the other.” In this essay, the two instincts are presented as proximate (“next”) to each other.

Next to the instinct of nourishment, through which nature preserves every individual, the most preeminent is the sexual instinct, through which it cares

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115 In the Metaphysics of Morals, Kant writes “Carnal enjoyment is cannibalistic in principle (even if not always in effect)...whether something is consumed by mouth and teeth, or whether the woman is consumed by pregnancy and the perhaps fatal delivery resulting from it, or the man by exhaustion of his sexual capacity from the woman’s frequent demands upon it, the difference is merely in the manner of enjoyment.” For Kant, of course, the carnal enjoyment of the woman is intertwined with pregnancy, which was not necessarily the case in the popular discourse. These manifestations of reason in nutrition and sex are described by Mircea Eliade as hierophanies in The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion, Orlando: Harcourt, 1959.
for the preservation of the kind. Once reason had been stirred, it did not omit to demonstrate its influence on the latter too. The human soon found that the stimulus (Reiz can also be translated attraction) to sex, which with animals merely rests on a transient, and for the most part periodic impulse (Antrieb), was capable for him of being prolonged and even increased through the power of the imagination, whose concern is indeed with more moderation, but at the same time presses [treiben, the imagination uses the force of trieb to moderate the Antrieb] more enduringly and uniformly the more the object is withdrawn from the senses and that it prevents the boredom (Überdruss) that occurs with the satisfaction of a merely animal desire. (AA VIII 112-3, 166, Kant’s emphasis)

Kant is weaving a thread into an elliptical moment in Luther’s translation of the book of Genesis. For Kant, this is also the moment for Kant of reason stirring. The eating and digestion of the fruit in the Book of Genesis leads to a moment of satisfaction followed by an awareness of nudity. For Kant, the eating of the fruit is equivocal: fruit seems to refer to both an object of nutrition and an object of sex. The eating of the fruit thus leads not only to the opening up of the faculty of choice but also, strangely, to a prophylactic for sex, that hiding the object of stimulus – the genitals – from the senses leads to the prolonging and increase of the inclination to sex. As with “Idea”, there is a reference to a prior moment. The memory of the surfeit of satisfaction or disgust that the term Überdruss carries is associated with the
fulfillment of a "merely, animal desire" that is never represented as such. In other words, the memory of a presumably heterosexual encounter becomes accessible in the opening up of a faculty of choice.

If the eating of the fruit for Kant – as an extension of the faculty of choice and the opening of the sense of sight – is a pleasurable experience ("momentary delight") followed by coming to the brink of an abyss, the heterosexual act of reproduction – an attempt to penetrate the abyss perhaps – is accompanied not by fear but by repulsion and disgust. Here, the pleasure associated with sexuality carries with it some added dimension, a surfeit – implied in the term Überdruss – a kind of over-satisfaction, that leads to a withdrawal of the stimulus. The aporia in this essay between fiction and epistemology, or play and labor, is most strongly staged in these lines. What exactly is withdrawn from the senses? The highlighted emphasis covers over a textual moment – simultaneously fictional and epistemological and neither fictional nor epistemological – in which some action leads to the withdrawal from the senses of the object of the stimulus, most likely the genitals. Does Eve or Adam withdraw first? Whose desire takes priority? These questions are not answered.

Instead, Kant uses another conjunction in verse 7 to cover the gap. The second part of verse 7 reads, “they were aware that they were naked, and weaved fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. ("sie wurden gewahr, daß sie nackt waren, und flochten Feigenblätter zusammen und machten sich Schurze.") The second conjunction is thus the space in which an aporetic decision has been made in the Bible, in which the relationship between conscious awareness and practical action is
ordered, such that the awareness of nudity leads to the weaving of fig-leaves. The primary intention, it would appear, of knowledge (as awareness) is the avoidance of shame. For Kant, on the other hand, this conjunctive “and” operates differently: the weaving of the fig-leaf is to avoid the revulsive sense of excess that comes from fulfilling a “mere, animal desire”; in other words, the weaving of the fig-leaf is not to avoid shame but rather to prolong and increase the “stimulus” that leads to sex, in other words, the withdrawing from the senses opens precisely the space of imagination and fantasy. In terms of unsociable sociability, the withdrawal of the genitals from the senses into the space of imagination stops the moment of unsociability, maintaining instead only the attractive or sociable relation, as long as the sexual impulse is not satisfied. Yet, this action is premised on a prior “knowledge” of disgust. Thus, this space of imagination and fantasy (of play) is not distinct from the avoidance of shame, but shame is most explicitly associated with erotic satisfaction, not simply with the presence of eros. In the passages that follow, it becomes clear that the weaving of the fig-leaf is the weaving of the origin of history, the covering over of the abyss of nature and the genitals of Eve.

The fig leaf (Genesis 3:7) therefore was the product of a much greater expression of reason, than had been proven in the first stage of development. For to make an inclination more inward and enduring by withdrawing its object from the senses, shows already the consciousness of some dominion of reason over the impulse and not merely, as in the first step, a faculty for doing
service to those impulses within a lesser or greater extension. (AA VIII 113, 166)

At this point, with the decision covered over by the phrase “withdrawn from the senses”, Kant can read the sins of the Bible as the emergence of reason in the human. Reason is at the same time an interiorization of nature, yet of a specific sort: here, the interior and corporeal instinct of sexuality, made manifest in a transient and periodic impulse, is interiorized, and thus subject to the operations of the cognitive faculties.

*Refusal* was the first artifice for leading from the merely sensed stimulus over to ideal ones, from merely animal desire gradually over to love, and with the latter from the feeling of the merely agreeable over to the taste for beauty, in the beginning only in human beings but then, however, also in nature. (AA VIII 113, 166, Kant’s emphasis)

“Refusal” translates “withdrawn from the senses” into an action, the result of a decision. Thus continuing to cover over the aporia, the fig-leaf is read as a type of action and practical object, whose function is to interiorize and thus transform an economy of natural inclinations, animal desires, and agreeable pleasures into a cognitive economy of rational love and beauty. The highlighted terms in this passage are the aporetic moments. The next highlighted term to appear turns the withdrawal
from the senses into an ethical action and associates it with shame and the Kantian theme of moral respect. The weaving of the fig-leaf that is the withdrawal from the senses of the genitals does not only constitute an action and the construction of an aesthetic object, it also makes appear/institutes a moral inclination upon which sociability is founded. The founding of sociability as the basis of society contains a kind of contradiction. The move towards cohesion and sociability requires the covering over by the fig-leaf that sustains attraction. Reproduction on the other hand entails a moment of unsociability: an uncovering of the fig-leaf that potentially leads to sexual intercourse and a taking away of attraction. The fig-leaf thus sustains the sociable moment of attraction that leads to moral behavior.

Moreover, propriety (Sittsamkeit), an inclination by good conduct to influence others to respect for us (through the concealment of that which could incite low esteem), as the proper foundation of all true sociability, gave the first hint toward the formation of the human being as a moral (sittliche) creature. (AA VIII 113, 166-7, Kant’s emphasis)

Thus constructed, Kant has found the moment of experience by which to render his conjecture an origin to history. The moment of experience is never explicitly given, but if we recall that Kant writes that it was no better or worse then than it is now, it is precisely in the inclination to propriety that impels the everyday action of putting on
clothes to which Kant is here appealing. Indeed, propriety is the possibility of any experience as a moral experience. History has thus begun:

– A small beginning, which, however is epoch-making, in that it gives an entirely new direction to the mode of thinking, and is more important than the entire imperceptible series of extensions of culture that followed upon it. (AA VIII 113, 167)

The use of the diacritic dash here seems to cover the time period from the origin to the present, from the conjecture to the present cognition of it. At this point, Kant relays two more steps of reason – the opening of the future and the dominion over animals as means – before concluding the first epoch of society, which coincides with the end of chapter 3 of the book of Genesis. This epoch stands within the tendency to laziness in the “Idea”. The appearance of labor and unsociable sociability occurs at the beginning of the next epoch of society. Here, Kant opens chapter 4 of the book of Genesis. Yet, he begins with verse 2, covering verse 1 with a “great leap.”

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 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
hunters to the first, and from the unsettled digging of roots or gathering of fruit to the second, might have taken place slowly enough. (AA VIII 118, 171)

Verse 1 of chapter 4 is the great moment of knowledge/action that founds human descent and establishes Adam and Eve as the first parents of all humans. In Luther, it reads “And Adam knew his woman Eve, and she was pregnant and gave birth to Cain and spoke: I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord.” (“Und Adam erkannte sein Weib Eva, und sie ward schwanger und gebar den Kain und sprach: Ich habe einen Mann gewonnen mit Hilfe des HERRN.”)

Here, of course, the very term for cognition (erkennen), is used in its Biblical sense to mean a kind of carnal knowledge that is simultaneously an action, namely, the act of heterosexual intercourse. That Kant seems not to want to admit this moment in his narrative of an origin, placing it much earlier, is curious. For Kant, the dual labors of pregnancy and farming that mark the punishment of the sins of Eve and Adam in the Bible – the transition from a period of laziness into a period of labor and discord – is omitted in favor simply of the birth of Abel as Cain’s brother and the start of the occupations of herding and farming. Labor and discord are thus decidedly masculine for Kant. The emergence of history as a masculine story of labor thus entails the effacing of an originating act of “knowledge/cognition”, starting from the effects – the brothers Cain and Abel – instead. There is thus no moment of representation in Kant’s narratives in which the fig-leaf comes back off.

Instead, questions of sexual labor and posterity are placed in the fantasy world opened by the fig-leaf, namely, in the expectation of the future given as the third step
of reason. For Kant, then, the question of sexual labor is considered in the
imagination of the couple Eve and Adam in chapter 3 of the book of Genesis, within
the garden of Eden. Adam’s assumption of the proper name Adam in opposition to the
naming of the she-man as Eve as well as the cognition of the difference of the she-
man as a sexual difference in terms of a power difference occurs in this space of the
imagination opened by the fig-leaf. On the basis of a shared moment of propriety
between past and present, the future opens up. The third step of reason is thus “the
deliberate expectations of the future.” The space of fantasy is one in which the
pleasure of the present can be deferred through the “making present” or
representation of the future. This representation is at the same time the “most
inexhaustible source of cares and worries.” (AA VIII 113, 167) Here, Kant’s
interpolation is for the first time multiple: a gloss of verses 13-19 of chapter 3,
namely, the scenes in which God learns of the sin of Eve and Adam and punishes
them. For Kant, this punishing is the establishment of the family as the best means by
which to negotiate finitude and posterity: here the family has yet to be established
concretely in the Bible or Kant’s narrative. Instead, it is a figure of the inevitable
future that guides the present of Eve and Adam. Moreover, Kant’s terminology
changes to imply that the marriage of Eve and Adam has already occurred.

The man (Mann might also be translated husband here), who had to nourish
himself and his spouse (Gattin), together with their future children, foresaw
the ever-growing troubles of his labor; the woman foresaw the hardships to
which nature had subjected her sex, and additionally still those which the 
more powerful man would lay upon her. (ibid)

What occasions this foresight? For the child has yet to be born, nor do Eve 
and Adam have knowledge – in the carnal or theoretical sense. There is thus a virtual 
structure of the family that is being established. The sexual difference between man 
and woman is here given in a projected difference in labor, the difference of the 
spouse (Gattin), and an epistemological difference in power (“the more powerful 
man”). Of these three differences, the last is the most enigmatic: up to this point in the 
Bible, it is certainly Eve who is the more powerful of the two figures; thus, how is she 
able to imagine Adam as the more powerful person in the Kantian narrative? There 
have yet to be any actions which establish Adam as the more powerful. This 
difference in power can only have been established in the actions that preceded the 
decision which occasioned the weaving of the fig-leaf. On the basis of this difference 
in man and woman, a terrifying aesthetic vision of the future opens up:

Both foresaw with fear that which, after a troubled life, lying in the 
background of the painting, befalls unavoidably all animals, to be sure, yet 
without worrying them – namely, death, and they seemed to reproach 
themselves and make into a crime the use of reason that causes them all these 
ills. (ibid)
Nature as abyssal origin now becomes nature as the abyssal future, ending in the knowledge of finitude. For this original couple, ambiguously married, finitude can only be broached – hope can only be found in this fantasy world – by reproduction, ambivalently natural and cultural.

To live on in their posterity, who might perhaps have it better, or also might alleviate their hardships as members of a family, this was perhaps the single consoling prospect that sustained them. (*Genesis* 3:16-20) (AA VIII 113-4, 167)

The imagination of a family thus establishes the following: a surviving (living on) in their descendants (Nachkommenschaft); future laborers who will lighten the load (the question of aging); and a consoling hope in an otherwise bleak situation. In what sense is posterity a living on? Kant does not ask that question here. Moreover, this single prospect in a state of origin broadens in the state of culture. The end of the passage thus adds the line not included in the earlier interpolation, verse 20 from chapter 3: “And Adam named his woman Eve; for she was the mother of all that lives there.” (“Und Adam nannte sein Weib Eva; denn sie wurde die Mutter aller, die da leben.”) The proper name of Eve – in Hebrew Havah “life”, completing the sequence begun in chapter 2 of the Book of Genesis, operates not as a proper name but as a kind of fully meaningful guarantor: for “Eve” is life”. In this manner, finitude has been broached, and woman has been cognized as life. The naming of Eve as life
opens up to the last step of reason: the use of concepts and the relationship of moral respect between humans, through the cognition of the human – now as the abstraction of the divided couple Adam and Eve – as a teleological product of nature.

The fourth and last step that reason took in elevating the human being entirely above the society with animals was that he grasped (begriff) (however obscurely) that he was the proper (eigentlich) end of nature, and that in this nothing that lives on earth can supply a competitor to him. The first time he said to the sheep: *Nature has given you the skin you wear not for you but for me*, and then took it off the sheep and put it on himself (*Genesis 3:21*), he became aware of a prerogative he had by his nature over all animals, which he no longer regarded as his fellow creatures…This representation includes (however obscurely) the thought of the opposite: that he must not say something like this to any human being, but has to regard him as an equal participant in the gifts of nature – a preparation from afar for the restrictions that reason was to lay on the will in the future in regard to his fellow human beings, and which far more than inclination and love is necessary to the establishment of society. (AA VIII 114, 167)

The cognition of being an end of nature – which in the Bible is the scene where God makes coats of animal skins to clothe Adam and Eve – leads to a thought of the opposite (Gedanken des Gegensatz). Here, the thought, which must in some
sense be abstract and in the imagination – is represented in both a prohibition (“he must not say”) and a consideration (“regard him as an equal participant”). Human existence now means a pair whose difference is a difference of power. Sexual difference per se has yet to be established except in the imagination. Chapter 3 of the Book of Genesis is now closed, before God expels Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, and Kant moves into history as a history of the brothers Cain and Abel. To interrogate sexual difference, and thus perhaps to reconsider the question of why the fig-leaf is woven, I turn to the Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View.
3. Knowing Gender for Universal Humanity

In this chapter, I pursue the questions opened up in the last chapter. The enigmatic self-knowledge of the “The Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Aim” was connected to an enigmatic moment of refusal in “Conjectural Beginning to Human History”, precisely in the founding of sociability, culture, and morality. I inquire into this enigmatic moment, using the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* to flesh out a possible response.

The problem of political autonomy in history has taken shape in two forms so far – between knowledge and action and between knowledge and fiction – rendered apparent in the description of the transition from nature to culture. In the section of the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* titled “The Character of the Sexes”, the problem of political autonomy takes form in the question of finding the right way to order nature and culture. *The Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* is centrally concerned with using knowledge of nature (physiological anthropology) – the *empirical* - pragmatically to take a step in the “progress of culture.” The second part of the book, which includes the “Character of the Sexes” asks the question of what it is to be pragmatic specifically as a cognitive relation that uses the exterior (appearance) to establish some kind of interior (reason) in its subtitle: “on the way to cognize (zu erkennen) the interior of the human being from the exterior.” (AA VII 283, 383, trans slightly modified)

The discursive frame changes rapidly, from paragraph to paragraph in this section, as the philosophical anthropologist tries to cognize woman by ordering nature
and culture. An array of discourses appears: teleology and mechanism, botanical
grafting, domestic warfare and military regiments, Greek civilizationism, gallantry,
and English satire. Within these circulating discourses, the terms nature and culture
are never fixed, taking meaning from each other and on the basis of temporary
oppositions to each other. What seems clear and evident turns out to be almost
unreadable. The first lines of this section show this complexity:

In all machines that are supposed to accomplish (ausrichtet also means to
align) with little power just as much as those with great power, art must be put
in. Consequently, one can already assume: that the provision of nature put
more art into the organization of the female part than of the male; for it
furnished the man with greater power than the woman. (AA VII 303, 399,
Kant’s emphasis)

The metaphor of machines assumes a cultural knowledge of instrumentally
using nature as matter, in other words, the teleological use of the mechanism of
nature. Here, the otherwise inexplicable difference in power between two machines
which are able to do the same thing can be filled by art. Art (Kunst) is an equivocal
term, implying not only the artifice (the instrumental use of nature) of an ingenious
design but also the specifically aesthetically ingenious (and natural) design called
beauty. What then is it to make explicable nature’s provision in terms of art, when art
itself can only be thought for Kant in relation to nature? Indeed, is the imperative
phrase “art must be put in” a theoretical assumption about how to know or understand
the difference of machines; or is it a practical imperative about how to represent this
difference? Is it perhaps a moral imperative that governs the gender relations Kant is
about to specify? On the basis of this analogy from culture, machine designates not
only the instrumental use of material nature, but also becomes a metaphor for the
natural difference of some whole (the human) composed of a female and male part.
The analogical link is established between the similarity of two causes: the difference
in power of machines that accomplish or align to the same degree, and the difference
in power between man and woman. These seemingly legible lines become unreadable
without some grounding principle, some assumption that there is a difference between
nature and culture, which is precisely the problem Kant is trying to solve.

The scene is only readable if we assume the fact of a difference in
organization of machines that has an analogical relationship to the fact of a difference
of power between man and woman. Consequently, the knowledge of sexual
difference as in some primary way a difference of power needs to be assumed as a
principle of reading. Otherwise, each term seem to take and give meaning from and to
some shifting sense of nature. For what is metaphorical and what is material keep
circulating in this schema. The question of difference appears to rest on knowing the
difference in organization of woman, a question that in some form or fashion needs to
be broached through art as both cause and mode of perception.

In the expressed logic of this passage, the difference in machines leads to a
consequence which also functions as an assumption for a different argument. The
consequence is given in a long sentence which attempts to articulate the logic of this section:

Consequently, one can already assume: that the provision of nature put more art into the organization of the female part than of the male part, because it furnished the man with greater power than the woman in order to bring both into the most intimate corporeal union (Vereinigung can also mean aggregation), which, insofar as they are nevertheless also rational beings, it orders to the end most important to it, the preservation of the species (Erhaltung der Art), and moreover, in this quality of theirs (as rational animals), it provided them social inclinations in order to make persistent their sexual community into a domestic union (Verbindung). (AA VII 303, 399, Kant’s emphasis)

Here, an ordering principle is attempted, in which the power-difference is the causal origin behind the natural difference in organization of the male and female part. This power difference is then given a teleological explanation which grounds it in nature’s attempts to order (note the repetition of the phrase “in order to” throughout this section) a corporeal union into a rational union – a sexual community into a domestic union. The decoupling of intimate, corporeal union as a phenomenon from its purpose – “preservation of the species” – is given in the difference between corporeal and rational. The figure of the intimate, corporeal union is also a figure for the textual ordering of this section, of the organization of parts into a whole that is not
an abyssal hole (this is the purpose of the weave of history): Kant is trying to work out a way in which the attraction of several discourses might be given a rational purpose. Here, gender differences are simultaneously played out as differences of discourses that might be both produced and bridged in a principle of ordering.

Unsociability is developed in the implied violence that persists in the
difference of power. Why would a difference of power – rather than, say, some account of desire – ensure that both man and woman would be brought into the “most intimate, corporeal union”? The implication here is that the man will act violently if need be to ensure this union, and that the legible understanding of this violence is nature’s intention of “preservation of the species” (Erhaltung der Art). Consequently, unsociability is linked to sexual violence. Reason emerges out of the potential for the man to act violent towards the woman.

The decoupling of the instinct or inclination for sexual union from
“preservation of the species” is given precisely in a distinction between nature’s teleological aim for “corporeal union” and a “rational” aim in preservation. The sexual union is the “pure, animal desire”, whereas the “preservation of the species” has a rational dimension. If sexual union and the preservation of the species are uncoupled, their conscious linking is the moment in which nature’s teleology becomes knowable. As with the previous two sections, unsociability is necessary to start reason off, but then must be somehow regulated in order for reason to fully emerge.
The clash of desires or inclinations in this originary union needs to be realigned towards some proper ordering. Indeed, the rest of the section is precisely about how to regulate the potential violence between man and woman in order to transform chance associations (another translation for Vereinigung) into a domestic union. This change depends on the action of making persistent social inclinations; in other words, for sociability to regulate attempts at unsociability. A normative discourse of gender roles thus attempts to supply the principle of regulation. The principle of regulation also attempts to order the violence between discourses.

Two persons convening at preference is insufficient for the unity and indissolubility of a union; one part (ein Teil) must yield to the other, and, in turn, one must be superior to the other in some way, in order to be able to rule over or govern him. For in the equality of claims of two people who cannot do without each other [sociability], self-love produces nothing but unsophisticated squabbling (lauter Zank). (AA VII 303, 399, trans slightly modified)

Transforming social unions into domestic unions cannot be a matter of two people with equal claims; the equality here seems to refer to a baseline of identical desires which produce unsophisticated squabbling, a violence in which the man will win. Instead, two near identical economies of desire and fulfillment must transform into two heterogeneous economies of submission and superiority: economies in which the yielding within one economy is accompanied by a superiority in the other. In
nature, there is only one economy and one kind of desire: an economy of power and a purely, animal desire. Yet, on the other hand, why would the fulfillment of this purely animal desire either require the use of the power difference to ensure its fulfillment or cause unsophisticated squabbling? What object is this originary couple squabbling about? Moreover, a proper union cannot be between two persons but only between two “parts” of a whole in a properly binding union, in the move from the substantive nouns woman (Weib) and man (Mann) into adjectival parts (weiblichen Teil and männlichen Teil). The regulation of violence between these two persons so as to transform them into two parts thus depends on some kind of means by which to internalize the violence within the union, as a force that binds the two parts together. This internalization depends on the instantiation of different economies.

In the sequence of culture (Fortgänge der Cultur), one part (Ein Teil) must be superior in a different way (heterogene Art): the man must be superior to the woman through his physical capacity and courage, while the woman must be superior to the man through her natural talent for mastering his inclination for her; on the other hand in still uncivilized conditions superiority is simply on the side of the man. (AA VII 303, 400, Kant’s emphasis, trans slightly modified)

Louden’s consistent translation of “Ein Teil” as “each partner” elides the movement of this passage. Kant’s claim is not that each partner must be different; rather, the difference from nature to culture is precisely in the institution of an economy in which the male part stays the same and the womanly part is superior in a
heterogeneous way. The possibility of the “preservation of the species” (Erhaltung der Art) as a rational end depends on the superiority of being “of a heterogeneous kind” (auf heterogene Art). Kant’s recourse to the Latinate “heterogene” is to name a difference that he cannot fully grasp conceptually in German, and thus similar to the essays on race, the demonstration in the rest of the section will attempt to determine gender (Geschlecht) as precisely a heterogeneous difference. The different economy of the woman is an economy of a different kind (Art), which is necessary to the preservation of the kind (Art). The difference in machines, the English art (Kunst) has to do with elaborating the organization of the woman within a heterogeneous economy. The provision of art here is also a matter of discourse: of formulating a heterogeneous discourse – different to the discourse of man – by which to elaborate this difference. The superiority of the woman cannot be elaborated in the same discourse. Same here is equivocal: it refers not only to the discourse of man, but also to the possibility of being elaborated in a univocal or monolithic discourse. Not only must the discourse of woman be heterogeneous to the discourse of man, it must also be internally heterogeneous, a heterogeneity that includes recourse to Latin. The discourse of woman – and here I shift sense to consider what Kant has to say about women speaking – cannot be simple, for this is a mark of “uncivilized conditions,” in which simple speech gives superiority to the man. Indeed, the superiority of woman lies, as Jacques Derrida and Sarah Kofman both point out, in the capacity of woman to speak in a heterogeneous way.¹¹⁶ Louden’s translation of “lauter Zank” as

¹¹⁶See Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, and Sarah Kofman, “The Economy of Respect: Kant and Respect For
squabbling rather than “unsophisticated squabbling” misses the point that the
discourse of and by woman can only be given in a language of sophisticated
squabbling, in which what is simple, true, or genuine, is constantly shifting and at
war.

I have saved discussion of the opening of this passage, the emphasized
“sequence of culture.” Kant rarely refers to a “sequence of culture” as a progressive
moment, utilizing it some three times in his oeuvre. The positive description of a
sequence here is precisely what Kant’s aporia of history ought not to let him do. If the
aporia of history entails that the possibility of a positive history is not knowable and
thus not representable, the positive description of sequence implies knowledge.
Indeed, the emphasized “sequence of culture” is the phrase that performs the
paradoxical transition from nature to culture, linked to the covering over that is the
fig-leaf in the “Conjectural Beginning to Human History” and self-knowledge in the
“Idea”.

In this essay, the notion of a sequence (Fortgange) implies that some ordering
has been found. Louden’s translation of Fortgang and Fortschritt as indistinguishably
progress do not capture the difference between step (Schritt) – Kant’s usual term for
some sign of historical progress- and sequence (Gang)– some ordering of events
which for Kant cannot, by the epistemological limits of his critical philosophy, appear
as a progressive sequence of history. The phrase “sequence of culture” momentarily
interrupts the distinction being drawn between moral imperatives in culture about

Women.”
what good unions should look like and an epistemological description of what a sexual community in nature is. After this phrase the language resumes again, but with an ordering principle.

–For this reason, in anthropology, the womanly properties, more than those of the manly sex, are a topic of study for the philosopher. In the raw state of nature one can as little cognize them as those of crab apples (Holzäpfel) and wild pears (Holzbirnen), whose diversity is revealed only through grafting or inoculation\textsuperscript{117}; for culture does not introduce these feminine compositions (Beschaffenheiten), it only allows them to develop and become knowable under favorable conditions. (AA VII 303, 400, trans slightly modified)

The elaboration of a discourse of woman – as object and subject – is more important to a philosopher in anthropology than a discourse of man, precisely because

\textsuperscript{117} Louden’s translation of “pfropfen oder inoculieren” by “grafting or inoculation” renders two similar words – often used together with the shortened form of the latter – “pfropfen oder oculiren” – both referring to grafting as distinct processes. The translation of inoculieren by the generally medical term inoculation referring to pathogens is not correct. The English term inoculation – not inoculation – is a botanical term and might have been used. Pfropfen and oculiren (or inoculiren) seem both to be a general term for grafting and also refer to specific methods of grafting. Various texts of the time sometimes prioritize pfropfen as the general term for grafting to which oculiren is a specific method and sometimes prioritize oculiren as the general term for grafting to which pfropfen is a specific method. Moreover, here the terms of botanical method relate not only to the burgeoning natural sciences, but will soon come to be part of a lexicon of terms of culture to be used by women in conversation, particularly in reading circles (Lesezirkel). In other words, the term grafting is part of a discourse of nature that enters into the civil discourse of literate women. This case too shows the heterogeneous discourse of woman. It is perhaps in keeping that these botanical terms appear in a lexicon for women in holding conversations, particularly in reading circles. See Damen Conversations Lexikon, Band 7, [o.O.] 1836, pp. 474-475. See also the review of “Transactions for the Advancement of Gardening in Royal Prussian States” in J.C. Louden, The Gardener’s Magazine and Register of Rural and Domestic Improvement, vol. III, London: Longman, Rees, Brown, and Green, Paternoster-Row, 1828, pp.63-4.
the possibility of elaborating this heterogeneous discourse is simultaneously an epistemological (cognitive) and practical (the action of thinking/writing) transition from nature to culture. It is this heterogeneous discourse moreover that makes available a discourse of humanity (anthropology). Here, though the difference is not between two substantive genders – woman and man – nor two adjectival parts of a whole – the womanly and manly part. Instead, the difference is elaborated as between sexually different adjectives that attach to different substantives – womanly property and a demonstrative pronoun (those) that is associated with the masculine gender. The cognition of the womanly properties as somehow diverse is necessary to the cognition of a masculine and feminine gender. For the manly properties are the simple, true, and stable properties, not subject to change in social conditions. Here, Kant utilizes a discourse of botany to use an analogy in which metaphors and meanings are, again, not fixed.

Crab apples and wild pears reveal a diverse range of domestic apple and pear species through the process of grafting. Otherwise, the diversity contained within these original species is not visible, and thus not knowable. The human action of grafting – art perhaps – thus reveals an already existing and invisible diversity.\(^\text{118}\) Likewise, culture in some way “grafts”; it does not introduce female compositions in a creative sense; rather, it makes perceptible a difference that was always there, disguised under a single economy of power. The persistent use of the Latinate term Cultur for culture alongside the image of the graft shows a joining together of a

physical metaphor of cultivation with a discourse of culture. The graft is physical and discursive. Through the joining together of a root-stock and stems or buds, a new nature is produced. This is not a new ontology but the knowledge of this diversity is related to the production of new empirical phenomena: in other words, the diversity of species made available through grafting was not empirically possible prior to grafting but was certainly not created through grafting. Here, the metaphor of grafting makes possible womanly compositions – referring not, as Louden translates it, only to feminine qualities but also to a new type of social union. For the effect of the grafting is to produce a binding social union of two parts through the transformation of otherwise similar persons (in an economy of power) into a newfound disparity that can be joined together. What looks like women’s weakness in an economy of power – in terms of brute strength and strength of speech – is in a culturally diverse economy revealed as superiority. The discourse of grafting thus provides one ordering principle in which a latent dimension of nature can only be activated in culture. In other words, grafting renders the ontological empirical and thus knowable.

Kant’s specific use of the term Holzapfel and Holzbirnen – crab or wild apple and wild pear – with the linguistic identity of wood (Holz) – relates the process of grafting here not necessarily to a question of propagation or making more fertile the yield but rather to the distinction between wild and domestic – or raw and cultural. Crab apples and wild pears were considered the root-stock from which varieties of domestic apples and pears were produced. Moreover, the German discourse of
grafting has with it a specifically moral aim that does not pertain, perhaps, in the English. In 1828, J.C. Loudon writes,

>The Germans have a term applicable to the object of grafting, for which we have no corresponding expression in the English language; this is Veredelung, literally, ennobling: by which it appears that they consider the operation of grafting, the term for which is Pfropfen (to graft), not so much as a mode of propagating trees, as of ameliorating or ennobling their fruits.\(^{119}\)

The metaphor of grafting seems to be the joining of a male root-stock with feminine stems or buds to produce a beautiful fruit that is cultured or cultivated woman. The outcome here is not the production of a child directly – the child or seed will be the rational end – but instead the production of the cognition of woman, as a beautiful object.

The violent “joining” of arbitrary sexual unions is replaced by grafting. Grafting refers not to the physical joining of two parts by force, but rather the imaginative binding (Bindung) and physical proximity of two parts through the act of refusal: through the weaving of the fig-leaf. The sexual inclination of the man for the woman binds him to her, and when it is refused in a specific way – namely through the substitution of a fascination object – the inclination becomes stronger and more persistent. The making persistent of social inclinations is the binding that is effected in the fig-leaf. The result of this binding, in which the removal of the fig-leaf is


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tantalizingly in reach but never taken off, is the woman as a beautiful object. Kant thus judges the level of culture and civilization by the appearance of woman as a beautiful object.

On this schema, the female properties only become knowable as beautiful objects of attraction within a sexual union in which the man’s sociability consists in desiring the woman. Here, a discourse of race, indigeneity, and gender are joined together to produce a narrative in which not only nature and culture are ordered but the representations of man and woman are ordered. For grafting not only makes the cognition of woman possible, it also designates certain types of practices as cultural rather than natural in a normative narrative of anthropological development. Not only does grafting produce a new nature – by making empirical previously tacit ontological differences – it also identifies certain actions as stemming from a potentially non-natural inclination – as artifice, culture, or art – in opposition to those derived solely from fulfilling natural impulses. In other words, the activity of grafting also indicates a graft at the level of inclination – an inclination that has been diverted from its natural object towards another object, which itself expresses the emergence of reason and, consequently, culture.

What then binds? Is it the memory of a violent origin? Is it the memory of an earlier pleasure? Is violence binding? Or is pleasure binding? Is it a violent pleasure that binds? These aporetic questions are thematized in the ensuing discourse of normative genders. What is at stake in the following passage is the division of some originary violence, such that a portion of it is contained within the domestic union –
as its binding force – and a portion of it is placed outside the domestic union, as its constitutive boundary. The institution of a heterogeneous economy of superiority aims precisely to do this. What follow are a swiftly changing array of discourses in which the weakness of women is elaborated into an economy of superiority.

Contrasting fools who see only the weakness, “reasoners see very well that they are just the levers women use for governing men.” (AA VII 303, 400) On the basis of this rational sight, Kant attempts to find the secret of women, which she will not “betray.” If “man is easy to study, woman (Frau) does not betray her secret, although she is poor at keeping another person’s secret (because of her loquacity).” (AA VII 304, 400) As an object of study, the man is easy because his discourse is simple and truthful. There is thus no secret to his speech. The difference in speech is the first moment of a heterogeneous economy. The division of violence into a regulated sociability occurs in the conduct of a war in a domestic sphere expressed through language. Three scenes of the difference between a domestic and public sphere are staged. The first is the house as a battlefield.

He loves *domestic peace* and gladly submits to her regiment (Regiment), simply in order not to see (zu sehen) himself hindered in his own concerns; she does not shy away from *domestic warfare*, which she conducts with her tongue, and for which nature bestowed her with loquacity and eloquence full of affect, which disarms the man. (AA VII 304, 400, Kant’s emphasis)
At home, he becomes part of her regiment – Louden’s translation of “Regiment” by regime changes the terrain slightly from battlefield to seat of government. Submitting to her in the home is part of an ordering principle (“in order not to see”) in which he is not disturbed as he speaks in public. To submit to her in private is to simultaneously see himself an autonomous citizen in public.

The separation of a domestic from a public sphere occurs precisely in terms of a division of violence in which the economy of power regulates a constitutive outside to the domestic sphere and a heterogeneous economy of woman regulates the binding of the inside.

He relies on the right of the stronger to give orders at home because he is supposed to protect it against external enemies; she relies on the right of the weaker to be protected by the male part (Teil) against men [but not other women] and makes him defenseless (wehrlos) by tears of exasperation while advancing against him for his lack of generosity. (AA VII 304, 400)

The translation of wehrlos by disarm and the term vorrücken in its non-military sense as reproach by Louden again changes the battlefield imagery of this passage. The house is neither the seat of governance nor some place of intrinsic satisfaction or peace: it is a battlefield in which his desire to submit and become part of her regiment at home – as her soldier of defense perhaps – is constantly tested by her own advances against him. In their face to face encounter, she is constantly
moving forward against him, while his effort to follow her at home as her soldier is continuously thwarted. Yet, this effort to follow her also puts him in front of her, as her defender – the male part against other men.

The clash of the two different economies – the right of the stronger and the right of the weaker – turns in her favor. The normative genders are thus two kinds of military figures, each effective in their own economy, and when the economies mix, victory goes to the one who is already within a heterogeneous discourse. Yet: this superiority in this heterogeneous economy does not leave the economy of power behind: the woman is always beholden to the strength of some man as a defender.

This configuration of gender roles and metaphorical terrain is then given a normative shape in a specific social-sexual union, as a kind of historical achievement (“sequence of culture”). The language of normativity approaches the discourse of race without ever crossing it. Instead, an imperial Greek discourse of civilization, in which the term “raw nature” is opposed to the Greek binaries of “barbaric constitution” and its antonym “civil society,” is the paradigm in which this configuration is given shape in monogamous (Kant uses the specifically Greek term Monogamie) marriage. The very shape of the domestic and public sphere, within which the ideal of the house as a battlefield provides a binding force and constitutive boundary, can only occur in monogamous marriage in civil society. The two remaining scenes to be given are one in nature and one in a barbaric state.

In the raw (rohen) state of nature, it is certainly different. There the woman is a domestic animal. The man leads the way with weapons in his hand, and the
woman follows him loaded down with his household belongings. (AA VII 304, 400, trans slightly modified)\textsuperscript{120}

In the raw condition of nature, within which the difference of the genders is not elaborated, the economy of power is the only economy functioning. Here, the woman can only follow him, the domestic sphere inscribed on her body as a weaker animal. His weapons are never disarmed for there is no other economy in which this might happen. This account portrays a state of nature in which the woman’s only difference is that of carrying a burden because she cannot fight with words. The impossibility of a “war” of the sexes – of some kind of battle – prevents this situation from progressing. In this situation, self-preservation always occurs in front of the man – in the form of the violence of warfare and hunting – and species preservation always occurs behind. This “raw nature” is subsequently contrasted with a barbaric civil constitution.

But even where a barbaric civil constitution makes polygamy (Vielweiberei) legal, the most favored woman in his kennel (called a harem) knows how to create dominion (Herrschaft) over the man, and he has no end of trouble creating a tolerable quietness (Ruhe) amid the squabbling (Zank) of many women to be the one (who is to rule (beherrschen) over him). (AA VII 304, 400-1, trans slightly modified)

\textsuperscript{120} The raw condition refers simultaneously to the prior normative condition of the household as battlefield as well as in Kant’s notes to an empirical account of native Americans from Samuel Hearne’s \textit{Journey from Prince of Wales fort on Hudson’s Bay to the Northern Ocean}. Is the empirical account supplying proof of the normative condition? Is the normative condition making legible the empirical account? In the next chapter, I consider these questions.
Later in the *Anthropology*, Kant writes of barbarism as a situation of force without freedom or law. The difficulty of polygamy (here the term is given in the German rather than the Greek) is that there is no possibility of quiet: the squabbling discourse by many women is constantly in the ears of the man. The etymological inheritance of barbarian – its paleonymy points to cacophony produced by babbling – is here represented in the squabbling of the harem, to which there is no easy way to produce silence. Louden’s translation of Ruhe by peace changes the metaphorical terrain to a battlefield. Yet, in this barbarian situation, there is no battlefield yet. Instead, the dominant image here is of a seat of governance: the language of competition portrays a situation that represents a legislative scene in disarray: endless squabbling about who will rule with little quiet for deliberation. The lines between domestic and public are blurred, out of order. Rather than an orderly scene of battle, with proper military units – regiments – and rules of conduct – the rights of the weaker and stronger – the scene is one of babbling. The trouble with creating quiet is precisely because the heterogeneous discourses of man and woman are not sufficiently distinct. Moreover, it is not clear in what way the rights of the stronger – to give orders in order to defend women – operate here. For the right of the stronger is not paralleled by a single right of the weaker; rather there are many; thus, perhaps his strength cannot be equally divided between physical defense and verbal parrying. There is no place for him to submit in the domestic sphere so as not to be hindered in public. The barbarian is finally – almost tautologically – characterized by a babbling squabbling.
This Greek discourse approaches the discourse of race and indigeneity by invoking raw nature and a barbaric constitution. Yet, it stays to the Greek concepts rather than utilize the discourse of race. The parallelism of the discourses – which come close to intersecting without doing so – especially in the discussion of nature’s teleology – is an effect of the dissociation that I discussed in chapter 1. The discourse of humanity – of which gender is a central part – does not stray into the discourse of the human.

Under the terms of the discourse of race, the normative move from raw nature to barbaric constitution to civil society is not only a Greek move from nature to the \textit{polis}, but tacitly also a shift in the \textit{cosmos} from the Americas through Africa and Asia into Europe. In the 1764 \textit{Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime}, the differences in sexual union is given explicitly in terms of a proto discourse of race, as I will discuss in chapter 3. In the thirty or so years since, Kant has reverted to an older Greek discourse of civilizationalism. The closest Kant comes to an intersection of the two is in his notes and footnotes. The tacit proximity of the two discourses suggests that the achievement of a normative domestic union in the \textit{polis} is sedimented onto a shift in the \textit{cosmos} to Europe as the political and erotic center.

In civil society the woman does not give herself away (sich weggeben) to the man’s appetite (Gelüsten) without marriage, and indeed \textit{monogamous} (Monogamie) marriage: Where civilization has not yet ascended to feminine freedom in \textit{gallantry} (to publicly have more men than a single one as lovers (“auch andere Männer als den einen öffentlich zu Liebhabern zu haben”)), the
man punishes his woman (Weib) if she threatens him with a rival.* But when
gallantry has become the fashion and jealousy ridiculous (as never fails to
happen in a time of luxury), the feminine character reveals itself: to assert
claims to freedom by extending favors towards men and simultaneously to
conquest over this entire gender (dieses ganzen Geschlechts). (AA VII 304-5,
401, Kant’s emphasis, trans modified)

Here, the play in German between giving herself away (sich weggeben) and
the man uttering his appetite (sich geben) is lost in the translation. The sophistication
of the discourse of squabbling and the philosophical description given is central to the
suggested moment of sexual intercourse. Does the woman objectify herself and give
herself away to the man’s direct sexual pleasure in intercourse? Or is her
objectification a continuation of the fig-leaf, by becoming a beautiful object of taste,
such that she now attracts all men? Monogamous marriage certainly contains –
legislatively – the moment of sexual intercourse. Yet Kant does not represent this
moment as a moment of nudity and sexual desire: instead, the fig-leaf comes off (it is
hard to determine whether to call this literal or figurative since the very basis by
which that distinction might be sustained is in question), to reveal the womanly
character as precisely not about her genitals. The uttering of the man’s appetite – and
becoming the object of all men’s taste – is the state in which the fleeting social
aggregation becomes a domestically bound union. The link – shown in the
emphasized terms – is between monogamy and gallantry. The boundary between the
domestic and public sphere is shaped around monogamous marriage. Monogamous
marriage makes of the house – the domestic sphere – one kind of battlefield, in which
the man chases and yields to the woman inside the house. On the other hand, he also
protects the domestic sphere from enemies – other men – thus making the house
secure from one kind of violence while regulating another kind of violence. Woman
moves out into the public sphere to compete with other women for the affections of
all men. This affectionate intercourse between men and women takes the name
gallantry. Kant’s notion of gallantry seems to by and large refer to moral gallantry.
Moral gallantry is a civilized discourse in which sexual passions could be safely
expressed and thus distinguish civil society in distinction to barbarians and savages.
Here, a code of gendered politesse allowed for the social expression of otherwise
sexual passions in appropriate ways.121

If the uttering of the man’s appetite can only happen in the house, the public
discourse is a discourse of gallantry, a discourse in which the propriety of the fig-leaf
covers over all the terms of the discourse, such that sexual passions can be
discursively expressed in a social setting. At this stage, Kant weaves together
Alexander Pope’s “Epistle to a Lady: Of the Characters of Women” with the
botanical discourse of cultivation and grafting to start to characterize the beautiful
flowers that are women.

Pope believes that one can characterize the female sex (the cultivated part of
it, of course) by two points: the inclination to dominate and the inclination to

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enjoyment. – However, by the latter one must understand not domestic but public enjoyment, where woman can show herself to advantage and distinguish herself and then the latter inclination also dissolves into the former, namely: not to back down (nachzugeben) to her rivals in pleasing others, but to triumph over them all, if possible, by her taste and charm. (AA VII 305, 401, Kant’s emphasis, trans slightly modified)

Quickly changing discourses, sometimes from paragraph to paragraph – from mechanism to botany to the battlefield to sovereignty to Greek civilizationalism to Pope’s satire – Kant’s philosopher is now starting to cognize the character of woman. In each discourse, woman as object is conceived slightly differently. The composite addressed here is not the aggregate of all women but the part that is “cultivated” – in other words, the flower produced by the graft. Here, Kant reverses Pope. The narrator of “Epistle to a Lady” paints a portrait of women as endlessly shifting and changing; in the closing lines, he thinks to have found the character of woman in “the love of pleasure and the love of sway,” of which, she “seeks the second not to lose the first.” For Kant, the two loves – given as inclinations – are reversed: “the inclination to dominate and the inclination to enjoyment” and the former takes priority over the latter. If for Pope, the love of pleasure finally appears to characterize woman, for Kant it is the inclination to dominate.

Yet this inclination to dominate cannot finally be the character of woman for Kant, for the inclination to dominate (beherrschen) characterizes humans in general,
and the discourse of man specifically. The philosopher who is studying woman attempts to articulate and thus see the object that is in front of him.

However, even the first-mentioned inclination, like inclination generally, is not suitable for characterizing a class of human beings in general in their conduct towards others. For inclination toward what is advantageous to us is common to all human beings, and so too is the inclination to dominate, so far as this is possible for us; therefore it does not characterize. (AA VII 305, 401-2, Kant’s emphasis)

The use of the collective personal pronoun “us” suggests a point of intersection between the philosopher who is writing this discourse and somewhat ambiguously the reader and the object of this discourse, namely, women. The intersection claims that the inclination to dominate is part of the commonality of all humans, rather than of a specific class. Thus, the inclination is excluded from characterizing women, insofar as they are a class of humans, and, as the subsequent passage shows, insofar as the inclination to dominate is associated with autonomy. When the inclination to dominate is associated with nature, it starts to show some significance in characterizing woman. Kant’s philosopher switches perspective from inclinations to the public battle in front of him.

However, the fact that this sex is constantly feuding with itself, whereas it remains on very good terms with the other sex, could rather be considered as
its character, were this not merely the natural result of rivalry (“möchte eher zum Charakter desselben gerechnet werden können, wenn es nicht die bloße natürliche Folge des Wetteifers ware”) to win the advantage of one over others in the favor and devotion of men. In that case, inclination to dominate is woman’s real aim, while enjoyment in public, by which the scope of her charm is widened, is only the means for providing the effect (Effect) for that inclination. (AA VII 305, 402)

The autonomy of man is staged in this passage, in which the decision to cognize woman in terms of nature is performed. Conducted in the subjunctive, the feuding of women could be calculated (gerechnet warden können) if it were not natural. The term Wetteifer plays also on emulation (another meaning for Wetteifer), wagering (wetten) and jealousy (eifer). Here, the decision to understand the feuding of women as a natural result is precisely an autonomous decision by the philosopher: his autonomy is thus linked to knowing her as a natural result.

The wager of Kant’s discourse of man is that the war of women is constituted by the public inclination (as opposed to the blurred space in which polygamy operates) to be the object of man’s favors and devotions, and thus spur an economy in which jealousy functions to keep men’s attentions while a division of violence from attention means that violence is regulated otherwise. The war of women is thus both an emulation of the violent war of men for a woman and the domesticated, regulated version of war. On the basis of choosing to consider this feud as the “natural result”, woman’s real aim (wirkliche Ziel) becomes knowable, and her subjectivity
scrutinizable. The use of the Latin Effect has shifted the burden for grasping the
difference from the cause – nature – to its effects. The difference is not yet fully
comprehensible to epistemology, but is now available in a specific mode of
comprehension, namely teleology. Thus too, nature and culture are given an ordering.

As Kant’s philosopher moves to a cognition of woman, a particular play
between the generic pronoun “one” (man) and the first person plural “we” begins to
emerge, a scene can be weaved together with Adam naming Eve.

One can only come to the characterization of this sex if one uses as one’s
principle not what we make our end, but what nature’s end was in establishing
femininity; and since this end itself, by means of the foolishness of human
beings, must still be wisdom according to nature’s purpose, these conjectural
ends can also serve to indicate the principle for characterizing woman – a
principle which does not depend on our choice but on a higher purpose for the
human race (menschlichen Geschlecht). These ends are: 1) the preservation of
the species (Erhaltung der Art), 2) The culture (Cultur) of society and its
refinement by femininity (weiblichkeit). (AA VII 305-6, 402, trans slightly
modified)

Kant’s drafts of the Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View show him
to be changing at least one use of the first person plural to the generic singular. In
other words, there is an oscillating movement between the “we” of the philosophical
investigator and reader claiming the characterization of woman and the impersonal
“one” of humanity making the claim. Kant’s use of the imperative “must” to offer a principle of reading which cognizes the “foolishness of human beings” according to nature’s purpose suggests that this moment is related to unsociable sociability in the “Idea” and the fig-leaf in “Conjectural Beginning to Human History. Here, this principle is given as a way for the philosopher to cognize a human whole, given by the phrase “menschlichen Geschlecht”, literally human gender. Indeed, Kant is clear that the cognition of this principle cannot simply be about autonomy in a restricted way – “our choice” – but depends on a “higher purpose for the human race.” The identification of the philosopher with a presumably male audience at this moment also distinguishes between a masculine discourse of autonomy with a womanly discourse of nature. The linking of autonomy to posterity – in terms of both the child and the philosophical posterity in an inheritor – is thus claimed here, in the emphasis on teleology over mere autonomy. Philosophical description thus joins the cognition of woman with the perspective of the philosopher, in a heterogeneous discourse that is unifying itself in terms of natural teleology. Thus, the human race or human gender becomes thinkable.

In chapter four, I suggest that when Kant comes to a discussion of the character of the species in the Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View, this phrase is clearly exclusionary, designating only the politically organized portion of the human. Here, it also seems clear that the cognition of woman is clearly linked to thinking the abstract human per se – in terms of the human gender – and that this abstraction can only be thought of on the basis of cognizing the cultivated part of the
gender of woman. The exclusion of the non-cultivated part is a normative exclusion here, but tacitly also effects an exclusion of non-European peoples. If cognizing a “higher purpose” for the human gender is occasioned through the use of a discourse of nature, it is at the same time part of a discourse of humanity which rarely utilizes the terminology of Kant’s discourse of natural science or discourse of the human: of germs, predispositions, and organisms. The terms for humans – menschlichen Geschlecht and Art – are not terms of natural science. Indeed, Kant delves into the latter discourse fleetingly when he has to consider the preservation of the species in physical terms.

1. When nature entrusted to the feminine womb its dearest pledge, namely, the species (Species), in the fetus (Leibesfrucht, literally fruit of the body) by which the species (Gattung) is to propagate (fortpflanzen) and perpetuate (verewigen) itself, nature was frightened (fürchtete) so to speak (gleichsam) about the preservation of the species (Gattung) and so implanted (pflanzte) this fear (Furcht) – namely, fear of corporeal injury and timidity before similar dangers – in woman’s nature; through which weakness this sex rightfully demands male protection for itself. (AA VII 306, 402, Kant’s emphasis)

The logic of the conjecture turns on word-play as much as it does on the content: the fruit of the body (Leibesfrucht), fruit that comes from the domesticated flower of the graft, can only be planted on if a personified nature plants her fear into the nature of the woman. The use of the phrase “so to speak” (gleichsam) is the
equivocal moment in which woman’s nature is momentarilly identical with nature. Sheltered by a number of heterogeneous discourses, Kant’s philosopher finally attempts to uncover the fig-leaf, to find out why it was woven in the first place. The intersection with the discourse of natural science, the attempt to weld together the corporeal with the rational, though seems to become less and less intelligible. The aporia of knowledge in unsociable sociability and the enigmatic decision by which the fig leaf is woven is here stitched together in a primordial affective structure of woman, namely, in the fear of injury and timidity – a type of virtual fright in which the fear of something at a distance occasions movement. Indeed, earlier in the anthropology Kant had specifically written of timidity as a kind of misanthropy, a perverted form of unsociable sociability. The woman thus has a kind of primordial space of fantasy or imagination opened up, which is strictly speaking not possible for Kant.

No longer content with a difference in power, Kant’s philosopher, ventriloquizing the voice of nature, does not seem assured about the decision to characterize woman as an end of nature. The “so to speak” might well be a stutter on the part of the philosopher as he is trying to distinguish the difference, to speak from the voice of nature. The displacement of the Latin difference (heterogene) from cause to effect – in its efforts to make the scene more legible – seems in contrast to be complicating it further. The use of the Latin Species here alongside the German Gattung, rather unfortunately translated by species and race, shows this tension. The language of natural science can only be used after the success of the graft, of the
blooming of the beautiful flower. Here, the moment of sexual intercourse seems to be all the more effaced. The decoupling between the corporeal and rational is now rearticulated in a teleological and cultural link: the moment of sexual reproduction – displaced to discourse – is almost completely effaced to produce the figure of a child in the final lines. As in the “Conjectural Beginning to Human History,” morality starts with the child, not with the act of reproduction.

Since nature also wanted to instill the finer feelings that belong to culture – namely those of sociability and propriety – it made this sex man’s ruler through her modesty and eloquence in speech and expression. It made her clever while still young in claiming gentle and courteous treatment by the male, so that he would find himself (gebracht sah) imperceptibly constrained (fesseln) by a child through his own magnanimity, and led by her, if not to morality itself, to that which is its cloak, moral decency, which is the preparation for morality and its recommendation. (AA VII 306, 402, trans slightly modified)

One of only two paragraphs with no emphasized terms, the moment of sexual intercourse is fully effaced: the man finds himself “imperceptibly (unsichtbar) constrained by a child through his own magnanimity.” The meanings of the term fesseln include attract, bond, constrain, and fascinate. Not only is the figure of the child what finally bonds man in this domestic union, it is also the figure that constrains and fascinates the discourse of history for Kant. If the promise of these passages from the Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View seemed to be the
rational representation of reproductive sexual activity, Kant finally substitutes the achievement of reproduction in the child rather than fulfilling the promise. The move is, of course, similar to Kant’s effacement of carnal knowledge in “Conjectural Beginning to Human History” for a start in the birth of the brothers Cain and Abel. The persistence of sociable inclinations and propriety is finally decided by the figure of the child. Imperceptibly, the lifting of the cover over the genitals reveals a child and the tacit implication of a womb. It is thus finally the child that leads to the woven cloak of moral decency. The man sees himself imperceptibly brought to morality. Here, the figure of the child not only fascinates or constrains the man to woman, it also moves his gaze from the fig-leaf – the covering of her genitals or in another register the terrible abyss of life and death – to the beginning of historical movement and the horizon of cosmopolitanism. The relationship between sexual activity and reproduction is aleatory precisely because Kant cannot represent a rational scene of sexual intercourse.

By cognizing woman through the cognition of an imperceptible time, the discourse of morality as a timeless discourse of humanity, which is at the same time the simple discourse of man, opens up to thought, as precisely an abstract discourse. If political autonomy entails not only the capacity to choose but to choose for a socially or rationally better future that can exist in the present as an object of hope, then the political autonomy of the citizen depends on joining together autonomy with teleology, which is all about knowing and doing the ordering of nature and culture. Kant’s text performs this knowing and doing, in order to produce a philosophical heir.
All this depends on a schema in which it is the woman who originally weaves the fig-leaf, who wards off both sexual attention and violence, who in some primordial sense is more sought after (AA VII 310, 406), for in the text, it is precisely the charm of the woman and her genitals that is the secret to this notion of autonomy. The capacity of the woman to virtualize herself – to displace the charm of her genitals into the charm of the refusal directs this schema.

Yet, there is a moment in this section which depends on the discourse of woman being understood as if it were the discourse of man, as if it were simple, direct, and true. At the moment that Kant’s philosopher is uttering the man’s pleasure within monogamous marriage as a moment within a public discourse of monogamy, a footnote is given as an example of uncivilized slavery.

Where civilization has not yet ascended to feminine freedom in gallantry (where a woman openly has lovers other than her husband), the man punishes (bestraft) his wife if she threatens him with a rival.* (AA VII 305, 401, Kant’s emphasis)

The footnote reads:

The old saying of the Russians that women suspect their husbands of keeping other women if they do not get a beating now and then by them is usually regarded as a fable (Fabel). However, in Cook’s Travels one finds that when an English sailor on Tahiti saw an Indian punishing his woman (Weib) by
chastising (züchtigen) her, the sailor, wanting to be gallant, attacked him with threats. The woman turned on the spot against the Englishman and asked how it concerned him: the husband must do this! (AA VII 304, 401)

Kant objects to the casting of the Russian saying as a fable, countering it with an anecdote from Cook’s Travels. Yet, Kant’s discourse is not a straightforward reproduction of Cook. Cook’s Travels\textsuperscript{122} – in the English and Wesel’s German translation of 1789 – offer a rather different anecdote. Occurring after Cook’s death, this scene does not occur in Tahiti but rather in the Sandwich Islands (Hawaiian Islands). It is offered as an exceptional scene of jealousy – as a singular instance encountered by Cook’s anxious men – rather than exemplary. In the anecdote given in Cook’s Travels, the wife of a tribal head follows the English sailors to their camp in order to obtain promised for presents. The tribal head becomes angry and beats her. Citing the high rank of the tribal head and his wife, the English sailors avoid intervening. Neither the English nor the German cast this scene explicitly as one of punishment, using only the term beating (in the German loszuschlagen). The only part of this anecdote that intersects with Kant is the imperative “the husband must do this.” Kant thus tries to restore truth to the Russian saying by casting his own\textit{empirical} fable of exemplary – rather than exceptional – violence.

\textsuperscript{122} Wesel’s 1789 \textit{Capitain Cook’s dritte und letzte Reise, oder Geschichte einer Entdeckungsreise nach dem Stillen Ocean} does indeed contain this account. I am proceeding on the assumption that Kant was reading Wesel’s account.
That Kant constructs this scene in Tahiti is not coincidental. Tahiti names for Kant the original, lazy, arcadian, raw condition of nature that needed to be overcome, precisely through the principle of unsociable-sociability.\footnote{123 Kant’s interest in Tahiti as a paradigm for the raw condition of laziness dates at least back to the 1785 “Review of J.G. Herder’s Ideas for the philosophy of the history of humanity” and potentially earlier. In that essay he had written, “Does the author really mean that if the happy inhabitants of Tahiti, never visited by more cultured 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?” (142) As I will show in the next chapter, the two names most often identified empirically with the raw condition, the American and the Tahitian, exemplify two attitudes which can also be read as kinds of refusal for Kant: originary indifference and originary pleasure.} The scene cannot be read as only between an Englishman (who for Kant is sometimes an honorary German) and a Tahitian, it is between at least two kinds of discourses: the historically achieved discourse of gallantry and a natural discourse based on gender ambivalence. The scene is staged as a clash between a mode of knowing that reads non-whites only in terms of epistemology, as types and abstractions, and one that might extend social and ethical relation to non-whites.

The Englishman for Kant is sexually motivated by his civilized discourse of gallantry to stop this public display of violence. The discourse of gallantry is countered by the Tahitian woman, whose speech, given in the subjunctive in the German as a mode of reporting indirect speech, affirms the violence of the man as an original condition to which gallantry is a hierarchical step of civilization: “the husband must do this!” (der Mann müsse das thun!)

The encounter is not only between an Englishman and a Tahitian. For Kant, it stages a clash between the normative discourse of gender that occurs in civil society (the discourse of society) and the epistemological discourse race (the discourse of...
The latter discourse turns on the spot ("she turns on the spot") to face the normative discourse and utter an imperative. In the anecdote, a brutal social relation between the Englishman and the Tahitians – which in its threat of a violent intervention offers nonetheless a possibility of ethics – is refused for the epistemological truth of the encounter: “he must do this!” The Tahitians, like other non-whites, are refused social relation. What they say or do can only be understood in terms of a discourse of types, not the transgressive language of morals. Louden’s translation of züchtigen by punishment misses this point. The Tahitian man is chastising his woman, which in the encounter of discourses might mean something like: the text is disciplining the woman in nature to fit the discourse of epistemology. Holding open momentarily the promise of a relationship between a normative discourse of humanity and an epistemological discourse of race, it is quickly refused. Normative woman can only be non-white. This discursive staging draws the boundary between the ethical and social relations available among the nations of whites and the framing of non-whites as meaningful only within a discourse of race.

By giving the speech in the distanced mode of the German Konjunctive I, Kant seems to leave it up to the readers to judge the truth of the speech. This is of course a ruse. The voice of the indigenous woman and the violence of the indigenous man – the separation of violence and speech – as utterly simple and true, because they are not gallant, founds the normative account that Kant is propounding. On this basis, Kant reveals that violence is the rational binding in the domestic unions that normative genders attract and establish.
Accordingly, one will also find that when the married woman openly practices
gallantry and her husband pays no attention to it or holds other rivals harmless
(oder andere Buhlerei schadlos halt), but rather attends to it by drinking – and
– card-parties (Punch und Spielgesellschaft), then not merely contempt
(Verachtung) but also hatred overcomes the female part: because the woman
cognizes by this that he now places no worth at all in her, and that he
abandons his wife indifferently to others to gnaw on the same bone. (AA VII
304, 401, trans modified)

If jealousy is ridiculous in civilization, the attention that comes with violence
cannot be diverted: finally, it is his indifference – for instance, if he plays with other
men, such that his social needs are met by them, or does not care for the threats of
other men – then she cognizes what she might be without him. Here, not only is her
sense of worth stripped, her very corporeality has been stripped away. Here it is as if
the very fleshliness of woman is dependent on the attention of the man, and, for that
matter, not any man but rather the husband. Her corporeality depends on his attention,
without which she recognizes herself as only bone, without any worth. Transferring
the corporeality of Adam to the sexually different pair, then, depends on an attending
to which is accompanied by violence. The correlate to the counterfactual lack of
violence in the raw condition – if the husband had not beaten the woman – is a lack of
attention in civilization. If the violence in the former is – for Cook’s travels – a
corporeal beating; and for Kant, a perhaps verbal and public chastisement (züchtigen) which is at the same time a punishment, the turning away of violence has more grievous consequences: an inability by the woman to cognize her own flesh as worthwhile.

Towards the end of the section, enumerating pragmatic consequences – the only section in the *Anthropology* where Kant claims to have gained pragmatic knowledge – Kant writes,

> When refined luxury has reached a high level, the woman appears demure only by compulsion (Sittsam) and makes no secret of wishing that she might rather be a man, so that she could give her inclinations larger and freer latitude; no man, however, would want to be a woman. (AA VII 307, 403-4)

Thus, if in the “raw condition of nature”, the genders are indistinguishable except by a difference in power, in the highest level of luxury, the woman wishes to be a man, to return to nature without the compulsion of the fig-leaf, to be able to take off the fig-leaf and give her inclinations larger extension. Yet, his autonomy is at this point no longer directed towards discourse of her, and thus his will (wollen), unlike her wish (wünschen), is not towards being a woman. Yet, it is precisely this luxury in the beauty of women that compels the motion of history. The moment that follows the four steps in the “Conjectural Beginning to Human History”, narrates the transition from a normative pre-civil raw condition into civil society in the war between the wild freedom of the nomads and agriculturalists leads to the development of an urban, colonizing, civil society: “Bit by bit, from this first and raw inception, all human art,
among which that of sociability and civil security is the most beneficial, could gradually develop, humankind (Menschengeschlecht) multiply, and extend itself everywhere from a central point, like a beehive sending out already formed colonists.” (AA VIII 119, 172, Kant’s emphasis) The compulsion by which the nomadists are assimilated is explicitly sexual: “But with time the increasing luxury of the town dwellers, but chiefly in 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, so that they entered into a combination with them and let themselves be drawn into the glittering misery of the towns.” (AA VIII 120, 172-3)

The remaining sections of the Anthropology – which is itself about weaving together heterogeneous discourses – attempt to decipher nature’s end while delving deeper into a discourse of natural sciences. In the end, though, the aporia of knowledge and action that constitute autonomy is placed in an impossible scene, in which the meanings of nature and culture collapse. The transition between nature and culture is itself given as natural, without any epistemological access. Writing precisely about the infant’s inclinations towards freedom and domination:

The cry of a newborn child is not the sound of distress but rather of indignation and furious anger; not because something hurts him, but because something annoys him: presumably because he wants to move and his inability to do so feels like a fetter through which his freedom is taken away from him. – What could nature’s intention be here in letting the child come into the world with loud cries, which, in the raw condition of nature (rohe Zustand), are extremely dangerous for
himself and his mother? For a wolf or even a pig would thereby be lured to eat the child, if the mother is absent or exhausted from childbirth. However, no animal except the human being (as he is now) will loudly announce his existence at the moment of birth which seems to have been so arranged by the wisdom of nature in order to preserve the species. One must therefore assume that in the first epoch of nature with respect to this class of animals (namely, in the time of rawness (Rohigkeit)), this crying of the child at birth did not yet exist; and then only later a second epoch set in, when both parents had already reached the level of culture necessary for domestic life; without our knowing how, or through what contributing causes, nature brought about such a development. This remark leads far; for example, to the thought that upon major upheavals in nature this second epoch might be followed by a third, when an orangutan or a chimpanzee formed the organs used for walking, for handling objects, and for speaking, into the structure of a human being, whose innermost part contained an organ for the use of the understanding and which developed gradually through social culture. (AA VII 327, 423, trans modified, my emphasis)

The careful weaving of the fig-leaves in the earlier essays as well as in the section on the “Character of the Sex” has been erased, replaced by an enigmatic dynamic in which the graft of culture is itself performed by nature. The fruit of the grafted tree – the domestic infant – is now characterized by an inscrutable natural teleology, yet one, which at the same time, represents culture itself as a natural
development. Kant ventures into the radical fiction he had not entered in “Conjectural Beginning to Human History”, all the while disavowing any possibility of knowing this origin. Here, the aporia is most clearly announced and crossed in a way that is also the most perplexing.

Against scholarship that would see these moments as correctible failures of Kant’s philosophy of history or anthropology, I read these as moments when Kant gives in to epistemological necessity. If they are indeed correctible, what would they be replaced with? Against theories of political autonomy in Kant that see the membership of the human as open, it is apparent that any theory of political autonomy – as joining a discourse of choice with a horizon for humanity – would need to revise Kant’s theory of sexual difference – in terms of the normative roles of gender, heterosexual teleology, and the slightly perceptible but consistent shift in the cosmos to Europe. The heterogeneous discourse of woman – which is at the same time an autonomous discourse of man – is clearly white and configured such that it should not be possible to think civil society in Kant without also including the domestic unions and public feuding that characterizes this society. This demarcation of race and gender is clearly seen in the anecdote that Kant lifts from Captain Cook. That the utterance by the Tahitian woman can only be understood as “true” within an epistemological rather than social discourse makes clear that non-whites are not taken into account. Yet, to frame this moment as a dismissible “mistake” is to misunderstand the aporia of history, thus transforming the aporia into an antinomy. Against those readings of Kant which would find these “mistakes” irrelevant, I have
tried to enter these “mistakes”. The ambivalent moments that I have analyzed are open to indefinite readings.

How else might the ambivalent remark “he must do this” be interpreted? It is precisely the political necessity of having to decide on an always mistaken interpretation that is at stake,
4. The Native American and the Sodomite

The Trajectory of the Native American

In 1764, fresh from his reading of Rousseau’s *Emile*, Kant publishes *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*. Perhaps the most popular of all of his works during his life, reprinted seven times, the book establishes the young Kant as an accomplished stylist and burgeoning belle-lettrist. It occasions favorable reviews in Kant’s milieu by Schleiermacher and Goethe among others.¹²⁴ The last paragraph of the book reveals the figure of a young, world-citizen, cast as an ideal awaiting the discovery of a Rousseauian inspired “secret of education.” The book stages an itinerary that attempts to educate the reader as student through a catalogue of observations, organized by the terms sublime and beautiful. The observations span the aesthetic qualities of objects, the humoral body, the difference of the sexes, and national differences. The penultimate passages of the book, immediately prior to the introduction of the world-citizen, present an account of Native Americans, showing the influence of Rousseau:

Among all savages (Wilden), there is no people which shows such a sublime character of mind as that of North America. They have a strong feeling for honor…The Canadian savage is moreover…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 savages, 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 Attakakullakulla except the honor of a Greek name... The other 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...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. Not as if they pay the women their humble respects; that would be mere compliments. No, they actually get to command...But they pay dearly enough for their preference. They have all the domestic concerns on their shoulders and share all of the hardships with men. (AA II 253-5, 60-1)

Roughly eight years later, in his first set of lectures on Anthropology, this time fresh from reading de Pauw’s *Recherche*, Kant presents a rather different image of Native Americans, one that is repeated throughout his oeuvre with little variation. The lectures on Anthropology are Kant’s revised practical efforts to educate students towards the position of world-citizen. Kant writes,
The character of all Americans is insensitivity which consists in the fact that they are indifferent…they are against the sexual inclination. 125

Elsewhere, he writes,

The American people are incapable of civilization. They have no motive force; for they are without affection and passion. They are not drawn to one another by love, and are thus unfruitful too. They hardly speak at all, never caress one another, care about nothing, and are lazy. 126

I start with this discursive break in Kant’s representations not because it dramatizes the failure of Kant’s ethnographic imagination, but because it clearly shows Kant’s representations to be intentional. Indeed, I stress a moment of continuity between these representations in my reading. I thus claim in this chapter that a change in Kant’s idea of the sublime is the salient factor towards understanding this discursive break; and, moreover, that despite this change (or perhaps because of it), these representations, as representations of the human sublime, maintain an orientation towards the education of world-citizens.

125 In Phillipi, Lectures on Anthropology, 1772. “Der Character aller Amerikaner ist Unempfindlichkeit, welche darin besteht, daß sie sehr gleichgültig…gegen Geschlechterneigung.”
I argue in this chapter that under the guise of an epistemological venture, representations of indigeneity\textsuperscript{127} embody alarming questions about the pedagogical relationship of aesthetics to morals for Kant. I establish the stakes in this venture by following the discursive difference Kant constructs between Africans and Native Americans, a strategy inspired by Jack Forbes’ *Africans and Native Americans: The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples*.\textsuperscript{128} I argue that Kant cleaves a line in his concept of humanity in which Africans figure the limit on this side as domestic, representable and epistemologically human. This difference is represented as a *racial* difference within Kant’s epistemological concept of the human. Native Americans are cast on the barely representable, wild, far side. This difference is constructed as an abyssal gap. For instance, in Kant’s last essay on race, Native Americans are described as “deep under the Negro, who is the lowest of all other steps.” Elsewhere, the comments on Native Americans form a pattern of vanishing horizons, visible only as a polar opposition to the African: “no motive force…never caress each other…do not love each other.”

This abyssal gap in Kant’s concept of the human is, I argue, a sublime moment for Kant’s reader, in which the two-step of the sublime can be textually experienced: a moment of terror followed by the revelation that the reason of humanity in oneself is stronger. Kant’s reader recognizes the rational sublimity of his own human nature by seeing the terrifying sublimity of natural humans, albeit at a

\textsuperscript{127} I discuss my use of the term indigeneity in the Introduction. See also footnote 17.

distance. By locating and analyzing various passages in Kant’s oeuvre, I show how the representations of indigeneity (typically but not always Native Americans) are immediately followed by some confident survey of a cosmopolitan, moral world, be it from the perspective of the philosophical investigator of race confidently surveying a world knowable through race or the perspective of the reader as student reassured about his cosmopolitan destiny. The paradox is enigmatic: the representation of some humans as barely human permits a positive cosmopolitan perspective on humanity.

That this may be Kant’s intention is suggested by the posthumous Opus Postumum. Kant there gives a clue to the relationship between his representations of Native Americans and the cognition of an abstract concept of humanity. Kant states, “men, as rational beings, exist for the sake of others of a different species (race). The latter stand at a higher level of humanity, either simultaneously, as for instance (Europeans and Americans) or sequentially.” (AA XXI 214, OP 66) The parenthetical difference between the Americans and the Europeans makes possible an analogical difference between the human and its sequential, radical, rational superior. The Native American is constructed as both inside humanity (as a qualitatively different level) and also standing in for a difference in which race is

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129 I follow here a line of thought powerfully opened by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s reading of Kant in Critique of Postcolonial Reason: A History of the Vanishing Present. Her argument shows how the “raw man” is necessarily excluded from the possibility of the aesthetic judgment of the sublime, and thus, from thinking the position of the noumenal man. For Kant, the sublime can only appear as terrible to the “raw man.”


parenthetically equivalent to species. Is the difference between Native Americans and Europeans epistemological? Is it practical? The analogy leads to a monumental vision of the globe in which theoretical and practical reason, nature and providence, are presented in an organic unity:

For instance, if our globe (having once been dissolved into chaos, but now being organized and regenerating) were to bring forth, by revolutions of the earth, differently organized creatures, which, in turn, gave place to others after destruction, organic nature could be conceived in terms of a sequence of different world-epochs, reproducing themselves in different forms, and our earth as an organically formed body – not one formed merely mechanically.” (ibid)

The Kant of 1764 has an idea of the sublime (and the beautiful) as referring to both a subjective feeling or disposition and a quality of objects in the world. Of these objects, the human being is one, not only possessing a capacity to recognize the sublime but also expressing recognizable qualities of sublimity. Subsequent to this text, Kant’s notion of the sublime changes, formalized in the Third Critique. This changed notion strikingly offers no example of objects in the world that are the human sublime, providing instead only representations of inanimate objects in nature and natural phenomena. Yet there is nothing in Kant’s Analytic of the Sublime to exclude examples of human sublimity. Indeed, Kant goes so far as to suggestively
consider war and the human figure as possible examples of sublimity. In this chapter, I will suggest that Kant’s representation of indigenous peoples as barely purposive might be considered an example of the human sublime.

In my argument, the figurations of indigeneity blur the line between an aesthetic judgment of the sublime and a teleological judgment, thus provoking the question that exercises Kant throughout the 1780s: why do they exist? The obvious teleological resonance of the question is clear. I shall suggest that the question also has an aesthetic function, accompanied by a concealed affect of terror, a necessary (though not sufficient) condition of the sublime. The vivid uses to which the indigenous are fleetingly figured in the texts of the 1790s, ranging in appearance from the spectacular and terrifying to the seemingly banal and harmless, show the force of the question, if not always the accompanying affect: in Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason, the empirical evil of indigenous peoples is strong enough to dispense with the formal proof of the proposition that the human is by nature evil, Kant thus citing “the scenes of unprovoked cruelty in the ritual murders of Tofoa, New Zealand, and the Navigator Islands, and the never-ending cruelty (which Captain Hearne reports) in the wide wastes of northwestern America from which, indeed, no human being derives the least benefit.” (AA VI 33, 56)132. In the Metaphysics of Morals, in the course of distinguishing between the citizens of a state and natural products, Kant produces an analogy that contrasts the population of an hypothetical state with Native Americans, casually recalling the sexual indifference

and laziness of Native Americans: “this holds true of the human population as well, which can only be small, as it is in the American wilderness, even if we attribute to these people the greatest industry (which they do not have).” (AA VI 345, PP 483) In *Towards Perpetual Peace*, Kant repeats the distinction between Europeans and Native Americans given above, yet in a surprising fashion. Admiring the ingenuity of Eskimos, Kant is keen to construct them as descendants of Europeans. The difference is parenthetically conjectured: “Eskimos (perhaps from ancient European adventurers, a totally different species [Geschlecht] from all Americans [vielleicht uralte europäische Abenteurer, ein von allen Amerikanern ganz unterschiedenes Geschlecht]).” (AA VIII 365, PP 334. trans modified)

Throughout, a set of traits characterizes these figures: a useless bravery, cruelty, laziness, wild freedom, and sexual indifference. Constructed accordingly, these figures represent people who, paradoxically, move too much and not enough. The only consistent principle is Kant’s inability to recognize self-reflective purpose. The figures thus express strongly only the first part of the coupled primitive tendency that Kant stipulates to all humans, namely unsociable-sociability. This difference is simultaneously mobilized and concealed to produce a difference in level of humanity by which to enable a cognition of the human as a totality in the reader: the aim of Kant’s anthropology.

The dissertation has thus far claimed that Kant’s representations of indigeneity are not contained by either his theory of race or his normative logic of gender. In chapter one, I showed how Kant’s representations of Native Americans were
paradoxically racial by being a racial exception. In chapters two and three, I examined the ways in which Native Americans and Tahitians were simultaneously necessary and dismissed from Kant’s representations of gender. I return in this chapter to that claim. I have briefly alluded to the discursive difference that Kant constructs between Native Americans and Africans, a focus inspired by sociologist Jack Forbes’ landmark study. Forbes analyzes empirical and archival data to carefully tease out the various ways in which Africans and Native Americans have been constructed as discursively different, and the methodological implications of this discursive difference on contemporary scholarship.\footnote{Forbes’ targets include the widespread acceptance of a thesis that holds that native Americans “vanished” – by disease or warfare with Europeans – and were subsequently replaced by African slaves as the main source of labor in the Americans. He also claims an epistemological consequence of this discursive difference in the lack of scholarly work on contacts between Africans and native Americans not only in the Americas, but also in Africa and Europe. Forbes convincingly shows that contemporary categories of African Americans and native Americans are indeed two groups formed out of a long history of inter-mixing, of which one mixed group is conventionally understood as African Americans and the other as native Americans.} I use Forbes’ emphasis on the discursive construction of this difference in my analytic approach to Kant. Kant uses a rhetoric of opposition in constructing this discursive difference, recurrently presenting Africans as “directly the opposite” of Native Americans. This opposition casts Africans as the preeminent object of epistemological inquiries of race while presenting Native Americans as barely knowable, ultimately representing this difference through the figure of an abyssal gap. I show how this discursive difference gets a visible hierarchy of race off the ground, but in doing so, the ground is itself simultaneously cast as an abyss and as a vanishing horizon. Kant violates the very limits by which his critical philosophy operates; or in another register, draws the very
lines by which his philosophy operates, blurring and subsequently revealing the lines
between knowledge, aesthetics, and morals.

Turning to Kant’s normative logic of gender, and the underlying theory of
sexuality on which it is based, I identify a dissociation between Kant’s
representations of indigeneity as barely purposive on the one hand and his
characterization of same-sex practices as counter-purposive on the other. Here, I
consider the source materials Kant uses and his participation in two polemics of the
day to contend that, if Kant’s representations are largely unoriginal and his
contributions to these historical currents minor, the divergence he makes from his
sources about the same-sex practices of Native Americans has implications for his
philosophy. In chapter 2, I examined the principles of Kant’s framework of sexual
difference to show that the logic of his principles ought to include same sex practices
in a state of nature. I follow up on this argument to demonstrate that Kant’s
dissociation allows him to fashion a theory of teleology in which same-sex practices
in culture, as illegal (in the Kantian sense) activities, permit Kant to distinguish
between natural and volitional teleology, a difference that depends on identifying the
sexual boundaries of civil society. A queer\textsuperscript{134} figuration of indigeneity thus must be
silently \textit{excluded} for this theory of teleology to function.

These figurations of indigeneity and the uses to which they are put – in
producing the judgments by which a theory of race or normative logic of gender get

\textsuperscript{134} I use queer here to mark the difference embodied by indigenous peoples from the heteronormative
paradigm I identify in Kant’s thought in this chapter. Queer is not used to suggest any positive
characterization.
off the ground or are broached – are ultimately in the service of educating the reader as student towards the position of world-citizen. Here, Kant’s reading of Rousseau refigures the implied reader of 1764 – a young student – into the multiply composed reading public projected in the 1798 *Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View*, a reading public which Kant contends will, by virtue of the popularity of the book, cross class boundaries.

Between 1764 and 1772, Kant confesses the monumental impact of Rousseau while at the same time disavowing his understanding of Rousseau in the *Observations* as naïve. Kant’s self-description attributes to Rousseau a stark insight in his revised idea of the common man or rabble (Pobel). (AA XX 44)\(^{135}\) The change in heart accompanies Kant’s writings from then on, in which working for the common man is the objective of his philosophizing. An aspect of this, claimed by Kant in an early lecture cycle of the Ethics, is to follow Rousseau’s investigations of the natural man in order to understand human nature.

The consistent orientation of these figurations of the reader to what I am calling the *human sublime* has precisely to do with the conjunction of human nature and the natural human, brought into closest contact by the representations of indigeneity. Kant’s project in the Anthropology, wrought as I show in the very structure of the book, is the education of the common, reading public towards a cosmopolitan unity. Yet, the cognition of the human which constitutes the stakes of this project is dependent on moments of textual sublimity, within which the

identification of the reader with humanity depends on separating the terrifying, abyssal sublimity of some humans from the rational sublimity of others, a wager upon which the hope for a better future is premised. These differences are largely placed in the separation and reconciliation of two senses of nature, as abyssal and teleological. The utilization of race and gender both enable this separation and reconciliation, but also constrain the cosmopolitan future that Kant imagines. If on the one hand, Kant takes precautions to call a cosmopolitan future a regulative principle, the moral certainty by which this perspective is attained is based on a constitutive moment of sublimity reliant on the possibility of an epistemology of race and a normative logic of gender. This constitutive moment depends on negotiating a double bind of reason at the heart of Kant’s critical philosophy if taken, as Kant does, in the aim of producing cosmopolitan citizens: if on the one hand it is theoretically impossible to know an action as rational, it is practically necessary to labor (including sexual labor) towards a future that is more rational. Reformulating this double bind into the question of purposiveness, namely, in the identification of reason with purposiveness, Kant constructs and conceals the difference of indigenous peoples in order to fashion a racial and sexual theory of purposiveness in its natural and non-natural dimensions. Instrumentally using the various artifacts – travelogues, taxonomic systems, and, treatises – of colonial, imperial, and commercial adventures, Kant’s vision for the future, only ever explicitly expressed in notes, emerges as one in which European, heterosexual, gender-normative, monogamous couples constitute the vaunted cosmopolitan society, a society whose outside is explicitly cast as within: in the
possibility of the initiation of non-normative, criminal, sexual practices, again only by Europeans. This terrifying utopia poses two questions: does the cosmopolitan perspective, however constituted, entail a constitutive moment of differentiation, in which my self-recognition and identification with a humanity with a future demand the construction of terrifying representations of human sublimity in the past? As Kant’s readers, how can we inherit this vision, inhabiting the double binds of reason and purposiveness perhaps differently?

In this chapter I produce a partial genealogy of figurations of indigeneity in Kant. In the first part of the chapter, I dwell at length on the 1764 Observations because the general structure of the dynamic that I argue for can already be located there and because the changes that Kant makes illuminate the discussion. I discuss also the changes that Kant makes in his notion of the sublime in the 1789 Critique of the Power of Judgment. I then turn to representations of indigeneity after 1764 as moments of the human sublime through an analysis of the ways in which indigeneity is not contained by race and gender in “On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy” and the 1798 Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View. The chapter concludes with an examination of the last section of the Anthropology.

I. Interpreting Observations

In this section, I narrate the itinerary of the reader from common human to world-citizen. This itinerary is constituted through repeated attempts by Kant’s narrator to cognize a concept of humanity, a humanity which finally depends on the
casting of Africans and Native Americans as pure beauty and pure sublimity respectively.

Kant publishes *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* in 1764. Scholars have located in the book an early, or pre-critical, effort to work out a theory of taste, moral philosophy, and anthropology.\(^{136}\) In short, the bridge provided in the third Critique between pure and practical reason and crafted in terms of aesthetic and teleological judgments of beauty and morality is here grafted onto a feeling for the sublime and beautiful, most explicitly articulated in terms of the “consciousness of a feeling that lives in every human breast…it is the feeling of the beauty and dignity of human nature.” Nowhere else in Kant’s published works are themes of aesthetics, morals, sexual difference, and national character, including an implicit theory of race somewhat *avant la lettre*\(^{137}\), brought together as an organic unity. The 1798

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\(^{136}\) See Patrick Frierson’s introduction to *Observations on the Feeling on the Beautiful and Sublime* and Susan Shell, “Kant as Propagator: Reflections on Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime.”

\(^{137}\) Susan Shell claims in “Kant as Propagator: Reflections on Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime” that the 1764 *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* is mined for damning “sexual and racial stereotypes” without careful study of the book. The accusation is somewhat just, especially on the score of race. The term race appears only once in the book, and not in the developed Kantian sense of the term. Indeed, at this point, neither Kant nor anyone else has developed a coherent theory of race. On the other hand, Kant’s most notoriously prejudicial published sentiment on “Negroes” is contained therein: “the scoundrel was completely black from head to foot, a distinct proof that what he said was dumb (dumm).” (61) The last two peoples mentioned – “Negroes” and “Americans” - although ostensibly cast in terms of nation, use the language that will later become that of race. One can tacitly discern a proto-theory of race. Moreover, Kant is at this time starting to develop a theory of race in his *Lectures on Geography*. Yet, these passages are usually explained in light of later works of Kant. Ronald Judy’s reading of this passage in “Kant and the Negro” is pursued under the framework of the much later *Critique of Pure Reason*. That these passages in this early book are frequently the only citations taken out of context as proof of Kant’s “racism” is the likely cause of Shell’s irritation. Her contention though is not a lot better. She suggests that this figure of the “Negro” is to be taken as ironic, allowing the text to utter a truth and simultaneously disavow it. In her reading, the truth of the statement uttered by the “Negro” threatens the collapse of the central project of the text, “jeopardiz[ing] the possibility of…moral consciousness.” This interpretation does not really explain why Kant chose to construct this figure in this way.
Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View touches on these themes disparately with a less obviously unified organization.

Taking shape in the form of a universal feeling, the itinerary of the Observations produces the figure of the young world-citizen in its concluding lines. Kant wishes in the last line that “the as yet undiscovered secret of education should be torn away from the ancient delusion in order early to raise the ethical feeling in the breast of every young citizen of the world into an active sentiment, so that all fineness should not merely amount to the fleeting and idle gratification of judging with more or less taste that which goes on outside of us.” The rhetorical shift from the breast of every human being to the breast of every young world-citizen suggests that the task of the Observations, projected in terms of a wish, is pedagogic. Indeed, as Shell suggests, and as the introduction to this dissertation has emphasized, Kant’s preeminent practical project is pedagogical.

The title of the work places it in obvious proximity to Edmund Burke’s Enquiry into the Origin of the Ideas of the Beautiful and Sublime, initially published in 1756. Through the cataloguing of observations organized by the terms sublime and beautiful (the title inverts Kant’s priority of the sublime over the beautiful throughout the body of the text and in all the section headings), Kant’s text attempts to compose a portrait of humanity. Yet Kant’s use of terms – generally considered to be aesthetic – is questionable throughout. Indeed, hazarding a definition is at best a tenuous affair. The terms sublime and beautiful are never determined. Instead, through the process of cataloguing a series of oppositions, the predicative use of sublime and beautiful as
practical principles of organization lends them an aura of meaning. The second section of the book in particular contains long lists of statements such as the following, “Understanding is sublime, wit is beautiful.” (AA II 211, 26) In this, Kant is not that far from Burke, for whom the terms are nominal, any two terms sufficient as long as they point to a “real difference” in nature. Goethe and Schelling’s reviews notice the “obfuscating quality of the beautiful and sublime”, praising instead the value of the observations themselves. Goethe and Schelling here catch at a feature that is both the strength and weakness of the book. The obfuscating nature of the terms sublime and beautiful has, as Armstrong astutely notes, to do with their reference to both a subjective disposition and an aesthetic quality of external things. Yet, the strength of the work, its experiment in producing a young world-citizen, lies precisely in this ambiguity, that the presentation of a successive series of observations of the sublime and beautiful will in turn raise the subjective feeling of the sublime and beautiful in the reader. Hence, Kant specifically privileges the perspective of the observer over the philosopher, writing that the appropriate modality of discovery (AA II 207, 23) is in “the eye of an observer than of the philosopher.”

138 Unlike Burke, though, for Kant, nature is no ground of difference. Objects in nature serve neither as a locus of difference nor as common point of reference, but, it would appear, as a kind of instigator. The primary space of difference for Kant is grounded in a feeling “proper to every human.” The field of observations for Kant thus concerns not some range of external objects, but on a difference of response tied to pleasure. When Kant “casts his glance” it is to this subjective response. See Edmund Burke, *Enquiry into the Origin of the Ideas of the Beautiful and Sublime.*

139 Goetschel, *Constituting Critique: Kant’s Writing as Critical Praxis*, p. 59.


141 Shell attributes this use of the topos of the observer to Rousseau’s *Julie*, which Kant had recently read.
The metaphors are resolutely spatial and topological: “I will cast my glances on several places that seem especially to stand out in this region.” (ibid)

The text is thus about linking a fineness in a kind of aesthetic judgment to moral feeling, rather than wasting that fineness on a “fleeting and idle gratification” of “that which goes on outside of us.” This fineness is distinguished on the one hand from a cruder feeling of that which “makes him capable of enjoying a great gratification without requiring exceptional talents”; Kant here enumerates a range of ordinary activities that one might be a lover (Liebhaber) of: from food to money to books to women. On the other hand, this fineness is also distinguished from an even finer feeling, which is attached to “lofty intellectual insights.” The comparative fineness of the feeling he is considering is constructed as a common feeling susceptible to improvement.

The outcome of this improvement, the raising of this aesthetic feeling, depends on seeing “the great portrait of human nature in its entirety in a moving shape (Gestalt).” To see in this way depends on seeing humanity in its sublimity, to be moved by its shape as a totality. Such a sublime relation in turn establishes the highest principle of moral subjectivity for Kant – cognizing and acting on the behalf of others and the self insofar as other and self are human beings. For Kant, the self is not privileged: the other is not a human being because the other is like the self. Instead, “he is a human being, and whatever affects human beings also affects me.”

(AA II 221, 34)
In order to discover “human nature”, the observer catalogues a series of observations. The resultant itinerary is in part comic, in part dizzying. The comic aspect becomes evident in Kant’s pronounced use of the pronominal ‘I’ in this text, an uncommon practice note commentators.142 This comic authorial ‘I’ stumbles, almost loses sight, casts weak glances, reproves itself, and confesses its own predilections. If The authorial ‘I’ is identified with a generic observer in sections one and two, In sections three and four, it identifies with a specific observer. These movements are particularly noticeable at the end of section two, when this “I” attempts its first cognition of the human being. Kant states,

If I observe alternately the noble and the weak sides of human beings, I reprove myself that I am not able to adopt that standpoint from which these contrasts can nevertheless exhibit the great portrait of human nature in its entirety in a moving shape (Gestalt). For I gladly grant that so far as it belongs to the project of great nature as a whole, these grotesque attitudes cannot lend it other than a noble expression, although one is too short-sighted to see them in their connection. (AA II 226-227, 39)

Reproving itself for its inability to raise itself high enough – a height that might be ambivalently topological or organic - this “I” must postulate a connection that it is unable to see between “grotesque attitudes” and a “noble expression.” The

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142 See Goetschel, Constituting Critique: Kant’s Writing as Critical Praxis and Shell, “Kant as Propagator: Reflections on Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime.”
failure of this sight and consequent postulation of a necessary assumption leads to the comic section three, which as Shell rightly notes, “resembles a cross between a personals ad and a declaration of perpetual bachelorhood.” Nowhere else does Kant write like the following, the connection of the grotesque and noble taking on a different import, as he exclaims, “How else would it be possible for so many grotesque male faces, although they may have merits, to be able to acquire such polite and fine wives!” (AA II 241, 50)

A reflection of this stumbling “I” – a precursor perhaps to the “blind groping” of the empirical observer denounced in the critical philosophy – is the employment of a difficult and dizzying system of valorization in which the terms sublime and beautiful are not only continuously divided and combined, but the values invested in them are not consistent. The important feature about these terms is not their individual meanings, but the ways in which they are combined in a single feeling. Indeed, Kant consistently refers to the feeling of the sublime and beautiful in the singular. The hope for moral improvement is placed on the prospect of finding the appropriate proportion. In the observer, this proportion is understood as simultaneous, in the side by side existence of two sentiments in a single feeling. In the objects of observation, this proportion is also understood as sequential, in a pattern of

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143 Shell, p. 463.
144 If the exclamatory style of the writing is unique, the sentiment itself is recurr-ently expressed. In the marginalia to his 1798 Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View, Kant notes, “Why a woman (Venus) also marries the ugliest man (Vulcan) and is not laughed at about it. (400)
145 Many commentators understand Kant to be talking about two distinct feelings, following perhaps Burke or Kant’s later Critique of the Power of Judgment. See, for instance, Eduardo Mendieta, “Geography Is to History as Woman Is to Man: Kant on Sex, Race, and Geography” in Reading Kant’s Geography, Stuart Elden and Eduardo Mendieta (eds.), Albany: SUNY Press, 2011, pp.346-368.
alternation between beautiful and sublime. The sublime object touches the viewer in a way that is more powerful but also more tiring, unable to be enjoyed for long without exhaustion. Here, the beautiful can intervene in a way that appears unlabored, permitting an easy alternation between both kinds of sentiments. A principle of meaning emerges among these attempts to organize objects and people by the terms sublime and beautiful: in the various statements to which the terms appear as contrasting predicates, the sublime is always about simplicity and things being what they seem to be; the beautiful, however, involves some level of dissimulation, of things not being what they seem to be, whether it is the incongruity of wit, the deceit in cunning, or the charm of a perceived nature that does not need to labor.

As an affective response, the sublime “arouses satisfaction” with dread. The beautiful in contrast “occasions” an enjoyable sentiment that is “joyful and smiling.” As Kant moves to consider various kinds of combinations, these affects are also manipulated. In the first two sections, the term sublime is divided into three kinds: terrifying, noble, and magnificent – dependent on the affect that accompanies them, of which beauty itself occasions one of the affects. The dread that distinguishes the sublime from the beautiful is reserved for the terrifying sublime. Sublime that has properly mixed with beauty is, as the noble sublime, marked by “quiet admiration.” The sublime that has not mixed with beauty, in which beauty serves as a shimmering gloss to the sublime is called magnificent sublime, “beauty spread over a sublime prospect.” (AA II 209, 24) The magnificent sublime “deceives and moves through its appearance.” (AA II 223, 35)
This combination generates a gradient of perfection, formed along an axis of beauty and sublimity, within which pure beauty – beauty devoid of any sublimity – is considered the most degenerate form of beauty. In contrast, the most degenerate or pure form of sublimity is the terrifying sublime, directed towards unnatural things. Grotesqueness is an orientation of the pure sublime.

These matrices in turn produce a typology of humans according to the theory of humors: melancholy, sanguine, choleric, and phlegmatic. Of these, the melancholic, understood as the noble sublime, is most valued. It appears as if the repeated attempts of the narrator to produce a portrait of the human in its moving dynamism occasions a shift in not only what it sees, but how these observations are organized.

There is an identifiable break in the book between the first two sections and sections three and four. The generic observer identifies in the beginning of section three as male (“our sex”) (AA II 228, 40) and in section four as European (“our part of the world”).¹⁴⁶ (AA II 250, 57) This identification leads to a renewed attempt to look at humanity at the end of the book. Moreover, a discrepancy opens up between Kant’s identification as male and European, and the intended audience of the book. The content of the sections increasingly resembles what Kant writes about education intended for women, a quality of these latter sections that Mendelsohn notices in his review.

¹⁴⁶ The important nations for Kant’s “Europe” are England, Germany, France, Italy, Holland, and Spain. Here he opposes this “part of the world” to the “rest of the world.”
Section three shifts the register from the failed generic look at humanity towards the necessity of understanding sexual difference. Kant thus writes, “For it is here not enough to represent that one has human beings before one: one must also not forget (aus der Acht lassen) that these human beings are not of the same kind (Art).”\textsuperscript{147} (AA II 228, 40, trans slightly modified) Implying that one might forget the significance of sexual difference, and that the only way not to do so is to establish the difference of the sublime and beautiful in the “judgments of these two genders (Gattungen).” Thus, the terms sublime and beautiful take on normative status as points of reference for moral instruction, so that “one does not make unknowable the charming difference that nature sought to establish.” (ibid, trans slightly modified)

The project of the book is now revealed as a pedagogically gendered project, one whose aim is “ennobling the man and beautifying the woman.” (AA II 240, 500) The appropriate combinations for Kant emerge as noble sublimity in the man and a type of beauty he calls moral beauty. Kant introduces the notion of moral beauty and catalogues a typology of women, extolling in his evaluations the woman who properly subordinates nobility to beauty in her figure, exemplifying a beautiful virtue that ennobles the man.\textsuperscript{148} The noble sublime is no longer solely preferred. Instead, it

\textsuperscript{147} Ursula Pia Jauch notices that the definition of species given in relation to sexual difference here correlates exactly to the definition of species given in the later essays on race. See Ursula Pia Jauch, \textit{Immanuel Kant zur Geschlechterdifferenz: Aufklärerische Vorurteils Kritik und bürgerliche Geschlechtsvormundschaft}, Passagen Verlag, 1989.

\textsuperscript{148} Here, the moral woman is not subordinating a pure sublimity to a pure beauty; instead, beauty is subordinating a sublimity that is itself a proportion of sublimity and beauty (noble sublimity). The logic here entails that the beauty of the woman subordinates a sublimity which has itself subordinated beauty. The contradictory figure that arises is one in which the beauty of the woman must both subordinate and have already been subordinated.
is the noble sublime in the male and the morally beautiful in the woman, and the reciprocal moral relation in marriage, that is valued.

The promise of this endeavor is punctuated by stumbling. Considering the sexually active older woman, the narrator stumbles. Writing that “similar pretensions of the other sex [the counterpart is the infatuated old man] are disgusting”, the next paragraph begins, “In order not to lose sight of my text.” (Ibid)

Indeed, at the end of the section, even as the text claims that the marital pair should be “a single moral person”, representing the ideal that Kant has been constructing in this section, the figure of aging comes in to dissolve any values placed on this pair:

The wise order of things brings it about that all these niceties and delicacies of sentiment have their full strength only in the beginning, but subsequently are gradually dulled by familiarity and domestic concerns and then degenerate into familiar love, where finally the great art consists in preserving sufficient remnants of the former so that indifference and surfeit do not defeat the entire value of the enjoyment on account of which alone it was worth having entered into such a bond. (AA II 242-243, 51)

Nobility again becomes grotesque. Section four, on national character, is the strongest attempt in the book to make this connection, to see nobility in

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149. The stumbling occasioned by the old woman is an old thematic, recalling the Greek figure of Baubo. In various versions including Clement of Alexandria’s, Baubo lifts her skirt and the sight of what is underneath causes Demeter to smile or laugh. In the Gay Science, Walter Kaufman (trans.), New York: Random House, 1974, p.38, Nietzsche asks if truth is equivalent to woman and names this woman Baubo.
grotesqueness. As Kant’s narrator self-identifies as a European, and the rest of the world opens up, the feeling of the sublime and beautiful are differentially distributed among various nations appears. The positing of nature as the “archetype of everything beautiful and noble” is here explored in national differences, organized by Kant’s distinction of the sexes: the effeminate Italy and France are the nations that “most distinguish themselves in the feeling of the beautiful”; (AA II 243, 52) the masculine Spanish, English, and German are distinguished in the feeling of the sublime. The Dutch are cast aside as coarse, unfeeling, traders. In a surprising shift, though, the distribution of sublimity casts the Spanish as the terrifying sublime, the English as the noble sublime, and the Germans as the magnificent sublime, the last being the desirable position.

What in the course of the first two sections was derided as the magnificent sublime, a deceptive and illusory kind of sublimity which depends for its effect on beauty, is privileged by way of a discussion of the differences of national character. The magnificent sublimity of the German best combines the feeling of the beautiful and sublime, in contrast to the excessively beautiful French and the overly sublime (if noble) British.

This change in valorization mirrors the move made by Kant’s narrator in section two, when it finds itself too short-sighted to see the connection between nobility and grotesqueness. The narrator there replaces the failed image of a noble

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150 Paul de Man in his reading of this passage sardonically remarks, “I have never felt more grateful for the hundred or so kilometers that separate Antwerp from Rotterdam,” in “Kant’s Materialism”, *Aesthetic Ideology*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p. 125.
humanity with a magnificent image of humanity, the result of “cast[ing] a weak glance”:

For while on the great stage each prosecutes his actions in accordance with his dominant inclinations, at the same time he is moved by a hidden incentive to adopt in his thoughts a standpoint outside himself in order to judge the propriety of his conduct, how it appears and strikes the eye of the observer. In this way the different groups unite themselves in a painting of magnificent expression, where in the midst of great variety unity shines forth, and the whole of moral nature displays beauty and dignity. (AA II 227, 39)

I have saved discussion on this substitution of the magnificent sublime for the noble sublime, in the “gloss of sublimity and a strikingly contrasting coloration…which deceives and moves through its appearance” (AA II 222-223, 35) because it illuminates the final two representations of national character, which are alternating representations of pure beauty – a degenerate beauty characterized by vanity and ridiculousness – and pure sublimity, a tending toward the unnatural, cast in Africans and Native Americans. The tone of the book changes in these representations, from the bemused tone of a conscious caricaturing to a tone in which the fanaticism or zeal that Kant denounces in the terrifying sublimity of the Spanish becomes apparent:

Kant writes of the Africans,
The Negroes of Africa have *by nature no feeling that rises above the ridiculous*. Mr. Hume 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 shown any other praiseworthy quality, while among the whites there are always those who rise up from the lowest rabble (Pobel) and through extraordinary gifts earn respect in the world. So essential is the difference between these two human kinds (Menschengeschlechtern) [the casting of essential differences between two Menschengeschlechtern mirrors what Kant has to say of the difference of the sexes (Geschlecht)], and it seems 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, which sinks so deeply into the *ridiculous as ever seems to be possible for human nature*…[t]he blacks are very vain, but in the Negro’s way, and so talkative that they must be driven apart from each other by blows. (AA II 253, 59-60, my emphasis)

The African represents pure beauty for Kant – a degenerate beauty in which ridiculousness is the organizing principle. Unable to labor, the African represents a
limit of human nature in pure beauty, stuck as it were outside of any possible itinerary of improvement. In contrast to the ridiculous, pure beauty of the Africans, the next passage presents the seemingly admirable pure sublimity of native North Americans.

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 of honor, and as in hunt of it they will seek wild adventure hundreds of miles away, they are also extremely careful to avoid the least injury to it where their ever so harsh enemy, after he has captured them, tries to force a cowardly sign from them by dreadful tortures. The Canadian savage is moreover truthful and honest. The friendship he establishes is just as adventurous and enthusiastic as anything 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 savages, and if a law-giver were to arise among the six nations, one would see a Spartan republic arise in the new world…Jason has nothing over Attakakullakulla except for the honor of a Greek name. All of these savages have little feeling for the beautiful in the moral sense…The other 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 (ausserordentlich) lack of feeling constitutes the mark of these kinds (Gattungen) of human beings. (AA II 253-254, 60)
If the Africans are cast as a limit to “human nature”, the admirable qualities of native North Americans can only be understood on the model of comparison with the ancient Greeks: here, the comparison – prominent in many writers of the time period – allows Kant to imagine these societies as potentially lawful; the avowal and disavowal of this comparison (“Lycurgus probably gave laws” and “Jason has nothing over Attakakullakulla”) permits this representation to be cast in a different temporality than the Old World, in which North America stands distant, perhaps under the telos of becoming a new Greece that is at the same time not the old Greece. The alternation of pure beauty with an admirable sublimity produces, however, the final image of Native Americans (“other natives of this part of the world”), cast in an unemphatic, flat tone: if the difference between Africans and whites is cast in the language of gender, as Menschengeschlechtern, the difference here is between these Native Americans and everyone else, understood as the language of species (Gattung). In the final section, I will show how this difference between Menschengeschlecht and Gattung is mobilized to create two kinds of humanity. Indeed, the difference is not specified explicitly as difference; rather, the observable mark (Merkmal) of these people is constituted by an “exceptional (ausserordentlich) lack of feeling.” For a book that is precisely about a universal feeling, never distinguished by quantity, to produce towards its end a figure of lack of feeling as the penultimate figure – the affectless Native American – before the figure of the young world-citizen full of feeling for the beautiful and sublime is curious. I want to suggest
that this figure of the affectless Native American is the truly terrifying sublime for Kant, and that the use of the adjective extraordinary to describe this lack of feeling is precisely Kant’s projection of lack to cover for terror.

The alternating pattern of pure beauty and sublimity, culminating in the feelingless Native Americans, leads to a quick view of the world in terms of the “relationship between the sexes.” A hierarchy of a proto-racial theory of sexual difference is produced, in which moral beauty is understood as the appropriate decoration of the “sexual inclination.” Beauty and sublimity are here intertwined to generate a hierarchy moving from normative gender roles, concubinage, slavery, and finally ending on the admirable and terrifying equality of women among the Canadians.

If we consider the relationship between the sexes in these parts of the world, we find that the European has alone found the secret of decorating the sensuous charm of a powerful inclination with so many flowers and interweaving it with so much that is moral that he has not merely very much elevated its agreeableness overall but has also made it very proper. The inhabitant of the Orient is of a very false taste in this point. Since he has no conception of the morally beautiful that can be combined with this drive…a woman there is always in prison…In the land of the blacks can one expect anything better than what is generally found there, namely the female sex in the deepest slavery?...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. Not as if they pay the women their humble respects; that would be mere compliments. No, they actually get to command…but they pay dearly enough for this preference. They have all the domestic concern on their shoulders and share all the hardships with the men. (AA II 254, 69)

This hierarchy of sexual difference, based on the discovery of moral beauty, is never again explicitly stated in “racial” terms in Kant’s published work; yet, with the exception of a change in the description, though not the position, of Native Americans, it recurs throughout his work, a hierarchy from monogamous marriage to polygamy to a natural condition in which a woman is only a beast of burden.

This itinerary of different configurations of sexual difference, cast at the same time as an alternating proto-racial sequence of beauty and sublimity finally produces Kant’s hoped for image. The theory of race that Kant is concurrently developing in his lectures on Geography has been deployed, in combination with sexual difference, to produce an image of humanity in its moving entirety, an image in which the grotesque is finally seen as noble. The image is no longer static though; instead the image of humanity is now cast over time, produced from “a few glances at history” at the protean (“like a Proteus”) shape of human taste. (AA II 255, 61) Sketching a potted history of Europe from the Greeks onward, the connection of the grotesque to the noble is not one of a mysterious expression that is too high to see but rather of a
temporal uplift from a near abyss: the grotesque is “lifted” into the noble through the activity of “human genius”, the genius referring to a type of spirit of the species:

Finally, after the human genius had happily lifted itself out of an almost complete destruction by a kind of palingenesis, we see in our own times the proper taste for the beautiful and noble blossom in the arts and science as well as with regard to the moral, and there is nothing more to be wished than that the false brilliance, which so readily deceives, should not distance us unnoticed from noble simplicity, but especially that the as yet undiscovered secret of education should be torn away from the ancient delusion in order early to raise the moral feeling in the breast of every young citizen. (AA II 255, 62)

As the narrator identifies himself as occupying a present in which propriety can be seen (“see in our own times the proper taste”), the vision that occasions this sign is the “almost complete destruction.” The historical connection of the grotesque to the noble is thus hidden in the metaphor of rebirth (“a kind of palingenesis”), an image that may or may not be deceptive. At the end of the book, Kant’s narrator no longer attempts to look for an image of humanity in its noble sublimity directly; instead he suggests that it is only by going through the magnificent sublime, through the prospect of being deceived, that noble sublimity might be achieved. The figure of the young world-citizen is revealed at the end, occasioned between the discovery of
the “secret of decorating the sensuous charm of a powerful inclination” and “waiting the undiscovered secret of education.” Yet, seeing this world-citizen in the horizon depends on looking into an abyss, seeing the almost complete destruction of humanity. The “almost” is the key term, occasioning a vision of the terrifying sublime which becomes satisfaction by turning into the future of the human.

I have dwelled on this text because it assembles many of the elements that form part of the textual representations of the human sublime that I examine in the following sections. The two-step formula of Kant’s sublime is not yet established. Kant has not yet developed a robust, concept of nature on which to ground his critical philosophy and the aesthetic theory that mediates between theoretical and practical reason. In the years to come, the concept of the sublime changes, the stylistic and comic features of Kant’s texts are not as strong, and the projected reader is no longer the individual student. Yet, the project of seeing humanity through an alternating pattern of Africans and Native Americans so as to form the sight of propriety in the present, a project whose goal is the noble sublimity of the human, continues. The orientation of the reader is precisely towards this structure.

II. The Sublime

Kant’s notion of the sublime changes after 1764, most fully articulated in the 1789 Critique of the Power of Judgment. In this change, the feelings of the sublime and beautiful (no longer singular), are understood as fully subjective, resulting from aesthetic judgments. There is nothing innate in an object per se that triggers these
judgments. Rather, I believe it is the form or formless of the object that is the inciting mechanism for aesthetic judgments: “The beautiful in nature concerns the form of the object…; the sublime, by contrast is to be found in a formless object.” (AA V 244, 128) Questions of form in this account refer to the intra-cognitive interactions between faculties. In the judgment of the beautiful, it is nonetheless possible to distinguish objects as beautiful. In the judgments of the sublime, on the other hand, this is a wholly mistaken attribution, a mistake called a subreption. This difference is related to a difference in purposiveness. Beautiful objects are purposive whereas sublime objects are counter-purposive. (AA V 245, 129)

In the dynamic sublime, for instance, the admirably sublime law of humanity inside of us is projected on to the contra-purposive outside as the terrifying sublime. The first moment of aesthetic judgment in the dynamic sublime thus depends on a moment of terror: some contra-purposiveness in the formlessness or chaos outside – typically cast in terms of natural phenomena such as storms, volcanoes, and the like – produces a feeling of powerlessness and terror. There is a subsequent moment when the faculty of reason kicks in, to show that this attribution of sublimity to the outside is indeed mistaken, for the law of humanity inside is the truly sublime aspect of the experience. The outcome of the aesthetic judgment of the sublime is a subjective certainty in a supra-sensible nature inside and outside us.

Here, there are further distinctions between the beautiful and sublime. Aesthetic judgments of the beautiful depend on Kant’s appeal to the sensus communis – a potential universal communicability – to establish the subjective universality of
judgments of beauty: all people with healthy reason will concur in the judgment of beauty. Judgments of the sublime, in contrast, depend on culture. (AA V 265, CPJ 148-149) The appeal to assent in the judgment of the sublime can only be supposed in “everyone who has culture.” In contrast, the “raw man” cannot move past the moment of terror in the sublime. (AA V 265, 148)

This assumption of culture relates to a dynamic of distance in the sublime. In the mathematical sublime, one must be at the proper distance, neither too far nor too close, and correctly oriented (the object must appear in the “sweet spot”, to use Melissa Merritt’s phrase)\(^{151}\) for the aesthetic judgment of the sublime to operate. In the dynamic sublime, one must have sufficient distance to be unaffected concretely by whatever force generates the affect of terror, yet still be close enough to observe the phenomena. The stipulation that culture is needed for the judgment of the sublime adds another relation of distance. The distance from culture to nature is, as is clear by now, occasioned by the ability to see nature as teleological, a distance which implicitly relies on the historical development of reason. Kant’s qualification that culture does not generate the judgment of the sublime, which has its “foundation in human nature”, but rather makes it possible, is a question of having sufficient distance from a raw condition of nature in order to see the terrifying outside as a question of the horizon rather than abyss.\(^{152}\)

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\(^{152}\) See Spivak, *Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, p.12 for a discussion of this passage in terms of the horizon and abyss and who is able to participate in the judgment of the sublime.
Kant never explicitly spells out the relationship between the aesthetic judgment of the sublime and his moral philosophy, offering suggestive comments for his reader to consider. Scholars have recently turned to an examination of this possible relation. In contrast, the relationship between beauty and the moral philosophy is specified as a symbolic relation: the beautiful can be a symbol of the morally good. Kant’s discussion of the sublime, moreover, is full of suggestions that the sublime can be triggered not only by formless phenomena in nature but also by humans. However, there can be no examples of the aesthetic sublime. It would strain Kant’s conception of art to consider a representation of the sublime that is at the same time art, i.e., intentionally or purposively designed by a human.

The most salient example of sublimity in humans for Kant is war. War initially appears contra-purposive. Yet, here it is not the teleological judgment that there is a hidden purpose to war that is important. Instead, it is an aesthetic reflection, that the “order and reverence for the rights of civilians, has something sublime about it, and at the same time makes the mentality of the people who conduct it in this way all the more sublime.” Kant goes on to suggest that if humans are considered without a purpose, they can occasion judgments of the beautiful and sublime. (AA V 271, CPJ 153) Kant never spells out what a sublime judgment on the human figure would be, what kind of contra-purposiveness would trigger a sense of the humanity within.

I wish to suggest that representations of indigeneity are precisely textual examples of the human sublime in Kant. The question, why do they exist, need not, in

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153 See Merrit for a discussion of the relationship between the moral philosophy and the sublime.
my reading, only be taken as a teleological question, as one about purpose, but as also a question that triggers the judgment of the sublime: here, the why do they exist suggests that Kant sees something contra-purposive about indigeneity, a contra-purposiveness whose consequence is moral certainty. The representations of indigeneity thus serve competing demands: on the one hand, the contra-purposiveness needs to be sufficient, in its formal aspects, to occasion this judgment; on the other hand, the law of humanity must somehow include them. Hence the ambivalence of these representations. The casting of Native Americans as barely purposive entails an ambivalent moment of terror, precisely in the possibility of formlessness.

I want to suggest speculatively that the terror Kant imagines in the “savage’s” experience of the sublime might be the subjective terror that constitutes the first affective moment of the sublime for the philosophical investigator. Kant’s representations of indigeneity as affectless ought not to allow him to imagine them as terrified. If understood this way, the moment of terror is a necessary impasse, in which the philosophical investigator’s recognition of his own reason as a historical achievement is at stake. The form of subjective reason depends on the formlessness of others.

As I show in the following sections, the representation of Native Americans as contra-purposive crucially depends on their being opposed to Africans in one dimension. In another, the contra-purposiveness of Native Americans is distinguished from the contra-purposiveness of those whose sexuality inclines towards same sex practices.
III. Indigeneity and Race

In the chapter on race, I showed how the figure of the Native American fractured Kant’s theory of race. The stated aim of that theory is the production of the natural human as an epistemological object through the concept of race. Race describes the dynamic of human migration and development in non-volitional terms. On this theory, two distinct markers are used to identify race: the phenomena of race mixing, that is, the notion that when people of distinct races produce offspring, these offspring bear traits that visibly blend inherited racial traits; and the noticeable physical suitability of peoples to their surrounding environment, a suitability that is associated with the capacity for preservation. The upshot of this theory is the judgment that the natural form of the human, precisely through this capacity for semi-plastic change, is purposive and consequently rational, in distinction to non-rational animals.

On this basis, Kant’s final theory holds that there are four races: whites, Negroes, Mongolians, and Americans. Of these, the first three are offered as races in the sense offered above, products of a natural historical process of migration and settling. The Native Americans on the other hand are presented as an errant race, contingently deviating from this process. In my chapter on race, I had thus shown how Native Americans are paradoxically constituted as a race through a logic of racial exception, namely the total unfitness to an environment. In this section, I want to revisit that representation of Native Americans in the 1788 “On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy”, and the errant itinerary described by Kant.
Kant’s final essay on race holds to an opposition between natural and volitional change. The first is properly the object of natural history, the second the object of universal history. The attribution of physical predispositions (Anlage) to race mirrors the language of the natural predisposition (also Anlage) of reason that he makes in the essays on history, anthropology, and religion. Kant attempts to keep them rigorously apart. Thus the theory and history of race rely on descriptions and judgments, including teleological ones, in which nature is the only principle of explanation and functions as the agent of change. The theory of race thus attempts to hold to the distinction Kant makes in the anthropology between what nature makes of the human and what the human can and ought to make of himself, understanding this line to mean that what nature makes of the human does not impede on what the human can and ought to make of himself. This is not to suggest that Kant did not entertain thoughts of racial behavior, as amply evident in his Lectures on Geography and Lectures on Anthropology. Yet Kant’s final theory of race explicitly declares itself to be an epistemological inquiry about nature. Consequently, Kant cannot associate observations of behavior with specifically natural predispositions without violating the bounds of his inquiry. Thus the last two of Kant’s essays on race by and large do not contain the descriptions of racialized behaviors so prevalent in Kant’s Lectures on Geography and Lectures on Anthropology. In what follows, I examine moments when these bounds are crossed.

A significant portion of “On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy” is concerned with refuting objections launched by Georg Forster in “Noch etwas über
die Menschenrassen, An Herrn Dr. Biester”, published in the same *Teutsche Merkur* that had published some of Kant’s essays, including his second essay on race. Georg Forster and his father Johann Reinhold Forster had accompanied Cook on his first voyage around the world, and had produced an authoritative English account of the travels as well as a German translation of Cook’s own narrative. The importance of the Forsters to the development of biology and anthropology in Germany has been well-documented, including their correspondence with Johannes Blumenbach. Unlike Johann, who had attempted to synthesize a Protestant belief in the unity of the species with ethnographic observations, Georg held the belief that at least two distinct species existed in the world, namely, the white and the Negro. As commentators have duly noted, this belief in polygenesis did not stop Forster from also asserting the brotherhood of a common humanity, no matter a distinct origin. Less known in this regard, though, are the rather invidious racial statements Forster makes when he turns his gaze to the inhabitants of “Oceania”.

The thrust of Forster’s objections thus concern Kant’s claim that an original set of predispositions developed during a primordial period of development to produce four distinct races. The debate is characterized as between “fact” and “induction” on the one side, and “system” on the other, Forster accusing Kant of fitting the facts to his system. Kant’s reply is twofold: 1) first he asserts the necessity of establishing some tentative philosophical orientation and aim prior to any gathering of data, claiming that the investigator without purpose “gropes blindly”; and 2) second, he claims that Forster’s own speculations multiply the number of
assumptions needed to produce a theory, appealing to a variant of Occam’s razor to
defend his own theory. On this basis, Kant uses his theory to explain Forster’s
empirical counter-examples.

Yet in the course of refuting Forster’s objections, the line between natural
change and volitional behavior blurs twice, as Kant makes a direct connection
between physical predispositions of race and behavior in order to counter Forster. In
Kant’s theory of race, these moments seem slight. In my reading they are moments of
racial crisis, in which the very logics of race are temporarily confounded. As I will
show, these are moments when Kant invokes what appears to be a counter-
teleological or negative teleological judgment, utilizing a perception of
unpurposiveness.

The two moments occur in a set of passages in which Kant defends against
Forster’s particularly dismissive objection (as is evident in the number of times
Forster repeats the German unbegreiflich [inconceivable]) that, unlike Kant’s claim of
a single primordial time period of racial development, there is nothing to stop nature
from multiple primordial times. Thus, there is no good basis for the postulation of an
original set of predispositions as the rational explanation for racial differences, and,
consequently, as the ground for a presumed unity of the species. Kant both counters
Forster’s objections and articulates the most important premise of his theory of race,
namely, the global migration of humans from a single origin.

Forster’s most important objection, in Kant’s view, is the argument that even
if Kant’s notion of original predispositions were to be conceded, it does not explain
why peoples are perfectly suitable to the environment they live in. In other words, how is it that as peoples spread over the earth from a single point, they become suited to their mother-countries? Would “providence” not need to arrange for multiple such transplanting on Kant’s account?

To counter Forster, Kant appeals precisely to the phenomenon of racial suitability, namely, that a racial process enables physical suitability to the surrounding environment. Asserting that originary predispositions are only united in a “first human couple,” a subsequent migration, attributable, contends Kant, to “chance,” leads the descendants to various places where the predispositions develop to make them “fit for such a climate.” Affirming a primordial time of racial development (“all of this only holds of the earliest times, which may have lasted long enough (for the gradual population of the earth”), Kant moves to counter Forster’s objections about a second transplanting by specifically appealing to fitness to a climate. Yet Kant’s appeal constructs a rather peculiar counterpoint: citing African slaves and gypsies in Europe who have been driven through exile into climates they are not suited for, he writes that they “have never been able to bring about (abgeben wollen) in their progeny a sort (Schlag) that would be fit for farmers or manual laborers.” (47, my emphasis) Louden’s translation of the modal verb wollen as “being able to” omits the reference to desire and volition that is clearly at work in this sentence. Physical suitability to environment is here measured in the fitness for work, a fitness that might be alternately understood in terms of capacity or desire. The language of natural and universal history mixes in this sentence, utilizing on the one
hand Kant’s carefully specified proto-biological lexicon of race (Nachkommen, Schlag), and on the other associating it with volition (wollen) and vocations that prominently appear in Kant’s essays on universal history. The forcible expulsion of Africans and Indians, a volitional transgression of geographic boundaries, is mirrored by a transgression of racial boundaries, whose end result is the production of seemingly counter-purposive people. The ambivalence, however, in these lines is as to whether Africans and gypsies do not want to bring about in their progeny a desire for the vocation of farming or manual labor or whether they are not able to produce a sort (Schlag) capable of farming or manual labor. In the blurring of lines, the first emphasizes volition and culture, the second capacity and nature.

This sentence is then qualified and supported by an even more peculiar footnote. If Kant tacitly understands slavery in the above passage as entailing a forcible expulsion and racial transgression, his endorsement of a pro-slavery tract below seems to indicate that this does not mean he is against the institution of slavery, particularly as it exists outside of Africa:

The last remark is not put forward here in order to prove something (beweisend angeführt) but it is nevertheless not insignificant (unerheblich).\textsuperscript{154}

In Hr. Sprengel’s Contributions, 5\textsuperscript{th} part, pp.287-92, a knowledgeable (sachkündige) man adduces the following against Ramsay’s wish to use all Negro slaves as free laborers (Arbeiter): that among the many thousand freed Negroes which one encounters in America and England he knows no example

\textsuperscript{154} There is a play of words here too between insignificant (unerheblich), the concept of heritability (erblich), and, tacitly, the sublime (das Erhabene).
of someone engaged in a business (Geschäfte treibe) which one could properly call labor (eigentlich Arbeit nenne); rather that, when they are set free, they soon abandon an easy craft (Handwerk) 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, in a word, tramps (Umtreiber). 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 (ungeneigt) for labor (Arbeit)…Should one not conclude from this that, in addition to the faculty to work (Vermögen zu arbeiten), there is also an immediate drive (Trieb) 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 (Antriebe) into other climates and pass it on to their offspring (vererben)\textsuperscript{155} 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. The far lesser needs in those countries and the little effort it takes to procure only them demand no greater predispositions to activity. (AA VIII 174, 209)\textsuperscript{156}

\textsuperscript{155} Zöller’s translation of vererben as “pass it on to their offspring” explicitly associates the act of passing on or bequeathing (vererben) with the specific production of offspring, an association that Kant makes frequently in his theory of race, but in this difficult passage is not necessarily warranted without explanation.

\textsuperscript{156} Bernasconi shows that Kant’s footnote here is drawn from James Tobin’s pro-slavery “Cursory Remarks upon the Reverend Mr Ramsay’s Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves
Kant qualifies his remark as not to be taken on the order of proof. Thus, what follows might be understood as occurring within the framework of conjecture. Yet it is not clear what he means by “not insignificant.” The footnote turns on the concepts of labor (Arbeit), drive (Trieb), and impulse (Antriebe). Given Kant’s habit of word play, it should be noted that the text consistently rearranges the very letters of Arbeit into Trieb and Antriebe in the passage above, making a recurring visual link for the reader between the external action of labor and the physical drives or impulses that might motivate it. Indeed, we might imagine Kant’s hands, motivated by a physical drive, laboring to rearrange letters.

Placed under the guise, perhaps, of speculation, the footnote shows Kant conflating arguments. The all (“All Negro slaves”) or none (“no example”) conflates different kinds of arguments, opposing Ramsay’s political argument against the institution of slavery with Tobin’s consequentialist and physical argument in support of slavery given the effect of freedom on ex-slaves. That the normally deontological Kant is here favoring consequentialism as an appropriate, instead of logically mistaken, counter-argument shows him to be contravening his own moral philosophy, by emphasizing the ends of an action as the appropriate measure by which to decide. Indeed, Kant’s entire moral philosophy is premised on the idea that it does not matter whether a free action has or ever will occur for it to be judged as morally obligatory.

in the Sugar Colonies”. Against those who claim Kant’s position was against slavery, Bernasconi observes that the journal from which Kant reads a German paraphrase of Tobin, Sprengel’s Beiträge zur Völker – und Länderkunde also includes a translation of the first two chapters of James Ramsay’s An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the Sugar Islands. See Robert Bernasconi, “Kant as an Unfamiliar Source of Racism”.

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The passage continues by very clearly tying freedom to labor, and decrying the inability of ex-slaves, and analogously, gypsies to make such a connection. For Kant in this passage, if political freedom does not entail a condition in which the drive (Trieb) can become an active verb (treiben) and thus physically, politically, and alphabetically rearranged into labor (Arbeit), leading instead to a kind of racialized regress and distorted disarrangement of letters into idleness (Umtreibe), then such people are racially constrained in a way that renders political freedom of little importance.

Kant concludes or decides (schliessen) that this inability is physical. Here climate is and is not important. The fundamental disinclination of slaves to labor is not due to the climate that they have been exiled to, but rather to a lesser amount of a mysterious drive to activity (Trieb zur Thätigkeit), which is distributed according to the primordial climate in which the race developed. Thus, the development of race is correlated to the quantitative distribution of this mysterious drive, which is only ever once mentioned in Kant’s corpus. The inability to increase this drive, no matter the passing of generations or the change of environment, means that Africans and Indians only have a limited capacity towards labor on their own.

Within the confines of this speculative footnote, Kant produces a qualitative distinction between whites – the observers in the footnote – and the races of Africans and Asians. Having only enough drive to activity to preserve their group in a primordial environment, they are not capable of the self-discipline required for extended labor or industry. Moreover, this distinction is produced in the form of a
distorted counter-teleological judgment. The very unsuitability of slaves and gypsies towards labor is given not a natural historical reason, but rather the postulate of an innate, unequal drive. Thus, Trieb and Arbeit are rearranged again into an inheritable impulse (Antrieb), set in a primordial climate according to what is necessary for preservation, limiting the political and moral reach of non-white races. The forced driving away (vertreiben) from this original climate thus reveals the impulse (Antrieb) that connects the physical predispositions of Kant’s theory of race with the possibility of moral behavior. Indeed, the drive to activity is finally naturalized into a predisposition (Anlage) towards less activity. The entire passage seems to turn on the question of what can appropriately be called labor: a scale upon which the easy craft (Handwerk) of slavery occupies a higher rung than the various “wretched” vocations Kant presents. The very care with which Kant constructs the body of the essay seems to be undone in this footnote. Situated as a footnote and cast as something other than proof, it is left up to the reader to understand what is not insignificant (unerheblich) about this racialized, inheritable (erblich) drive, which is only ever raised once in Kant’s texts. Ultimately, Kant is here indicating that this “immediate drive to activity”, which tacitly includes the activities of thinking and philosophizing, is somehow primordially determined according to needs having to do with “preservation” or reproduction. The footnote thus implies the scenario of a potential future of either racial extinction or slavery, in which non-white races are constantly dependent on whites.
This footnote immediately precedes the passage on which the entire essay is staked, namely the passage in which the text presents a teleological judgment that can assume the unity of the species. Kant articulates here the rational assumption of the monogenetic unity of the species precisely through a concept of race. My interest in this passage has to do with how the logics of the footnote recur in the body of the text precisely when Kant wants to use the theory of race he outlines here to comprehend Native Americans as an errant, unfit race.

If Kant has in the footnote blurred the line between volition and nature, in the following passage, the teleological assumption he makes seems free of any volitional elements, such that the population of the globe (a key theme for Kant particularly in the establishment of cosmopolitan right and the right to hospitality in “Towards Perpetual Peace” and Metaphysics of Morals) is presented as a purely natural process.

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 adaption to a climate that during this time span the expansion of the human species (Menschengattung) over the most considerable part of the earth could have taken place, under the meager multiplication of the species (Art) – an expansion that for the most part was brought about forcefully through violent revolutions of nature. (AA VIII 175, 210)
In this narrative, not only is nature as an underlying, instrumental reason responsible for movement, nature is the force behind the migration. Yet this articulation of a natural narrative of migration is subsequently used to posit an errant itinerary:

If through these causes a small people of the old world had been driven from southern regions to the northern ones [the very condition Kant examined in the footnote], 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 (Menschenschlag) had moved in a north-eastern direction all the way to America – a view which currently has the greatest probability…a race would have been founded which…is not suited for 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. (Menschenhaufens) (ibid, trans slightly modified, my emphasis)

The phrase Menschenschlag occurs only once in Kant’s texts, in this passage. Haufen is often used by Kant in its connotation of a mob or motley crew, sometimes in conjunction with the rabble (Pobel). For Kant to call Native Americans Menschenhaufens is to conjoin some condition of being human to the state of being a
motley crew. If the paragraph begins with the articulation of the common origin of the species, it ends on a different note, utilizing the errant itinerary to claim:

that their natural disposition (Naturell) 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 (Arbeit), 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 the differences of races. (AA VIII 175-6, 211, Kant’s emphasis)

In the essay, this passage seems to satisfy Kant’s sense that he has answered Forster’s objections towards principle. For at this point, he quickly and confidently states and dismisses other possible objections not launched by Forster, before going on to show how Forster’s specific empirical examples can be handled by his theory. The gaze at Native Americans thus opens up a racial survey of the world, a survey that implies that the philosophical investigator has recognized his own reason through the concept of race as expressive of nature’s teleological causality.

In what way then does the characterization of the Native American as some oddly arrested condition of humanity satisfy Kant? What kind of height is being imagined in the phrase “ranks still far below even the Negro”? What rhetorical opposition is being set up between the Native American and African? What is the position of the philosophical investigator observing, as it were, this vertical system of
ranking, characterized by the metaphors of depth (Zöller’s translation of tief unter as “far below” could as well be rendered deep under) and lowliness (niedrigste)? Indeed, this terrifying image is abyssal, in which this motley crew of human beings seems destined to extinction. If the African can be named as the “lowest” on the steps of racial differences, the Native American goes deep under these steps. The very naming of the American as a race thus casts them into an abyssal position in the hierarchy of races. One can perhaps imagine Kant gazing down at this indifferent race. Is this an image of terrifying sublimity for Kant or for Kant’s readers? In what way does this sublimity occasion an ethnographic self-recognition as rational, that no matter how terribly nature has produced some humans, reason is still stronger?

The questions opened up here find some answer in Kant’s handwritten *Reflexionen*. Consider the following opposition:

The Americans are insensitive. Without affect and passion, unless merely for revenge. Love of freedom is here merely lazy independence. They do not speak, do not love, care for nothing.

The American people are incapable of civilization. Mexico and Peru accept absolutely no culture.

The Negro: Directly the opposite: are lively, full of affect and passion. Chatty, vain, taking to enjoyment. Adopting the culture of a
bondsman, but not free and are incapable of leading by themselves. Children.\textsuperscript{157} (AA XV 877, trans my own)

The difference between Native Americans and Africans is made palpable, precisely because it is organized around a logic of plenitude. The binary oppositions of affectless/affectful, passionless/passionate, not speaking/chatty, loving nothing/vain, unconcerned/taking to enjoyment lead to the interiority of the African as easily evident — on the color of the skin as it were — while the interiority of the Native American is rendered enigmatic. This binary figures a distinction between the African as natural human — an epistemological object — and the Native American as its enigmatic opposite, a representation that triggers the aesthetic judgment of the sublime. From here, the difference between the white and African can be cast as eminently knowable, representational, and coherent — the possible object of debate. Whether described in terms of a familial romance (the parent’s responsibilities to the child) or in political-exploitative terms (bondsman and master), for Kant the possibility of an epistemology is never in doubt. If the African is projected as a knowable other, as a \textit{racial} difference, the abyssal gap between Native American and African is structured on the possibility of an opposite to this knowable other, unable

\textsuperscript{157} The notes read:

to be incorporated quite by the logics of race. The construction of a logic of plenitude in actuality forms a pattern of vanishing horizons, in which each descriptive statement about Native Americans locates them on some shimmering edge of humanity: “no motive force…without affection and passion. Not drawn to one another by love…unfruitful…hardly speak…never caress…care about nothing…lazy.”

Indeed, the Native American is only representable as a polar opposition; as the dimly lit opposite to the African. From 1772 to 1794, in all the extant cycles of the Lectures on Anthropology and Lectures on Physical Geography, this opposition between Native American and African is reiterated. These representations also resemble the alternating pattern of pure beauty and pure sublimity from the Observations. This opposition is only momentarily mobilized in Kant’s Reflexionen, subsequently dissolved to express the terrifying vision that was implicit in Kant’s theory of race.

All races will be exterminated (the Americans and Negroes cannot govern themselves. Serving therefore only as slaves), only not that of whites. The stubbornness of Indians with their customs is the cause, why they do not melt together in one people with the Whites. (AA XV 878)

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158 This passage is from the Menschenkunde. Quoted in Gerbi, p.330.
159 The melting together may or may not refer to racial mixing. For the next line cautions against racial mixing.
160 “Alle racen werden ausgerottet werden (Amerikaner und Neger können sich nicht selbst regiren. Dienen also nur zu Slaven ), nur nicht die der Weissen. Hartnäckigkeit der Indianer bey ihren Gebräuchen ist Ursache, daß sie nicht in ein Volk mit den Weissen zusammen schmeltzen.”
This notorious passage in Kant’s handwritten notes has increasingly become the topic of discussion. In contrast to the seemingly volitional cause of the Indians – their stubbornness – the Africans and Americans are parenthetically included in a destiny of racial vanishing by virtue of a natural difference in capacity, a difference that we can now understand as the disguising of qualitative distinctions in the quantitative drive to activity. The structure of the pronouncement and the diacritics are intriguing. Casting the whites as exceptional, Kant begins by declaring a common racial destiny. The political capacity, indeed, the capability for law-governed conduct, is parenthetically remarked, rather than directly adduced as the reason for racial extermination.

In the next statement, the history that launches this terrifying utopia gets a start: “Our (old) history of humans rises with reliability only from the race of whites. Egyptians, Persians, Thracians, Greeks, Celts, Scythians (not Indians, Negroes).” (AA XV 879) The African appears twice in these passages. On the one hand the figure is coupled with Native Americans as naturally unable to participate in a racially pure future. On the other hand, the figure is coupled with Indians at the origin of history. These two passages show the presence of Africans, as the natural human needed to get history off on a reliable basis but not included in the future, while the Native American can only ever be excluded from future and past. The difference between these two is never explicitly referenced in the 1798 Anthropology. Yet, it

appears in the text in various coded forms, particularly in the difference between two kinds of gender relations in a state of nature.

What then is the precise difference of Native Americans to the other races? A clue to this is to be found in the “drive to activity” that Kant had postulated in the footnote in his theory of race. There, it was connected to satisfaction of the needs required for the preservation of a group, and by implication, with reproduction. I turn now to the Anthropology to follow up on the implication that the drive to activity is linked to sexual inclination. To move towards this text, I first consider the figure that Kant never actively excludes, but must rather silently exclude, the queer indigenous.

IV. The Sodomite Outside

Relative to the importance of Kant’s theory of race and his ideas of gender to the history of ideas, his representations of indigeneity are unremarkable. They show Kant taking positions in the polemics of his day, slightly changing the scripts available to him. His most prominent representation of indigenous people, namely the representation of Native Americans as sexually indifferent and unfeeling, participates in the polemic Gerbi has titled The Dispute of the New World. Debates over two theses characterize this polemic: 1) the inferiority of the New World in every way to the Old World; and 2) the New World as a future to the Old World. This wide-ranging polemic draws comment from most European philosophers, belletrists, politicians, and artists from the early 18th century through to the mid 19th.
century, including Montesquieu, Bodin, Voltaire, Herder, Coleridge, and Shelley. It reaches its apogee in Hegel. The sexual indifference of Native Americans was one prominent line of “proof” used to support the thesis of inferiority. As noted, the discursive break in Kant’s representations show a movement from Rousseau to Cornelius de Pauw’s *Recherches philosophiques sur les Américains*. Kant’s later comments in many ways read as a facsimile of the first pages of the *Recherches*.

Yet Kant diverges in an important way from De Pauw. Kant does not accept the principle of degeneracy which for De Pauw serves as the organizing principle of his representation of Native Americans and the continent in general, ranging from the

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162 Thomas Jefferson’s shipment of moose carcasses to the Comte de Buffon to deny the thesis of inferiority or Humboldt’s irritation at Hegel’s contention that New World crocodiles are “weaker” than their Old World counterparts are two of the more famous manifestations of this polemic. See Antonello Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World*. See Keith Thomas, “Jefferson, Buffon, and the Moose” in *American Scientist*, (May-June 2008) and Lee Alan Dugatkin, *Mr. Jefferson and the Giant Moose: Natural History in Early America*, (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press 2009), for recent treatments of the Jefferson episode.

163 Antonello Gerbi contends that Hegel gives the most philosophically complete expression of the polemic, synthesizing the two theses to claim the New World as inferior in every way yet at the same time seeing the New World as the future place of world-historical reason. Gerbi also points out that Hegel’s contribution to this polemic is at the same time anachronistic, listing the tenets Hegel takes up as outdated. The specifically Hegelian topos of the New World as the place of the future was taken up by Walt Whitman.

164 This is a key point of Gerbi’s.

165 Throughout his writings, Kant confesses his admiration for de Pauw’s scientific system, calling the system praiseworthy even when individual details are factually incorrect. See Gerbi, p.329. Against Gerbi, I understand this discursive break to reflect less a move away from Rousseau to De Pauw and more a synthesis of the two. What Kant finds in Rousseau is a compelling concept of human nature. De Pauw’s influence on Kant has been less studied. The change in emphasis for Kant from the role of observer, prominent to the *Observations*, to the philosophical investigator is certainly one place De Pauw’s influence shows. De Pauw’s valorization of the philosophical investigator over the travelling observer was one of the key interventions that changed the historiography of the New World in the late 1700s. The philosophical investigator is armed with an extra-literary entity incapable of lying, namely a concept of nature, by which to adjudicate different testimonials of the New World. The resultant natural history is systematic rather than episodic, cast in a single, linear narrative. Alongside his copying of De Pauw’s actual representations of native Americans, I want to suggest that Kant’s texts on history, political philosophy, and anthropology present a composite of human nature as understood by Rousseau and De Pauw.

166 See De Pauw, “Discours Preliminaire” in *Recherches philosophiques sur les Américains, ou Mémoires intéressants pour servir à l’Histoire de l’Espece Humain par Mr. de P****. Berlin: 1770, pp.iii-xxii.
features of the landmass, the flora and fauna, and extending not only to the native inhabitants but also to settlers and colonists. This principle of degeneracy leads in De Pauw to the association of sexual indifference with sexual perversity. For De Pauw, nature is figured as a “step-mother” who occasions the physical degeneracy – in his eyes – of gender roles and sexual practices, a degeneration that includes lactating men and same-sex practices. These claims are for De Pauw the results of a scientific inquiry that he holds as superior to what he considers to be myths of native giants, single-eyed men, and so forth. That Kant denies this principle of degeneracy is keeping with a central principle of perfectibility in his conception of nature, namely, that all animate beings in nature move towards perfection. His passive denial of same-sex practices to Native Americans – through his lack of attribution – on the other hand is in need of interrogation, as it shows Kant taking a position in another polemic of the day on the legislation of sexual practices and the naturalness of same sex practices. Here, there is an important overlap. In the polemic of the New World, De Pauw and others, starting perhaps from Balboa’s brutal murder of so-called “sodomites” in present-day Panama, take the same sex practices of Native Americans as “evidence” of their inferiority. At the same time, there is a debate in Europe on the status of same-sex practices, a debate in which the existence of these practices among Native Americans was used as support to affirm the naturalness of these practices. On the other hand, the purported lack of such practices among Native Americans was used to affirm the unnaturalness of these practices, as excesses of

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Kant’s position here, in contrast to the people he is reading, is to affirm the inferiority of the Native Americans while holding same-sex practices as excesses of culture. For Kant, therefore, same-sex practices are understood as *crimina carnis contra naturam* ("carnal crimes against nature"), occurring only in the domain of culture. But to do this, Kant selectively constructs a representation of Native Americans that at times is a straight copy of De Pauw and in other ways ignores his text. Moreover, Kant constructs this representation as based on a quantifiable lesser sexual inclination, without the resultant “perversions” that De Pauw imputes.

In the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant distinguishes same sex and inter-species sexual practices as “unnatural”, on the basis of an understanding that the “natural use” of the sexual impulse is procreative. (AA VI 277, PP 427) Based on the decoupling of the sexual inclination from reproduction that I showed in the previous chapter, there is no inherent reason for Kant to assume that heterosexuality is the only option in a state of nature. It is certainly the case that Kant claims that reproduction is a teleological end to the sexual impulse; yet, he also decouples the sexual impulse from reproduction. Kant moves from here to claim that a natural sexual union “takes place

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169 The criminal carnis contra naturam are masturbation, same sex, and sex with animals. I have focused on the second category, because it is the one that was most typically associated with native Americans. I note that Kant uses the term sodomy to mean intercourse with animals and does not have a specific term for homosexuality. My use of the term follows the use of the term in the Enlightenment but does not correspond to Kant’s use of the term sodomy.


in accordance with mere animal nature or the law.” (ibid) The difference here is of course the difference between a state of nature and civil society. The discussion of same-sex practices is not resumed in the *Metaphysics of Morals* but is taken up, recurrently, in Kant’s *Lectures on Ethics*. There, Kant writes of same sex practices that they demean the humanity in the person insofar as they place that lower than animals. Indeed, in the *Lectures on Ethics*, Kant suggests that the appropriate punishment for the sodomite is expulsion from civil society, thus revealing the sexual borders of civil society.

I want to challenge this dissociation of Kant’s, which allows Kant to present Native Americans as “barely human” and the figure of the sodomite as a criminal below *humanity*. In other words, the sodomite is at the level of humanity, who through his transgression makes known the boundaries of humanity as a boundary of civil society, whereas the Native American stays on the far side of a natural concept of the human. The metaphor, indeed, for same sex practices is the counter-purposive metaphor of the “lesion against humanity.” In contrast, the representation of Native Americans presents them as barely purposive. The difference in levels – humanity and the human – and type of purposiveness is only made possible by this active dissociation of Kant. The cultured sodomite is understood as transgressing at the level of humanity rather than at the epistemological level of the human. In the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant writes of sodomy that “such transgression of laws, called unnatural (*criminal carnis contra naturam*) or also unmentionable vices, do wrong to humanity in our own person.” (AA VI 277, PP 427) The transgression here is “unnatural”
because it acts against the universal telos of reproduction. In the Lectures on Ethics, Kant makes a similar statement, claiming that this transgression runs “counter to the ends of humanity.” (AA XXVII 391, 161) By placing this transgression at the level of humanity, Kant considers sodomites to be moral agents, as is evident in his use of the first person singular pronoun “I” when discussing sodomy in the Lectures on Ethics. He states there that by committing the act of sodomy “I degrade humanity below the animal level.” (ibid) The orifice of the sodomite is not a site of natural reproduction. Therefore, in terms of the text the sodomite forms a constitutive outside for civil society. The Native American on the other hand forms an ambivalent boundary at the epistemological level of the human rather than humanity. This figure too can be made productive (and reproductive) for the text insofar as the theory of race and the normative logic of gender need this figure in order to be broached. However its place is not in civil society. It is precisely the possibility of the Native American as a possible sodomite that must be silently excluded, for such a figure would blur the lines between human and humanity rather than offering a productive moment of exclusion.

The non-normative sexual practices of Native Americans, recorded by travelers, ethnographers, and missionaries in the 17th and 18th century as “proof” of sexual indifference and perversion, a “proof” at the same time of brutal encounters, is

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in turn instrumentally recoded by Kant. This recoding, in turn, allows Kant to contain non-normative sexual practices in the domain of culture, as the transgression that, in overstepping lines, shows the capacity for free choice and the sexual boundaries of civil society. If Kant’s notion of humanity depends on the transgression of same-sex practices as a constitutive outside, such that a certain type of heterosexuality and same-sex practices can be opposed, what of sexuality in a state of nature?

Such a representation is also out of line with the dominant assumption in late 18th century Germany, which understands the universal existence of strong sexual urges among humans. Indeed, German civil society is filled with journals and books that debate the uses of these urges, over any questions of quantity. Thus, Kant’s later representations of Native Americans, while holding little interest to the polemics of the day, in its divergences, have a particular importance in his teleological theory of sexuality. Native Americans stand as barely purposive heterosexual beings in a raw condition of nature, while the sodomite is the counter-purposive figure of civil society. The Native American is thus barely gendered, whereas the sodomite transgresses gender norms and practices. Consider for example

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174 Hull describes how the Cameralists attempt to account for a positive place in civil society for sexual attraction. See Sexuality, State, and Civil Society in Germany, 1700-1815, pp.172-198.

175 See, for instance, the analysis of anti-masturbation campaigns in the chapter titled “Thought Experiments” in Hull, pp.258-279.
the following passage from the *Anthropology*, resembling the narrative of gender sketched in the *Observations*:

In the raw (rohe) state of nature it is certainly different. There the woman is a domestic animal. The man leads the way with weapons in his hand, and the woman follows him loaded down with his household beginnings. (AA VII 304, 400, trans slightly modified)

Kant’s handwritten notes and lecture cycles on geography and anthropology clearly show that this raw state of nature is drawn from his representations of Native Americans. Consider in conjunction, then, the following comments from Kant’s 1772 Lectures on Geography:

As for the relationship of the woman to the man, for the Americans they can be considered as domestic beasts, whose business is incumbent on hunting and war.

North Americans are to the highest degree unfeeling; this expresses itself perhaps in the following, that among them almost no inclination towards sex

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176 Kant’s handwritten note in the margin states “among unrefined groups the woman is a beast of burden” and references “Hearne of Hudson Bay”, a reference to Samuel Hearne’s *Journey from Prince of Wales fort on Hudson’s Bay to the Northern Ocean*. It is not clear whether Kant read the section of Hearne included in Georg Forster’s German translation of Cook or whether he read Hearne directly.

177 “Was das Verhältnis des weiblichen Geschlechts zum männlichen betrifft; so werden sie von den Americanern als Haustiere angesehen, denen alle Geschäfte außer dem Jagen und Kriegen obliegen”
can be detected, thus the woman cannot be regarded as other than a domestic beast, who must carry the food for hunting.\textsuperscript{178}

As I noted in the previous chapter, the raw state of nature is also distinguished by the inability to cognize gender differences (no difference between crab apples and pears). Samuel Hearne’s narrative adds an explicit aesthetic component for this visible lack of difference, claiming that the early loss of beauty among Native Americans leads to the lack of sexual inclination. For Kant, however, it seems that this lack of inclination is innate. Focused instead on the activity of procuring nutrition and the (homo-erotic) unsociable activity of war, the lack of sexual inclination translates to an inability to recognize gender differences, casting the power-differential of men and women into a situation of a subordinating mobile domesticity that is not domestic. In other words, women are domestic beasts, not allowed expression in a domestic situation. The situation extends, in Kant’s account, to an inability to domesticate dogs: “American dogs do not love humans, but rather flee from them, because they are not used to being cajoled by them.”

The domestication of women, a relationship that is not one of love, thus cannot lead to the creation of a domestic and civil sphere, but is rather mobile, covering expanses of space. The relationship is subsequently contrasted to the semi-legal civil construction of polygamy:

\textsuperscript{178} “Die Nordamerikaner sind im höchsten Grade unempfindlich; dieses äußert sich vielleicht sowohl darin, daß bey ihnen fast gar keine Geschlechter_Neigung zu spühren, dahero auch die Weiber nicht anders, als HausThiere, die ihnen das Eßen auf der Iagdt nachtragen müßen, behandelt werden.”
But even where a barbaric civil constitution makes polygamy legal, the most favored woman in his kennel (called a harem) knows how to achieve dominion over the man, and he has no end of trouble creating a tolerable peace amid the quarrel of many women to be the one (who is to rule over him). (AA VII 304, 400-1)

These two stages serve as reminder to Kant’s readers about the link between gender roles and civil society. In civil society, the woman becomes a symbol of beauty, simultaneously leading the man to morality and also incurring attraction from other men, so as to divide the man’s attention from his force. Here, I want to suggest that the contrast between polygamy and a raw condition of nature might be considered in terms of the rhetorical opposition of African and Native American that I have been suggesting. In the Lectures on Geography, Kant represents Africans as polygamous. This contrast in representation leads to the triumphant view of the achievement of the appropriate gender relationship in civil society: “In civil society the woman does not give herself away to the man’s pleasure (Gelüsten) without marriage, and indeed, monogamous marriage.” (AA VII 304, 401, Kant’s emphasis)

The “and, indeed” here marks quite a distance, from the raw state of nature to the polygamy of the barbarians to the appropriate social union of sexual relations between two people. In chapter 3, I had shown how Kant’s glossed two origins of nature produce a heteronormative teleology on the one hand, here understood as
starting in polygamy, and a difference from that teleology on the other, in the barely
gendered inhabitants of a raw condition of nature. This contrast, in its banality, is
nonetheless a contrast between pure beauty (a degenerate polygamous sexuality) and
pure sublimity (at the limit of nature). What this affectless representation of Native
Americans silently excludes I would like to conclude on the basis of this section is
precisely a figuration of queer indigeneity, a figure that would terrifyingly disrupt this
teleology, because it would imply not a difference in strength of sexual inclination but
a change in orientation.

V. Indigeneity and Cosmopolitical Unity

The concluding section of the 1798 Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of
View is titled “The Character of the Species”. The section offers Kant’s most
pronounced response to the question “what is the human”, a question the response to
which Kant claims is, in his revision of the Canon of Reason, the organizing principle
of not only his anthropology, but of the critical philosophical system as a whole. My
reading of this section serves not only to conclude this chapter but the dissertation as
a whole, drawing together the analyses that form these three chapters: the use of race,
gender, and indigeneity in the formation of a cosmopolitan vision. Kant makes a
surprising use of the terms race and gender, occasioned precisely by the exclusionary
force of his representations of indigeneity, in order to formulate a vision of a united
cosmopolitan whole.
The declared aim of this book is the production of world-citizens through education. The preface outlines these dynamics. Most important to Kant is delineating how knowledge acquired through schooling or science might be made useful for the purpose of “cognition (Erkenntnis) of the human being as a citizen of the world.” (AA VII 119, 231, trans slightly modified) The translation of Erkenntnis as knowledge names, as it should be clear by now, an impossible project, an ideal forever deferred. The best one can hope for is a cognition of the human being in this way. Indeed, even the very cognition of the human in this sense conceals the various aporias that this dissertation has examined. Such a cognition, writes Kant, would “deserve to be called knowledge of the world (Weltkenntnis).” (ibid)

In order to motivate the reader’s sense of this cognition, Kant draws a line between physiological and pragmatic anthropology: the first concerns what nature has made of the human – a veritable object of epistemology. The second concerns what “the human being as a free-acting being makes of himself, or can and should make of himself” (ibid) : a formula that attempts to negotiate the epistemological limits of Kant’s philosophy under the rubric of what Kant calls pragmatic. Pragmatism here concerns the ways in which knowledge in the first sense might be used to enhance the second. The murky example Kant offers of taking the study of cranial nerves in order to stimulate memory, far from clarifying things, implies an instrumental relationship between physiological and pragmatic knowledge.

For Kant, knowledge of the world is divided into two component pieces: physical geography and anthropology. The latter is again divided into physical
anthropology and pragmatic anthropology. Indeed, physical anthropology – in the sense that Kant seems to think of it – is for the most part included in his Lectures on Physical Geography. In those lectures, Kant writes that the world can be divided into nature as the object of outer sense and the human or soul as object of inner sense. 179 Thus, knowledge of the world as nature is the provenance of physical geography, whereas knowledge of the world as the human is the provenance of anthropology.

As Kant starts to formulate the project of pragmatic anthropology, which must come after schooling, he postulates a relationship between such an anthropology and other components of a knowledge of the world in terms of a tantalizing “not yet”:

Such an anthropology, considered as knowledge of the world, which must come after our schooling, is actually not yet called pragmatic when it contains an extensive knowledge of things in the world, for example, animals, plants, and minerals from various lands and climates, but only when it contains knowledge (Erkenntnis) of the human being as a citizen of the world. – Therefore, 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 theoretical knowledge of the world. (AA VII 120, 231-2, Kant’s emphasis)

The emphasized words resemble perhaps a formula by which to become a world citizen, a formula that the reader will need to put together, supplying the missing word “human” in this chain of emphasized terms. This reader will need to ponder the “not-yet”. The status of the “not yet” has been understood by various commentators in different ways. Kleingeld reads it as a hard distinction (of what kind one might ask), separating one domain from the other. Mark Larrimore understands the not-yet as an unfulfilled promissory note. I’d like to suggest that this is a necessarily unfulfilled promissory note, the aporetic gesture of Kant’s Anthropology. This not-yet then might be understood as a point of intersection between two competing demands: 1) the demand for epistemology to lead to better (cosmopolitan) action; 2) the impossibility of knowing the human as rational. Produced as a “not-yet”, the possibility of a positive relationship between knowledge and morals dangles for Kant’s reader, as a project that is simultaneously necessarily unfulfilled but must nonetheless be undertaken.

Kant has in mind not an individual reader, but rather a diversified one. The preface ends by projecting a reading public, who in their divided consumption (suggested by the use of the term Liebhaber) will mimic in their movements – a natural division followed by a gradual unity - the very cosmopolitan promise, and the history that offers an assuring sense of it, that animates the book:

An anthropology written from a pragmatic point of view that is systematically designed and yet popular (through reference to examples which can be found
by every reader), yields an advantage for the reading public: the completeness
of the headings under which this or that observed human quality of practical
relevance can be subsumed offers readers many occasions and invitations to
make each particular into a theme of its own, so as to place it in the
appropriate category. Through this means the details of the work are naturally
divided among the connoisseurs (Liebhaber) of this study, and they are
gradually united into a whole through the unity of the plan. As a result the
growth of the science for the common good is promoted and accelerated. (AA
VII 121-2, 233)

The book thus aims at the gradual reconstitution of a self-interested reading
public who will consume this book as they will. This is a cannier Kant than the Kant
of 1764. The primary focus of this book is the production of a reading public who,
intentionally or not, will lead towards a cosmopolitan unity. Gone is the hope of
raising individual students into cosmopolitan world-citizenry, a change reflected in
the structure of this book, which no longer even demands an individual reader who
will read the whole book. Although Kant does not do away with the promise of
individual self-enlightenment, it is muted.\(^1\) Whereas in 1764, Kant had
distinguished a fine feeling for the sublime and beautiful from ordinary activities of
gratification (the lovers of hunting for example), in this book, it is precisely by re-

\(^1\) In the section of the Anthropology titled “Character of the Person”, Kant stages self-enlightenment
in a scene that is filled with connotations of masturbation (enlightenment is characterized as a kind of
explosion that happens after the student has held his desire in sufficient check for long enough).
orienting the lovers of ordinary things towards reading, as lovers of the study, that a cosmopolitan unity will come about. In the footnote to this paragraph, Kant notes that he has taught anthropology and physical geography for some thirty years, lectures aimed at “knowledge of the world.” Perhaps then this is Kant’s lesson after thirty years. He goes on to state that the popularity of the course consequently lead to “people of different estates” attending it. Thus, in Kant’s eyes, the reading public is not only diversified by the contents of the book, its popularity will entail class-differentiated readers. Such hopes represent Kant’s best (and naively limited) efforts to imagine a reading public that is not fully class bound.

In the passage above, the last paragraph of the preface, the prospect of a pragmatic anthropology is displaced towards writing an anthropology from a pragmatic regard (hinsicht). The translation of Hinsicht as point of view elides Kant’s proposal here: a properly pragmatic anthropology is simply not possible; nor for that matter is the pragmatic viewpoint a perspective that can simply be taken. If the younger Kant had insisted on imagining a cosmopolitan point of view, at this point Kant has no such aspirations. Instead, the readers must work towards those goals, of turning knowledge of the world into a cognition of world-citizens. A pragmatic regard is thus much more limited than a pragmatic point of view. Its meaning does not become clear until the conclusion. The end result of such a plan, moreover, is not some vaunted pragmatic anthropology, whose possibility Kant offers in the beginning; it is merely “the promotion and acceleration of a science for the common good.”
The use of these metaphors of movement, indeed, of this science for the common good (or use, gemeinnutzen) is in line with the stated accomplishment of the book, namely, the production of “moral certainty” in the regulative idea that the human being has a “natural tendency” to progress towards the good. Thus, if this destiny is inevitable, the task for humans is the possible hastening towards this end, a hastening accomplished Kant believes through this “science for a common good.” Through an invitation to a multiply composed reading public, then, this book of Kant’s also aims to transform any doubt associated with the “not-yet” into expectation, a moral certainty in the progress of the “human species.”

I turn now to the conclusion of the book. In this section, titled “Character of the Species”, Kant attempts a cognition of humanity, joining an abstract, theoretical concept of the species (Gattung) with the idea of a moral whole, whose parts and ends are reciprocally bound. For this latter whole, Kant uses the term humankind (Menschengeschlecht).

Kant starts by declaring the epistemological impossibility of the project. In the Anthropology, this impossibility is not about the limits established by the antinomies in the critical philosophy but the more mundane issue that there are no other rational species by which to compare. The Anthropology as a whole has a comparative dimension: through comparison (which at times resembles the cataloguing of the Observations), a character is discerned. In the case of the species, there are no non-terrestrial rational species known to humans by which to discern the distinctive character of human reason.
Kant must thus construct a representation in which this distinctive character can be discerned against other imagined rational beings. As he assembles an image in which the character of the species can be discerned, he repeats the various histories he has constructed over the course of his philosophy, including the joining of an organic predisposition to reason with a natural, inevitable rational causality of nature and an immanent rational subjectivity. Of these, the inevitable rational causality, here cast as a regulative idea, does the most work. For instance, in the revelation of the human species (Gattung) as a moral whole (Menschengeschlecht), this natural reason plays not only the role of the realization of a practical supposition but also implies a historical achievement. Resembling the palingenesis of the *Observations*, the process is clearly exclusive and violent, tacitly referencing the scene of racial extinction:

The education of the humankind (Menschengeschlecht), taking its species (Gattung) as a *whole*, that is *collectively* (*universorum*), not all of the individuals (*singulorum*), where the multitude does not yield a system but only an aggregate gathered together; and the tendency toward an envisaged civil constitution…the human being expects these only from *Providence*…This education from above, I maintain is salutary but harsh and stern in the cultivation (Bearbeitung) of nature, which extends through great hardship and almost to the extinction of the entire kind (der ganzen Geschlechts). It consists in bringing forth the *good* which the human being has not intended, but which continues to maintain itself once it is there, from *evil*,

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which is always internally at odds with itself. Providence signifies precisely the same wisdom that we observe with admiration in the preservation of a species of organized natural beings. (AA VII 328, 423-4, trans slightly modified Kant’s emphasis)

Here, the moral whole is not an aggregate, but instead exclusive, including only those with the “tendency towards a civil constitution.” This scene of extinction produces a use of the term gender (Geschlecht) that is used to characterize the moral grouping of the species, as well as casting the group as saved from an almost extinction. In my reading, Geschlecht, in its tendency to civil constitutions, explicitly excludes those that do not fit into a teleology of normative gender roles. Kant’s use here only includes autonomous, self-governing, properly gender-normative individuals in civil society.

At the conclusion of the section, Kant assembles an image of humans among other rational beings (at a table perhaps). Here Kant makes a surprising use of the term race. Commentators have puzzled over the omission of race in the Anthropology. The omission of race from the table of contents, despite the fact that there is a section titled “The Character of Race”, and the brief account in that section pointing readers towards Christoph Meiner’s application of Kantian principles in producing a theory of race, have led readers to believe that race is no longer an important concept to Kant. Bernasconi and Larrimore contend that the popularity of Kant’s essays on race obviated the need to address the topic. I want to follow their
suggestion that race is a successful project for Kant, but in my reading, the success in the Anthropology is due to a different reason. In the Introduction to the Anthropology, Kant mentions race specifically as a concept that has not-yet become pragmatic. In my reading, Kant’s use of the term race at the conclusion is precisely an attempt to use race in a pragmatic sense. Indeed, the section titled “The Character of Race” is immediately prior to this section and refers to a natural law of fertility, a law that prohibits race mixing. If the upshot of Kant’s theory of race is the ability to visibly observe the teleological purpose of nature, its pragmatic use, in the cognition of human beings, is to support a theoretical concept of the species, one which finds its origin in natural heterosexuality and its terminus in monogamous marriage in civil society.

As Kant moves to cognize humanity from an empirical and historical standpoint, the term race joins together the idea of humanity as a moral whole with a physiological language of needs and predispositions. In other words, this is the moment in the Anthropology when a moral-political idea of humanity is reconciled with an epistemological concept of the human. Crucial to the use of race in this pragmatic sense is the exclusion of non-whites and thus the concept of race in a theoretical sense. The seeming universality of the following passage is undermined by Kant’s argument in an earlier section that implicitly constrains the concept of “peoples” (Völkern) to whites:
The character of the species, as it is known from the experience of all ages and by all peoples, is this: that, taken collectively (humankind [Menschengeschlecht] as one whole), it is a multitude of persons, existing successively and side by side, who cannot do without being together peacefully and yet cannot avoid constantly being objectionable to one another. Consequently, they feel destined by nature to [develop], through mutual compulsion under laws that come from themselves, into a cosmopolitan society (cosmopolitismus) that is constantly threatened by disunion but generally progresses toward a coalition. In itself it is an unattainable idea, but not a constitutive principle (the principle of anticipating lasting peace amidst the most vigorous actions and reactions of human beings). Rather, it is only a regulative principle: to pursue this diligently as the determination (Bestimmung) of humankind (Menschengeschlecht), not without a grounded supposition of a natural tendency toward it. (AA VII 331 427, trans slightly modified, Kant’s emphasis)

Because the peoples that collectively constitute humankind (Menschengeschlecht) are white, Kant can assume the gendered and political dynamic of unsociable sociability (“cannot do without…and cannot avoid”) is firmly in place. On the basis of this dynamic, he can claim that, although the idea of cosmopolitanism is a “regulative idea,” there is a “grounded supposition of a natural tendency toward it.” It is precisely the grounding of this supposition through race,
gender, and indigeneity that I have been investigating in this dissertation. After discussing this supposition, Kant introduces the term race.

If one now asks whether the human species (which, when one thinks of it as a species of rational beings on earth in comparison with rational beings on other planets, as a multitude of creatures arising from one demiurge, can also be called a race) – whether I say it is to be regarded as a good or bad race, then I must confess that there is not much to boast about it. (AA VII 331, 427, Kant’s emphasis)

The pragmatic concept of race used here is normative, a concept that can be morally evaluated as good or bad. By making race parenthetically equivalent to species, Kant constructs a concept of the species in which the physiological language of race is joined to the idea of a moral agent. Thus, when Kant repeats a historical cognition of the species – this time with the help of the pragmatic concept of race – the character of the species is discerned in certain kinds of behavior located in the “moral physiognomy of our species”:

Anyone who takes a look at human behavior not only in ancient history but also in recent history will…find foolishness rather than malice to be the most striking characteristic mark of our species. But since foolishness combined with a lineament of malice (which is then called folly) is not to be
underestimated in the moral physiognomy of our species, it is already clear enough from the concealment of a good part of one’s thoughts, which every prudent human being finds necessary, that in our race everyone finds it advisable to be on his guard…this already betrays the propensity of our species to be evil-minded toward one another. (AA VII 331-2, 427)

Shuttling from race to species, Kant describes a dynamic which is clearly linked to unsociable sociability: in order to avoid the folly of others, it is necessary for prudent humans to conceal their own thoughts. Kant contrasts this need to conceal with the speculative idea of rational beings on some other planet who can only think aloud. Writing that “unless they are all pure as angels, it is inconceivable how they could live in peace together, how they could have any respect at all for anyone else, and how they could get on well together” (AA VII 332, 427, Kant’s emphasis) Kant claims that the human capacity to conceal one’s thoughts – to effect a disjunction between thought and speech – is central to politics (“live in peace”), moral interaction (“any respect”) and sociability (“how they could get on well together”).

That the disjunction between thought and speech claimed here is gendered can be seen by way of my argument in chapters 2 and 3. As I noted there, in the “Conjectural Beginning to Human History”, the capacities to think and speak are connected to the naming of the first human couple as man and she-man. In that essay, the concealment of the genitals by the fig-leaf is the founding moment of sociability.
The disjunction of thought and speech can thus be related to the concealment effected by the fig-leaf. The fig-leaf permits a disjunction between the grounding of moral and social interactions on the sexual inclination and the satisfaction of that inclination. It is precisely in the delay of the satisfaction of the sexual inclination that both the promise of Kant’s civil society (in the achievement of monogamous marriage) and its transgression (sodomy) is lodged. Although Kant never explicitly makes the connection, it would not be too far-fetched to claim that the need to conceal one’s thoughts is related to the heterosexual dynamics of courting in civil society that Kant discusses earlier in the Anthropology.

Throughout the essays I have examined, Kant propounds a principle of reading in which what appears to be transgression or “vice” can simultaneously be interpreted as the appearance of reason. Linking the disjunction between thought and speech to certain kinds of immoral behaviors, permits Kant to move to discerning the rational character of the human species. These behaviors could just as well be used to describe the function of the fig-leaf: dissimulation, intentional deception, even lying. The use of the term race in these passages allows Kant to find in these behaviors the existence of a bodily predisposition (Anlage) for moral action.

So it already belongs to the original composition of a human creature and to the concept of his species to explore the thoughts of others but to withhold one’s own; a neat quality which then does not fail to progress gradually from dissimulation to intentional deception and finally to lying. This would then
result in a caricature of our species that would warrant not mere good-natured 
laughter at it but contempt for what constitutes its character, and the 
admission that this race of terrestrial rational beings deserves no honorable 
place among the (to us unknown) other rational beings – except that precisely 
this condemning judgment reveals a moral predisposition (Anlage) in us, an 
inmate demand of reason to also work against this propensity. (AA VII 332-3, 
428-9, Kant’s emphasis)

The use of the term race thus connects the gendered disjunction between 
thought and 
speech to the cognition of the human species as rational. This is precisely the 
pragmatic project of race that Kant had indicated had not yet been undertaken at the 
beginning of the Anthropology. Race and gender thus allow Kant to reconcile the 
moral idea of humanity with the epistemological concept of the human. On this basis, 
Kant articulates his belief in the progressiveness of the human species.

So it presents the human species not as evil, but as a species of rational being 
that strives among obstacles to rise out of evil in constant progress toward the 
good. In this its volition is generally good, but achievement is difficult 
because one cannot expect to reach the goal by free agreement of individuals, 
but only by a progressive organization of citizens of the earth into and toward
the species as a system that is cosmopolitically united. (AA VII 333, 429, Kant’s emphasis)

This sublime view discerns human character in the disjunction between speech and thought, of which the most extreme appearance is in “lying”. In the 1764 Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime, Kant repeatedly fails to construct a vision of humanity in terms of the noble sublime, one in which what was grotesque could not be seen as noble. There, he resorts to a vision of humanity constructed in terms of the magnificent sublime, an image in which the simplicity of the sublime is covered over by the play of beautiful surfaces. In the 1798 Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View, Kant makes this play of beautiful surfaces itself the distinguishing character of any representation of humanity. It is precisely in this play of beautiful surfaces that “lying” constitutes the “truth” of humanity. The political promise of Kant’s philosophy is lodged in this play between “lying” and truth, a play that is the experience of the aporia between moral and epistemology. The main argument of this dissertation about the movement of identity and difference between the human and humanity is spelled out in this play: the disjunction between thought and speech – of which the most extreme appearance is “lying” - founds the unsociable sociability that propels some humans towards a cosmopolitan society and leads them to be identified with the cognition of humanity. Yet he withholds this putatively universal character – namely the possibility of a disjunction between thought and speech (or the sexual inclination and its satisfaction)
that appears in the capacity to “lie” – and thus the appellation of humanity from non-white peoples. The disjunction of thought and speech depend on the appearance of normative “men” and “women.”

The non-white peoples characterized by Kant’s theoretical (rather than pragmatic) concept of race are described as possessing gender configurations that deviate from this norm. These deviations form Kant’s account of natural history, out of which emerges the universal history of white peoples. The constitutive outside to this normative scheme and its deviations is most evident in Kant’s representations of Native Americans. These representations not only participate in a story of sexual inclinations, of the barely gendered Native American and the normatively gendered European, but also of the inability to separate thought from speech. Indeed, the only explicit reference to Native Americans in the *Anthropology* complains of their inability (unlike the child) to loudly announce their existence, precisely as Kant is formulating his theory of signs. Kant goes on to interpret this silence as indicating a paucity of thought. Kant must construct this figure as honest, weak, cruel, and silent, the truth of their existence written on their bodies. Kant needs to read these representations as simple, direct, and true. Yet a look at Kant’s use of source material reveals that he distorts and fabricates those materials. The height of Kant’s cosmopolitan vision depends on a constitutive moment in which there is a look at a terrifying other.

The sublimity of Kant’s vision thus depends on a restricted universality: only white peoples comprise the pragmatic cognition of the human, one which reconciles
the moral idea of humanity with the epistemological concept of the human species. Kant’s cosmopolitan society emerges as a racially pure vision which can possibly take on board sexual freedom of a certain kind (although Kant does not explicitly do so), namely as a liberal question of rights in civil society.

At the end of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant promises a history of pure reason to round out the Transcendental Doctrine of Method. This history is never provided. Instead, Kant claims that a “cursory glance” at nature will suffice for the moment. Moreover, he suggests that a reader in the near future will write this history and thus complete the architectonic system. In my reading, Kant is staging the necessary yet impossible task that he bequeathes to his philosophical heirs: writing the history that would guarantee moral certainty in a cosmopolitan future.

In this dissertation, I have interpreted the texts that comprise Kant’s philosophical anthropology as taking up this task. I have investigated the deep background of the mechanics of the production of a rational subject of history in Kant’s philosophy. In order to do so, I have traced the production of this subject through the philosophical-historical formations of a scientific discourse of race in the 18th century, of a discourse of gendered political agency, and, lastly, of a change in representations of Native Americans within Kant’s texts. Throughout, I have attempted to utilize a perspective that attends to the political framework within which the rational subject is produced.
The central argument of this dissertation has been that the production of a rational subject of history depends on a conception of the human and humanity as two distinct objects in Kant’s cosmopolitan horizon. By looking at discourses of race, gender, and indigeneity, I have shown how the terms human and humanity are neither coeval nor identical. The division of these two terms forms the frame from which a cosmopolitan perspective becomes possible. By following Kant’s vision of cosmopolitanism through a range of texts, I have shown how the rational subject is constituted on the basis of race, gender, and indigeneity.

I have tracked this production within moments of philosophizing in Kant’s popular texts: transgressive moments in which the boundaries drawn by the critical philosophy do not hold. Against readings that claim these moments of transgression as dismissible mistakes, I have suggested that they are instructive. By lingering in them, I have made some suggestions about how the position of Kant’s implied reader might be productively opened up. My interest is not refiguring the identity of Kant’s implied reader so much as to make Kant useful for contemporary discourses of cosmopolitanism. Given the conjunctural difference between Kant’s time and ours, discussions of class would not be pertinent here. I thus want to suggest that the project of updating Kant’s cosmopolitanism might start in the aporetic “mistakes” necessary to getting a cosmopolitan perspective off the ground. It is in these “mistakes” that the most interesting examples of Kant philosophizing to a popular audience are in play. I conclude by asking, if Kant needed such examples to produce
a cosmopolitan subjectivity, what is the political frame from within which our own
(mistaken) attempts are launched?
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