Race, Empire, and the Idea of Human Development

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2 Kant on race and development

Derogatory characterizations of out-groups by in-groups are as old as recorded history. And various forms of bond-servitude, particularly in connection with conquest and captivity, are at least as old as settled agricultural societies. Christianity, despite its doctrine of the universal "brotherhood of mankind" as all God's children, generally accommodated itself to established practices of servitude and bondage: it was not until the latter half of the eighteenth century that there was sustained opposition to slavery *as such* from that quarter.[1] And the rationalized universalism of philosophy was no better in this respect: from Aristotle's justification of enslaving those who are inferior by nature, through medieval disquisitions on why man's fallen nature and spiritual bondage called for corresponding forms of earthly subordination and bondage, to modern liberal accounts of the civilizing mission of Europe toward savage and barbaric non-European peoples not yet ready for equal liberty. In this quarter too, the emergence of sustained opposition to racial slavery had to await the latter half of the eighteenth century.[2] The dismal record of philosophical thought in this regard raises the obvious question of how putatively universalistic, inclusive, moral doctrines could so readily countenance particularistic, exclusionary practices – and, as it seems, with surprisingly little cognitive dissonance. This question is no less important than it is obvious, both for coming to a better understanding of our history and traditions and also for heightening sensitivity to the presence of similar hidden dissonances in our current thinking. But we should not expect to find a single answer fitting the wide variety of circumstances with regard to which it might be raised.

[1] There was, to be sure, earlier opposition to enslaving other *Christians*. See Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); and David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Oxford University Press, 1988).

[2] There were, of course, earlier exceptions to this general pattern among religious and philosophical thinkers, as both Davis and Pagden remark.

In what follows, I will confine myself to asking "how possibly?" about a single instance – though arguably an exemplary instance – of modern universalistic philosophy, that of Immanuel Kant.[3] Writing precisely at the time when significant religious and philosophical opposition to racial slavery was emerging in Europe and America, Kant not only failed explicitly to condemn that "peculiar institution" but constructed one of the most – some would argue, *the* most[4] – systematic accounts of "race" prior to the flood tide of racial thinking accompanying late nineteenth-century imperialism. In the English-speaking world, his writings and lectures on anthropology and physical geography have only recently begun to receive the attention they deserve;[5] and one focal point of that attention is his treatment of race.[6] I want to take up that discussion here and connect it with the decisive role that Kant's developmental thinking plays in his efforts to reconcile moral-political

[3] In this respect, Kant is representative of Enlightenment thought more generally, which was pervaded by the ambivalence of reconciling universal ideals with deeply entrenched inequalities through hierarchical schemes allegedly based on reason and nature.

[4] See Robert Bernasconi's discussions of this in "Who Invented the Concept of Race? Kant's Role in the Enlightenment Construction of Race," in Bernasconi (ed.), *Race* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 11–36; and "Kant as an Unfamiliar Source of Racism," in J. Ward and T. Lott (eds.), *Philosophers on Race* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 145–166.

[5] Stimulated by the relatively recent publication (1997), in vol. XXV of the Academy edition of Kant's collected works, of seven transcriptions of student and auditor notes on his lectures in anthropology. *Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, 29 vols. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1902–). Vol. XXVI, with transcriptions of notes on his lectures in physical geography, is forthcoming. Other transcriptions of student notes can be found at the Marburg Kant-Archiv website: www.uni-marburg.de/kant/webseitn/gt_v_ant.htm. A number of the transcriptions from vol. XXV will appear in English translation in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant* (Cambridge University Press), in a volume entitled *Lectures on Anthropology*. The Academy edition will henceforth be cited as AA and the Cambridge edition by name.

[6] For some recent English-language discussions of Kant's views on race, in addition to the essays by Bernasconi cited in n. 4, see Emmanuel Chuckwudi Eze, "The Color of Reason: The Idea of 'Race' in Kant's Anthropology," in Eze (ed.), *Postcolonial African Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), pp. 103–140; and in the same volume, pp. 141–161, Tsenay Serequeberhan, "The Critique of Eurocentrism and the Practice of African Philosophy"; Thomas Hill and Bernard Boxill, "Kant and Race," in Boxill (ed.), *Race and Racism* (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 448–471; and the essays in part II of E. Eigen and M. Larrimore (eds.), *The German Invention of Race* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006).

universalism with anthropological-historical particularism, for ideas of "development" and "underdevelopment" are still central to Eurocentric thinking.

I Impure ethics

For some time now, the once all but exclusive focus on Kant's pure ethics in the English-speaking world has been broadening to include aspects of his impure ethics, especially his philosophy of history. More recently, the focus has expanded still further to include his views on the empirical study of human nature and culture generally.[7] If one looks back now at the specifically ethical works, one can readily see that this expansion is entirely appropriate: Kant repeatedly characterizes moral philosophy as comprising both a pure – rational – part and an impure – empirical – part. In the *Groundwork*, the former and leading part, which establishes the fundamental principles of morals, is said to be wholly independent of experience.[8] Everything having to do with the application of these principles to human beings is said to belong to the impure, empirical part, which he calls practical anthropology. In *The Metaphysics of Morals*, this sharp division is complicated somewhat, insofar as the doctrine of virtue presents a mixed metaphysics in which pure rational principles are applied to *human nature in general*, an undertaking that requires some empirical knowledge of human beings, though presumably of a universal and noncontroversial sort.[9] To be sure, this purported knowledge of human nature in general can be and has been contested. But that is not my concern here, which is rather with Kant's views *on human nature in particular* – in particular times and places, cultures and races. Thus in his essays on the philosophy of history, Kant treats of different epochs and civilizations, and in the published manual for his anthropology course, *Anthropology from a*

[7] Good examples of this genre are Susan Meld Shell, *The Embodiment of Reason* (University of Chicago Press, 1996), and Robert Louden, *Kant's Impure Ethics* (Oxford University Press, 2000). See also B. Jacobs and P. Kain (eds.), *Essays on Kant's Anthropology* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[8] *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* [1785: AA IV, 385–463], in Cambridge edition, *Practical Philosophy*, tr. and ed. M. Gregor, with an intro. by Allen Wood (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 43–108, at pp. 43–45.

[9] *The Metaphysics of Morals* [1797: AA VI, 203–493], tr. and ed. M. Gregor (Cambridge University Press, 1996). Allen Wood, *Kant's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 193–196, is helpful on this point.

Pragmatic Point of View, he offers an account not only of individual character and of the character of the species, but also of the characters of sexes, peoples, and races.[10]

The "pragmatic" anthropology sketched in that work is not meant to be a "value-free" or purely theoretical enterprise: it is undertaken from a "practical" perspective in the broadest sense, that is, one related to free human action of various sorts – "technical" (i.e. instrumental) and "prudential" (i.e. oriented to happiness), as well as "practical" in the narrower sense of "moral." But it is this narrower sense of "practical anthropology" as "moral anthropology" that Kant has in view when he uses the term to designate the impure or empirical part of ethics, the part that is concerned with the application of pure rational principles to concrete human beings in all their historical and cultural similarities and differences. The general aim of this moral-practical anthropology is to identify cultural and historical factors that help or hinder the establishment and efficacy of morality in human life. It deals with stages of cultural, institutional, and moral progress, and with cultural, political, and religious conditions for the realization of the highest good of the *species as a whole*, a global kingdom of ends.

But there is also a part of practical anthropology that deals with morally relevant differences among *subgroups within the species*, that is, differences that make a difference in regard to the duties owed them. As Kant puts it in a brief remark "On Ethical Duties of Human Beings toward One Another with Regard to Their Condition" in *The Metaphysics of Morals*: "[S]ince they do not involve principles of obligation for human beings as such toward one another, they cannot properly constitute a part of the metaphysical first principles of a doctrine of virtue.

[10] *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* [1798: AA VII, 117–333], tr. M. Gregor (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1794), part II, "Anthropological Characteristics." Louden, *Kant's Impure Ethics*, pp. 10–16, offers a differentiated account of the "degrees and kinds of impurity" in Kant's ethical thought. He distinguishes (a) the necessary moral laws of a free will in general, (b) morality for finite rational beings who can oppose the moral law (the level of the *Groundwork*), (c) the determination of moral duties for human beings as such (the level of *The Metaphysics of Morals*), (d) moral or practical anthropology, concerned with the development, spread, and strengthening, of morality in human culture and history, (e) practical anthropology, concerned with the morally relevant conditions and relations of various subgroups of human beings, and (f) moral judgment in specific situations (catechism, casuistry). It is primarily with levels "d" and "e" that I am concerned here.

They are only rules modified in accordance with the differences of the subjects to whom the principle of virtue (in terms of what is formal) is applied in cases that come up in experience (the material) ... a transition which, by applying the pure principles of duty to cases of experience would schematize these principles, as it were, and present them ready for morally practical use."[11] As examples of such "schematized" moral principles, Kant mentions rules that apply to the treatment of people "in accordance with their differences in rank, age, sex, health, property, or poverty, and so forth," or according to whether they belong to "the cultivated or the crude."[12] I shall be concerned here with Kant's practical anthropology in both general and particular aspects, more precisely with both his developmental philosophy of universal history and his anthropological "characteristics" of particular racial subgroups.

Kant's popular lecture course on anthropology and his published notes thereto dealt not with practical anthropology in the narrower sense of moral anthropology but with practical anthropology in the broader sense that pertains to all forms of free action: that is to say, they dealt with pragmatic anthropology.[13] He distinguishes "anthropology from a pragmatic point of view" from "physiological anthropology" by noting that the latter studies only what nature makes of man, whereas the former considers "what man as a free agent makes, or can and should make, of himself."[14] Pragmatic anthropology thus includes moral-practical anthropology but is not restricted to it: it studies humankind in respect to, and for the sake of, human agency in all its dimensions, not only the moral. Partly for textual reasons, then, our concern with Kant's "impure ethics" will be pursued in this broader context. But this is also the context required by the logic of Kant's reflections on human destiny, which renders highly problematic any attempt sharply to separate the workings of nature – particularly as culturally formed – from those of freedom: mixed creatures such as we, with one foot firmly planted in each realm, have to realize the ends proposed by the laws of freedom in the realm of nature. The construction of a moral world, of a kingdom of ends, which practical reason enjoins as the highest good, cannot but use the materials that nature,

[11] *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 214. [12] *Ibid.*

[13] Kant lectured on anthropology every winter semester from 1772–1773 until his retirement in 1796. His lectures on physical geography began in 1755 and also continued until retirement, alternating semesters with the anthropology lectures after 1773.

[14] *Anthropology*, preface, p. 3.

including human culture and civilization, provides. And this means, in the terminology of the passage from *The Metaphysics of Morals* cited above, that the laws of freedom can be put into effect only if they are "schematized" in some sense, so that purely "formal" principles can be applied to the "material" of experience. Impure ethics is not, then, merely a convenient but unnecessary addition to pure ethics; it is, as Derrida might say, a necessary supplement, if morality is to have any purchase at all on human life. And this means that however "purely rational" the derivation of first principles may be, their application will require ongoing "schematization" to deal with the impurities of experience.

It is as if the pure rays emanating from ideas of practical reason could illuminate human life only once they are refracted through the denser medium of human nature, culture, and history. This is, at least, the division of labor that Kant proposes. Moreover, because particularity and contingency are ineliminable from the human condition in his view, there can be no complete, systematic knowledge of it. Thus pragmatic anthropology will, he maintains, never achieve the status of a strict science; it is not only practically interested but also unavoidably incomplete. This lower epistemic status gives cause for concern about the sources and uses of such knowledge, and Kant does advise his readers and auditors to exercise great caution in using the travel reports, histories, biographies, literature, and the like, which were the standard sources in his day for knowledge of other cultures. But he frequently failed to follow his own advice. And as the "denser media" in which his pure rational ethics was refracted were shot through with the prejudices of the age, his operative views on differences of gender, race, ethnicity, class, culture, religion, and the like were "impure" in more than one sense. My concern here, however, is primarily with his theory of racial differences.[15]

[15] The most important published works for this purpose are "Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime" [1764: AA II, 205–256], "Of the Different Races of Human Beings" [1775/1777: AA II, 427–443], "Determination of the Concept of a Race of Human Beings" [1785: AA VIII, 89–106], "Of the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy" [1788: AA VIII, 159–184], and *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* [1798: AA VII, 117–333]. The most important unpublished materials from Kant's own hand are lecture notes for his courses in physical geography and anthropology, and various *Reflexionen* (notes, fragments, course announcements) collected in vol. XV of AA. In addition there are the aforementioned student and auditor transcriptions of his lectures. I shall be citing the published works, which, on the points that concern me here, are not different in substance from the unpublished materials.

II Race

One thing that should be noted straightway regarding Kant's theorizing of "race" is that he was not only at the forefront in Germany of the emerging discipline of anthropology, he was also fully abreast of contemporary discussions of the natural history of the human species. Thus his interchanges with Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, who is often deemed to have invented the modern, scientific notion of race, were not unidirectional.[16] In particular, it seems to have been Kant who introduced the idea of explaining racial differentiation by postulating in our original ancestors a fund of four germs or seeds [*Keime*], each of which contained *in potentia* one set of racial characteristics; which germ developed in a given genetic line and which remained inactive, and thus which set of racial characteristics was actualized, was determined by geographical – especially climatic – conditions; and once developed, racial characteristics were invariably inherited in a genetic line, for no reversion to the original stem was possible.[17] One of Kant's chief aims in developing this theory of race was to defend monogenesis and the biological unity of the human species against the polygenetic views of authors like Voltaire and Lord Kames, views that had developed in response to the intensified European encounter with alien peoples in Africa and the Americas over the preceding century.[18] That is to say, Kant intended his account of racial diversity also to preserve the unity in difference of the human species, in line with the Biblical narrative of creation and the traditional doctrine of the "brotherhood of mankind" under God.[19] The costs of doing so via a theory of biologically based racial differentiation were, as we now know, much too high.

[16] On Kant's relation to Blumenbach, see J. H. Zammito, "Policing Polygeneticism In Germany, 1775," and R. Bernasconi, "Kant on Blumenbach's Polyps," both in Eigen and Larrimore (eds.), *The German Invention of Race*, pp. 35–54 and 73–90. As noted below in chapter 3, it was Blumenbach's version of race theory that had much the more significant influence on the development of race thinking in the nineteenth century.

[17] Attributing racial differences to climatic and other environmental factors was not unusual in this period. It is the notion of *Keime* as the biological basis of racial characteristics that is new.

[18] In "Of the Different Races of Human Beings," tr. J. M. Mikkelsen, in R. Bernasconi and T. Lott (eds.), *The Idea of Race* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000), pp. 8–22, Kant explicitly addresses himself to Voltaire's polygenetic hypothesis, at p. 19.

[19] For Kant, this biological unity of the species underpins its ultimate cultural and political unity, and thus is a condition of its final moral unity, as I shall elaborate below.

In addition to being familiar with earlier developments in natural history and contemporary developments in anthropology and ethnology, Kant was an avid reader of travel reports of all kinds, written by explorers, traders, missionaries, settlers, and others involved in direct contacts with distant peoples; and at that time such reports were still a principal source of knowledge in Europe about many of them. He warned repeatedly of the unreliability of such sources, but rely on them he did. As a result, his characterizations of the different races – which he distinguished primarily by skin-color: red, black, yellow, and white – largely repeated the racist commonplaces of the period.[20] And in his account these commonplaces were naturalized through being biologized. Thus his ranking of the innate capacities of the major subdivisions of the species is fleshed out in terms of their different *Naturanlagen* or natural predispositions.[21] Part II of the published manual on anthropology, which deals with the "characteristics" of persons, sexes, peoples, races, and the species, is subtitled "On How to Discern Man's Inner Self from His Exterior."[22] There we read that "physical character" belongs to the world of nature, "moral character" to that of freedom.[23] The former, what nature makes of us – which would seem to be properly a concern of "physiological" rather than "pragmatic" anthropology – includes our individual natures [*das Naturell*] and our temperaments. In the lectures on anthropology, individual nature is said to be the basis of natural abilities or talents, and temperament to be the basis of inclinations, insofar as they are related to bodily constitution.[24]

[20] Most of Kant's detailed remarks about the various races of human beings are to be found in unpublished materials, especially in his *Reflexionen zur Anthropologie*, the *Menschenkunde* transcription of his anthropology lectures, and the notes to his lectures on physical geography (edited by Theodor Rink); but his published remarks, while fewer in number, are not substantively different.

[21] See the definition of *Naturanlage* in "Of the Different Races," p. 13, and Wood's explication of it in *Kant's Ethical Thought*, p. 211.

[22] *Anthropology*, p. 149. This is, of course, an instance of the theoretical linking of physical and mental stereotypes that is characteristic of race thinking.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 151.

[24] Wood, *Kant's Ethical Thought*, p. 205, emphasizes that character, in the full sense, involves the "taking over" and "transforming" of these "physiological endowments" by free agents, so that in his view Kant's anthropology is not a naturalistic determinism. But it remains that, for Kant, the natural medium in and through which human freedom must express itself is differentiated by sex and race in ways that result in significantly different "propensities" and abilities of the

Such differences in talent and temperament are what Kant has in mind when he speaks of the "innate" [*angeboren*] differences between the races.[25] Because racial differences are adapted in large part to geographical differences, abilities and inclinations suited to one environment may be dysfunctional in another. In particular, the weaker impulse to activity suited to tropical climes, according to Kant, renders their native inhabitants – for example blacks – less energetic and industrious than the native inhabitants of temperate zones – for example whites – and thus less capable of self-improvement.[26] Because the growth of culture and civilization depend on such things, we can understand why, in Kant's view, the advancement of the species is, and will continue to be, centered in Europe.[27] Reflecting – often in distressing detail – the character of European contacts with non-Europeans, he represents Native Americans as too weak for hard

corresponding human subgroups. On the whole, I agree with Louden's assessment of the strict dichotomy between physical and moral character in Kant's anthropology as "hard to swallow" (*Kant's Impure Ethics*, p. 81). On this issue in the context of the anthropology lectures, see Brian Jacobs, "Kantian Character and the Problem of a Science of Humanity," in Jacobs and Kain (eds.), *Essays on Kant's Anthropology*, pp. 105–134.

[25] He also regards some of the differences between "peoples" or "nations" as "innate" or "in the blood," owing to the "mixture of races" that produces them. See, for instance, *Anthropology*, pp. 315, 319. I shall be only marginally concerned with that in this essay, though it is relevant to his conception of nation-states and thus of cosmopolitan order. I discuss it briefly in "On Reconciling National Diversity and Cosmopolitan Unity," in C. Cronin and P. DeGreiff (eds.), *Global Justice and Transitional Politics* (MIT Press, 2002), pp. 235–274.

[26] Like other Enlightenment thinkers, Kant regarded adaptation to extreme climates as generally bad for a people's character. Thus he explains the "diminished life power" of American Indians in part through their having adapted to extremely cold climes as they migrated over many generations from Northeast Asia to Northwest America. ("Of the Different Races," p. 16) It should be noted that Kant variably classified as "white" peoples other than European. In "Of the Different Races," for example, that classification includes – in addition to Europeans – Moors, Arabs, Turkish-Tatars, and Persians. But, his philosophy of history makes clear that in his view, however dispersed earlier advances in culture may have been, European whites alone drive cultural and political progress from the modern period onward.

[27] European whites were consistently given top ranking by Kant from early on – see *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764), tr. J. T. Goldthwait (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), pp. 109–112 – but his relative ranking of Africans and American Indians shifted in favor of the former.

labor and resistant to culture; Africans as accepting the culture of slaves but not of free people; and both as incapable of creating for themselves an orderly civil society. Asians (China and Hindustan) are depicted as civilized but static and lacking in spirit. Whites, by contrast, are said to possess all the drives, talents, and predispositions to culture and civilization that make for progress toward perfection.[28] The specifics of these comparative assessments are not of interest here; but their general result is a naturalistic rationale for existing power relations between Europeans and the nonwhite world. As we shall see, in the context of Kant's philosophy of history, his natural-historical account of racial hierarchy merges into a philosophical and even theological justification: it becomes part of a theodicy justifying God's ways to humankind. And it is in this larger setting that Kant's strictures against race mixing should be understood: it is against nature and thus against the plan of divine providence.[29] How, then, is this natural, God-willed hierarchy of human types, possessing markedly different capacities for culture and civilization, to be reconciled with the all-inclusive demands of morality as figured in a global kingdom of ends?

The path of attempted reconciliation is a teleological one, and it proceeds in several stages. At every stage, the guiding principle of teleological judgment is understood to be "reflective," not "constitutive." That is, it properly functions as a heuristic principle needed by us humans to make sense of nature and history; but it is not appropriate for "determinant" judgments concerning the actual grounds of the appearance of natural purposiveness, which may in fact be causal mechanisms. Viewing nature as if some end were the ground for the existence of this or that regular feature of it, does not, then, exclude our

[28] See, for instance, "Of the Different Races," pp. 16–18, and "On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy," tr. J. M. Mikkelsen, in Bernasconi (ed.), *Race*, pp. 37–56, at pp. 47–49. For additional remarks and sources, see Louden, *Kant's Impure Ethics*, pp. 98–100, and Wood, *Kant's Ethical Thought*, pp. 338–339, n. 3.

[29] See, for instance, "Of the Different Races," p. 10, and *Anthropology*, p. 320. At the same time, Kant appears to be aware that most nations were the result of interbreeding of one sort or another. Kant's complex and – at least on first appearance – inconsistent views on this matter are sorted out in different ways by Susan Shell, "Kant's Concept of a Human Race," and Mark Larrimore, "Race, Freedom, and the Fall in Steffens and Kant," both in Eigen and Larrimore (eds.), *The German Invention of Race*, pp. 55–72 and 91–120.

eventually being able to explain that feature in causal terms. But it does enable us to give systematic unity to what would otherwise be an indeterminate collection of contingent facts and laws. This is particularly important in the move from mere "natural description" to "natural history," for the systematic ambitions of the latter can be fulfilled only by assuming a purposiveness underlying its classificatory divisions.[30] In the case of organic beings, this underlying purposiveness means that functionally significant similarities and differences are to be traced back to natural predispositions: they are "originally implanted" as part of "the plan of nature," so to speak.[31] Thus, for example, in the human species the differences between the sexes are understood teleologically in terms of the different natural predispositions of males and females, which suit them to their different functions in the natural and cultural reproduction of the species.[32] The differences among the races are to be understood in terms of different natural predispositions suiting them to different geographical conditions. The principle of natural teleological judgment – that nature does nothing in vain – prompts us to inquire after the natural purposiveness of such differentiation; and that is said to lie in nature's plan that human beings populate the entire globe. The biological differences attendant upon this functional adaptation prominently include heritable skin-color: as the principal means for ridding the body of harmful elements, perspiration, and thus skin composition, are central to survival in a given environment. But those differences – rooted, as we saw, in which germ is activated and which others "stifled" or "extinguished" by climatic and other geographical conditions experienced over long periods – also importantly include differences in temperament and ability. So, as with the subdivision of the sexes, the subdivision of the races for biological purposes is linked with fateful differences at the level of "mental powers" and "culture." The resultant hierarchical scheme thus provides a natural-historical underpinning to the deep social and cultural inequalities that Kant takes to be characteristic of the human condition. To make moral sense of those sociocultural differences requires now that we extend

[30] "Of the Different Races," p. 13, n. 1.

[31] See "On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy," pp. 42–44.

[32] See *Anthropology*, pp. 166–173. Not surprisingly, these functionally rooted biological differences entail, for Kant, that women are less suited by temperament and ability to engage in public life.

the principle of (reflective) teleological judgment from natural history in the narrower sense to human history proper.

III Development

To understand nature in the broadest sense, including human history, as a systematic unity, we must have recourse to an "ultimate end of nature" [*letzter Zweck der Natur*] beyond the natural ends that explain specific features of specific kinds of organic beings; and according to Kant that ultimate end is the full development of the natural capacities of the human being. Even beyond this, to understand why nature as a whole, with its systematic purposiveness oriented to that ultimate end, is itself not simply an unintelligible fact, we have to have recourse to a "final end" [*Endzweck*] that stands outside of nature and possesses its own intrinsic worth; and that Kant takes to be "the highest good" in the form of a "kingdom of ends." Racial differentiation and hierarchy will have to make sense, then, both in the context of human sociocultural development naturalistically conceived, and, at the same time, in the context of the species achieving its highest good morally conceived. For our purposes, it is important to examine Kant's views on race in this expanded context, for though teleological thinking has largely been displaced from biology by Darwinian thinking, it still plays a role in conceptualizing the history of the species.

In Kant's view, over the course of human history the biological unity of the species is destined to become, first, a legal-political unity – a cosmopolitan federation of nation-states – and then, finally, a moral unity – a "Kingdom of God on earth." The teleological philosophy of history in which he sketches this development does not attribute it directly to the conscious intentions of historical actors but rather to "a purpose of nature behind this senseless course of human events," a "plan of nature" informing the "history of creatures who act without a plan of their own."[33] In thus anticipating the better-known Hegelian version of the cunning of reason in history, Kant lays down the basic (teleological) principles of (reflective) judgment in this domain: "all the natural capacities [or predispositions: *Naturanlagen*] of a creature are

[33] "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose," [1784: AA VIII, 15–31], tr. H. B. Nisbet, in H. Reiss (ed.), *Kant: Political Writings* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 41–53, at p. 42.

destined sooner or later to be developed completely," and "in man (as the only rational creature on earth), those natural capacities which are directed toward the use of reason are such that they could be developed only in the species, but not in the individual."[34] Using this as his guiding thread, Kant produces a reading of history that is progressivist and cosmopolitan while remaining decidedly Eurocentric – that is to say, a reading in the Enlightenment mold.

Unlike instinct, reason "requires trial, practice, and instruction to enable it to progress," and thus it will "require a long, perhaps incalculable series of generations, each passing on its enlightenment to the next, before the germs implanted by nature in our species can be developed to the degree which corresponds to nature's original intention."[35] As our rational capacities turn on the ability to set ourselves ends and select means to them, our development is essentially a matter of progressive cultivation; for culture is precisely the aptitude in a rational being for setting and pursuing ends generally, that is, not just moral ends but any ends whatever.[36] There are different aspects of this progressive cultivation of the species. At a general level, Kant distinguishes the negative aspect of discipline – liberation from the despotism of desire – and the positive aspect of skill [*Geschicklichkeit*] – the ability to attain chosen ends. And under the latter aspect he distinguishes the development of the arts and sciences, of taste and refinement, and of the rule of law, particularly in nation-states organized as constitutional republics and in a cosmopolitan federation of such states. In his historical essays, Kant emphasizes this last, legal-political, dimension of historical development, so much so that some commentators have taken this to be "the ultimate end of nature" in his eyes, rather than sociocultural development more broadly. But the broader view can accommodate that emphasis as well, for Kant holds that "the highest purpose of nature – i.e. the development of all natural capacities – can be fulfilled only in society," and indeed only in a "civil society [*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*] which can administer justice [or law: *Recht*] universally."[37] And that will require, in the end, "a law-governed external relationship with other states," in the form of a "civil union [*bürgerliche Vereinigung*]

[34] *Ibid.*, First and Second Propositions, p. 42. [35] *Ibid.*, pp. 42–43.
[36] *Critique of the Power of Judgment* [1790: AA V, 165–485], Cambridge edition, tr. P. Guyer and E. Matthews (Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 299.
[37] "Universal History," p. 45.

of mankind," a "universal cosmopolitan condition [*weltbürgerlicher Zustand*]" as the "matrix [or womb: *Schoß*] within which all the original predispositions of the human species will develop."[38] Securing external freedom through the rule of coercive law [*Zwangsrecht*] is a basic condition of, and thus a central ingredient in, the full development of species capacities. Cultural advances and advances in legal-political organization go hand in hand.

Kant distinguishes these natural developments from *moral development* – which, as commentators have repeatedly pointed out, is a difficult notion to make sense of in a system that rigidly separates the noumenal realm of timeless freedom from the phenomenal realms of nature and history. Be that as it may, there is little doubt that Kant's philosophy of history treats cultural progress, conceived in naturalistic terms, as a necessary condition for the realization of nature's *final end*, the global moral community, which must itself be the work of freedom. That is, the "final end of nature" – which makes sense of there being any nature at all, rather than nothing – unlike the "ultimate end of nature" – which unifies nature, including human nature and history, into a systematic whole – lies beyond nature. What redeems nature, so to speak, is human freedom in its complete or perfect form of a kingdom of ends. Human destiny [*Bestimmung*], as the destiny of the mixed beings that we are, requires the cooperation of nature with freedom; it comprises both the development of our natural predispositions and the gradual realization of our moral end, the highest good – which is itself dual, combining the well-being that is the object of our natural desires with the moral disposition [*Gesinnung*] that can only result from free choice. The bridge between nature and freedom is, then, human history, in which raw human nature is gradually cultivated to the point at which the realization of a moral world in nature/history becomes not a certainty but a rational hope.[39]

If the republican constitutional state, and ultimately a global federation of all such states, is the matrix within which our natural predispositions may fully develop, organized religion is the institutional means through which moral community develops and – this is the hope – may lead eventually to a global kingdom of ends, figured in religious terms as the Kingdom of God on earth. That is, only when a

[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 51.
[39] I shall have more to say about this Kantian idea of hope in chapter 5.

world civil society under the rule of coercive law is combined with a *world moral community* under laws of freedom or virtue do we have the final goal of history, which it is our duty consciously to promote. Overcoming the war of all against all that has been the rule in international relations requires that republican nation-states relativize their particularistic claims to absolute sovereignty in a global *Völkerstaat*, a world republic of all republics, under the rule of cosmopolitan law [*Völkerstaatsrecht*].[40] And overcoming the mutual suspicion, contempt, and hostility that have characterized relations among organized religions requires that historical faiths transcend their sectarian claims to offer the one true path to salvation and gradually come to understand themselves as purely rational, moral faiths. To be sure, for mixed beings such as ourselves, pure moral-rational faith cannot of itself effectively ground moral community; for us the invisible moral union of hearts requires visible symbols and supports, in the form of historical ecclesiastical faiths with sacred scriptures, and the like, if it is to take root in people's lives and spread across the whole species. In a variation on a familiar Enlightenment theme, however, Kant regards the particular "vehicles" or "shells" of pure rational faith as inessential to its core content, which is purely moral. Sometimes he writes as if they will gradually disappear; but most often he envisions their gradual transformation through a growing consciousness that they are inessential outward forms of pure moral religion, forms which may be retained, if needed, but only after having been freed from the illusions and superstitions that plagued their historical manifestations. When Kant writes that there are many historical faiths but only one true religion, when he envisions historical faiths gradually coming to realize this and thereupon making themselves more suitable vehicles for a universal ethical community encompassing all peoples, he is unclear as to what specific roles the various world religions might play in such a, so to speak, second-order convergence of religious self-understanding. On the whole, however, and in keeping with his generally Eurocentric perspective, Kant decidedly privileges Christianity. Not only was it originally taught by its founder as a moral (rather than statutory) religion, it was presently (i.e. at the close of the eighteenth century) much further along the road to a pure moral religion. So here too, it seems, as with progress

[40] For an elaboration of this interpretation of Kant's cosmopolitan ideal, see my article cited in n. 25.

in law and politics, art and science, European developments will set the pace and provide the models for the rest of the world. Ethico-religious community, like legal-political union, will arrive not through some form of dialectical or dialogical mediation of differences, but through the global diffusion of Western ways.

On the other hand, though eighteenth-century Europe had, in Kant's view, already advanced significantly in culture and civilization, its moralization lagged seriously behind. The radical transformation of moral disposition which would put the general advances in the development of human capacities to good use, that is, to the creation of a world in which justice, virtue, and happiness were united, was still outstanding. This transformation of men's and women's hearts, which must come in significant part from the purification of religion (as well as from the reform of education), is, according to Kant, the most difficult step along the path to realizing our final end. But without the passage from civilization to moralization, humanity's growing aptitude for attaining ends of all sorts will increasingly be made to serve the worst sorts of purposes. If civilization is to be more than the "glittering misery" that it has so far been, a profound moral change is required, so that the ends we pursue with increasing skill will be good ends, ends that can be approved and shared by all.[41] For this, however, we cannot rely on the cunning of nature: it is something that we have to do for ourselves as free, moral beings. Philosophy of history with a practical interest can provide no guarantees in this regard, it can only show that there is a rational basis for hope and thus no need to despair.

It is critical to Kant's conception of the highest good as a kingdom of ends that the legal-political side of global unification be complemented and completed by the ethico-religious side. For without a corresponding, reinforcing transformation of moral character, attitudes, and motivations, any legally established cosmopolitan order would be in constant danger of being undone by the depravity of human nature.[42] Beyond this pragmatic worry, the need for a specifically moral conception of the final end of nature is built into Kant's system, since a moral world is the unconditional collective end that practical reason as such

[41] As enjoined by the categorical imperative, particularly in the formulation of humanity as an end in itself.

[42] "Perpetual Peace" [1795: AA VIII, 341–386], tr. Nisbet, in Reiss (ed.), *Kant: Political Writings*, pp. 93–130, at pp. 103–105.

commands. Considered apart from our moral destiny, even with highly developed skills we are but "a mere trifle in relation to the omnipotence of nature."[43] Again: "In the system of nature, a human being (*homo phaenomenon, animal rationale*) is a being of slight importance ... Although a human being has, in his understanding, something more than [the rest of the animals] and can set himself ends, even this gives him only an extrinsic value for his usefulness ... But a human being regarded as a person, that is, as the subject of morally practical reason, is exalted above any price; for as a person (*homo noumenon*) he is not to be valued as a means to the ends of others or even to his own ends, but as an end in himself, that is, he possesses a dignity (an absolute intrinsic value) by which he exacts respect for himself from all other rational beings in the world. He can measure himself with every other rational being of this kind and value himself on a footing of equality with them ... [H]is insignificance as a human animal may not infringe upon his consciousness of his dignity as a rational human being."[44] But if equal dignity and respect define the kind of world which, to borrow a formulation from the *Religion*, a moral being "would create, under the guidance of practical reason, were such a thing in his power, a world into which, moreover, he would place himself as a member,"[45] how does Kant make moral-rational sense of the racial inequality that he takes to be part of our natural history? To grasp the essentials of Kant's version of Christian–Stoic theodicy, we shall have to take a closer look at how he conceives the "radical evil" inherent in human nature and its essential role in human development.

IV Theodicy naturalized

A concise indication of Kant's conception of the role of evil in human history can be found in the "Fourth Proposition" of his "Idea for a

[43] "A Renewed Attempt to Answer the Question: 'Is the Human Race Continually Improving?,'" Second Part of *The Conflict of the Faculties* [1798: AA VII, 1–116], tr. Nisbet, in Reiss (ed.), *Kant: Political Writings*, pp. 177–200, at p. 185.

[44] *The Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 186–187. These considerations, which are set forth in a section entitled "On Servility," directly give rise there to such injunctions as the following: "Be no man's lackey [*Knecht*]. Do not let others tread with impunity on your rights."

[45] *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* [1793/1794: AA VI, 1–203], tr. T. M. Greene and H. H. Hudson (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 5.

Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose": "The means which nature employs to bring about the development of innate capacities is that of antagonism within society, in so far as this antagonism becomes in the long run the cause of a law-governed social order. By antagonism, I mean in this context the *unsocial sociability* of men, that is, their propensity to enter into society, coupled however, with a continual resistance [thereto] that threatens to break it up."[46] This structure of motivation, Kant notes, is "obviously rooted in human nature"; and in various places he spells out his version of what is in essence a familiar story about the continual war between good and evil in the human breast. The evil side is fleshed out in terms – again, not unfamiliar – of basic desires, affects, and passions that lead us away from the path of reason – self-love, ambition, greed, desire for honor and power, and the like – which Kant sums up as "the unsocial characteristic of wanting to direct everything in accordance with [one's] own ideas."[47] We want to have things our own way, as do others; we resist one another and expect resistance from one another. And "it is this very resistance which awakens all men's powers ... and drives [them] to seek status among [their] fellows," through gaining honor, power, property, and so forth.[48] Without these "self-seeking pretensions" and other "asocial qualities," human talents would have remained "forever in a dormant state ... [T]he end for which [men] were created, their rational nature, would be an unfilled void."[49] In short, "nature" uses evil to achieve good. This might seem an odd combination until we recall that many eighteenth-century authors – from Mandeville and Smith to Rousseau and Turgot – were wrestling with the problem of what might be called "the dialectic of progress," that is, the inextricable entanglement of good and evil in human development, which some of them understood also to include the unintended good consequences of actions undertaken for selfish reasons (the invisible hand, the cunning of reason, and the like).[50] Kant's version of this invokes "the hidden plan of nature" or "Providence," which systematically turns evil to good: "Nature should thus be thanked for fostering social incompatibility, enviously competitive vanity, and insatiable desires for possession or even power. Without these desires, all man's excellent natural capacities would

[46] "Universal History," p. 51. [47] *Ibid.* [48] *Ibid.* [49] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

[50] I elaborate further on the dialectic of progress in chapter 5.

never be roused to develop ... They would thus seem to indicate the design of a wise creator."[51]

The basic structure of the human condition – mutual interdependence pervaded by mutual antagonism – and the "propensity to evil" that it subtends, mark both the state of nature, which Kant depicts as a "condition of savagery" [*Zustand der Wilden*], and the civilized state, which he repeatedly characterizes as a "glittering misery" [*schimmerndes Elend*]. The source of the problem in the state of nature is the "crudeness and vehemence of those inclinations which belongs more to our animality"[52] – for the developmental plan of nature or providence entails that this part of us would predominate in the earlier stages of our history.[53] And it continues to predominate during the long passage through cultivation and civilization on the way to moralization: "[E]ven under a civil condition, animality manifests itself earlier and, at bottom, more powerfully than humanity ... Man's self-will is always ready to break forth in hostility toward his neighbors, and always presses him to claim unconditional freedom, not merely independence of others, but even mastery of other beings that are his equal by nature – something we can see in even the smallest child. This is because nature within man tries to lead him from culture to morality and not (as reason prescribes) from morality and law, as the starting point, to a culture designed to conform with morality ... This education from [Providence] is salutary but harsh and stern; nature works it out by way of great hardships, to the extent of nearly destroying the whole race."[54]

Among these great hardships is, of course, war, which at times threatens the "barbarian devastation" of the achievements of culture and civilization; however, in the larger scheme of things, it serves as a valuable spur not only to the constructions of peace meant to contain it but also to other cultural advances driven by the competitive mobilization of forces it occasions.[55] Another great hardship that proves to be

[51] "Universal History," p. 45. [52] *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 300.

[53] Which means, of course, that human reason has continually to do battle against the very conditions that give rise to it. In his "Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History" [1786: AA VIII, 107–123], tr. Nisbet, in Reiss (ed.), *Kant: Political Writings*, pp. 221–234, Kant figures the initial break with instinctual life and the start on the long road to morality as a "fall": "When reason began to function and, in all its weakness, came into conflict with animality in all its strength, evils necessarily ensued ... From the moral point of view, therefore, the first stage beyond this state was a fall" (pp. 227–228).

[54] *Anthropology*, pp. 188–189.

[55] See "Universal History," pp. 47–49; "Conjectures," pp. 230–232.

functional for the perfection of the species is the gross inequality and oppression that accompany the advance of culture and civilization. The progress of the arts and sciences, of taste and refinement has largely been the work of leisure classes who could count on the labor of others, the dominated and exploited, to attend to the necessities of life.[56] In sum, then, for Kant the history of human progress has been anything but a pretty story; rather, his view of it anticipates in some respects Walter Benjamin's later judgment that all civilization is a monument to barbarity. And yet, in his view "this glittering misery is bound up with the development of the natural predispositions in the human race, and the end of nature itself, even if it is not our end, is hereby attained ... to make us receptive to higher ends than nature itself can afford."[57] So it is an ugly story with a happy ending, in which human morality finally overcomes the empirical (animal) conditions of its own possibility. The chief cause of the ugliness, according to Kant, is that in the premoral stages of cultivation and civilization, nature has no other means to combat our unsociability but that unsociability itself, "for it is compelled by its own nature to discipline itself."[58] Antagonism is checked by antagonism, self-interest by self-interest, and the resultant teleological inversions thus also contain the seeds of their disintegration, until the moralization of culture is further along.

A crucial consideration here – and one which Kant never tires of emphasizing – is that nature's purpose in history is not human happiness but human development. "Without these asocial qualities (far from admirable in themselves) ... men would live an Arcadian, pastoral existence of perfect concord, self-sufficiency, and mutual love. But all human talents would remain hidden forever in a dormant state, and men, as good-natured as the sheep they tended, would scarcely render their existence more valuable than that of their animals. The end for which they were created, their rational nature, would be an unfilled void ... Man wishes concord, but nature, knowing better what is good for his species, wishes discord."[59] And it is this same consideration that is behind his infamous remarks on the Tahitians: "Does [Herder] really

[56] See *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, pp. 299–300.

[57] *Ibid.* Again, I leave aside the question of how, in Kant's system, there can be empirical conditions for a non-empirical moral disposition.

[58] "Universal History," p. 46.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 45. On this point in the larger context of the anthropology lectures, see S. M. Shell, "Kant's 'True Economy of Human Nature': Rousseau, Count Verri,

mean that, if the happy inhabitants of Tahiti never visited by more civilized nations, were destined to live in their peaceful indolence for thousands of centuries, it would be possible to give a satisfactory answer to the question of why they should exist at all, and of whether it would not have been just as good if this island had been occupied by happy sheep and cattle as by happy human beings who merely enjoy themselves?"[60]

In the context of this reading of history, it would not be surprising if Kant viewed the oppression and exploitation specific to racially structured forms of injustice as another dimension of the same dialectic of progress, that is, as just another form of developmentally functional evil. It is, then, noteworthy that he sharply condemns the contemporary forms of European settlement and colonization on grounds of morality and right.[61] And yet, it seems that he cannot but rely on them for teleological purposes, that is, precisely as the vehicles at that time for the spread of European culture and civilization, law and religion throughout the world. His position here is thus similar in important respects to the one he took on the French Revolution: he condemned its violence on moral grounds while welcoming the legal and political advances it brought with it.[62] In both cases – and, indeed, more generally – there is a lack of fit between how things look from the normative point of view of morality or right and how they look from the functional point of view of human progress: what appears to teleological judgment as a crucial evolutionary vehicle, may well stand condemned by morality and justice. The two standpoints are in tension.[63]

With respect to chattel slavery, Kant's position is similarly ambivalent. He denies that there is any right to bondage that can be acquired through conquest: "Still less can bondage [*Leibeigenschaft*] and its legitimacy be derived from a people's being overcome in war ... [L]east of all can hereditary bondage be derived from it; hereditary bondage as such is absurd."[64] Or through contract: "[A] contract by

and the Problem of Happiness," in Jacobs and Kain (eds.), *Essays on Kant's Anthropology*, pp. 194–229.

60 Review of Herder's *Ideas on the Philosophy of History of Mankind* [1785: AA VIII, 43–66] tr. Nisbet, in Reiss (ed.), *Kant: Political Writings*, pp. 201–220, at pp. 219–220.

61 *The Metaphysics of Morals*, pp. 53, 121–122; "Perpetual Peace," pp. 106–107.

62 See "Is the Human Race Continually Improving?"

63 I discuss this "dilemma of development" further in chapter 6.

64 *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 118.

which one party would completely renounce its freedom for the other's advantage would be self-contradictory, that is, null and void, since by it one party would cease to be a person and so would have no duty to keep the contract but would recognize only force ... The contract of the head of a household with servants can therefore not be such that his use of them would amount to using them up; and it is not for him alone to judge about this, but also for the servants (who, accordingly, can never be in bondage [*Leibeigenschaft*])."[65] The only basis in right for bondage is as punishment for certain crimes, and then only as legally institutionalized: "The exception is someone who has lost [the dignity of a citizen] by his own crime, because of which, though he is kept alive, he is made a mere tool of another's choice (either of the state or of another citizen). Whoever is another's tool (which he can become only by a verdict and right) is a bondsman [*Leibeigener*] ... [H]e still wants to live, and this now is possible only if others provide for him. But since the state will not provide for him free of charge, he must let it have his powers for any kind of work it pleases (in convict or prison labor) and is reduced to the status of a slave [*Sklavenstand*] for a certain time, or permanently if the state sees fit."[66] But in no case is bondage heritable: "children (even those of someone who has become a slave [*Sklaven*] through his crime) are at all times free. For everyone is born free."[67] So it is clear that, on Kant's view, there is no basis in right for enslaving people or otherwise placing them in bondage which would even begin to legitimate the African slave trade, of which he had an extensive knowledge. And then, too, Kant expresses sharp disapproval of existing practices and institutions of slavery, for instance when he refers to "the Sugar Islands, that stronghold of the cruelest and most calculated slavery ... And all this is the work of powers who make endless ado about their piety, and who wish to be considered as chosen believers while they live on the fruits of iniquity."[68] Or when he writes: "For if the master is authorized to use the powers of his subjects as he pleases, he can also exhaust them until his subject dies or is driven into despair (as with the Negroes on the sugar islands); his subject will in fact have given himself away, as property, to his master, which is impossible."[69] And

65 *Ibid.*, p. 66.

66 *Ibid.*, pp. 104–106. On p. 33, Kant classes *Leibeigene* and *Sklaven* together.

67 *Ibid.*, p. 66. 68 "Perpetual Peace," p. 107.

69 *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 104. Bernasconi gives this passage an opposed reading in "Kant as an Unfamiliar Source of Racism."

yet it remains that Kant did not explicitly intervene in the debates about the slave trade that were raging at the time and often commented on the chattel slavery of Africans in the tone of a disinterested observer.[70] This, together with his frequent disquisitions on the inherent inferiority of Africans, their ready adaptation to slave routines, and their innate inability to raise themselves from the state of nature, make it not unreasonable to conclude that, *from a historical-developmental perspective*, Kant understood slavery to be one of those evils that contributed to the advance of the human race through the diffusion of European culture, a part of its "civilizing mission." Be that as it may, in trying to make moral sense of history, he ironically constructed an early version of the very rationale – biological and cultural – that would serve as the dominant proslavery ideology later in the following century.

V Coda: problems with the Kantian idea of progress

For more than two centuries now, critics have remarked on the fault lines running through Kant's developmental schema. Some of them are peculiar to Kant's own construction and those modeled closely upon it; others, however, signal problems that have to be faced by liberal developmentalism more generally. To the former belong the various tensions caused by his strict *bifurcation between freedom and nature*. It never becomes clear how, on this account, there could be natural – biological, social, cultural, legal, political – conditions for the progress of morality, which is supposed to be the work of freedom alone, or how there could be phenomenal, temporal supports for and impediments to a noumenal, timeless, condition of the *Gesinnung*. Nor is it clear how there could be anything like moral progress and what that might mean for the moral equality of all human beings.[71] Then there is a host of problems attendant upon Kant's *theodicy of history* – and, more generally, upon ontotheological schemes of development similar to his in requiring that out of evil come good. That requirement comes from the need to justify the ways of God to humankind – or, in Kant's less expressly

[70] Infamously, in commenting on the most effective way to discipline blacks in his lectures on Physical Geography. The passage in question appears in English translation by E. C. Eze and K. M. Faull, in Eze (ed.), *Race and the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p. 61.

[71] On this point, see Paul Stern, "The Problem of History and Temporality in Kantian Ethics," *Review of Metaphysics*, 39 (1986): 404–545.

theological language, to show that a world order replete with suffering and evil is the sort of world which a moral being "under the guidance of practical reason" would nevertheless create. That the world as a whole makes moral sense in this way is a burden of proof that more consistently naturalized developmental accounts need not assume. Finally, Kant's reliance on a strong *teleology of nature* – summed up in the maxim that "nature does nothing in vain" – with his frequent references to the purposes and plans of nature, generate yet another array of problems. The skepticism regarding causal explanation of biological phenomena, which underlay his teleological approach, was largely dispelled by the Darwinian revolution. Few evolutionary biologists would today be tempted to argue that, say, the full development of the natural capacities of human beings is the "aim" or "plan" of nature as a whole.

Even if we bracket Kant's two-world doctrine, his theodicy, and his teleology of nature, his account of historical development is inherently unstable. For one thing, tensions between the developmental and the moral standpoints are built into any such construction of the "cunning of reason"; but for Kant they are more of a problem than they are for, say, Hegel or Marx, since he requires that history make *moral* sense. And morally speaking, the end does not justify the means: the war, oppression, injustice, and other evils that appear from the former standpoint as functional – even functionally necessary – for the progressive improvement of the species are, from the latter standpoint, no less violations of the fundamental moral injunction to treat human beings as ends-in-themselves, and never only as means.[72] So even if we granted, for the sake of argument, his account of the progressive development of *species* capacities, we could not morally justify the sacrifice, on what Hegel famously called "the slaughter bench of history," of countless *individuals*, each of whom, Kant tells us, possesses infinite moral worth, nor the dire circumstances of the numerous earlier generations who serve merely as stepping stones on the way to the kingdom of ends. That is to say, the reflective judge who discerns the invisible hand of progress at work in history and the moral agent who is appalled by its depredations are not easily harmonized within a single breast.

[72] See Tsenay Serequeberhan's critical analysis of "Kant's double game" in "The Critique of Eurocentrism."

As noted above, Kant explicitly eschews looking for purpose in the dimension of human happiness: "It seems that nature has worked more with a view to man's rational self-esteem than to his mere well-being ... [It] does not seem to have been concerned with seeing that man should live agreeably, but with seeing that he should work his way onwards to make himself by his own conduct worthy of life and well-being."[73] But this "perfectionist" component of his species perfectionism is no less troubling than its species component. The tension here is between treating concrete human beings as ends-in-themselves and treating the humanity in their persons as an end-in-itself.[74] *On the one hand*, both our "humanity" and our "personality" are inherently tied to our rational capacities.[75] "Humanity" refers to rational nature in general and "personality" to rational nature in its capacity to be morally self-legislative. The development of our predisposition to humanity is, correspondingly, understood to be the development of our capacity to set and pursue ends through reason generally, and not just moral-practically; thus it is coincident with the development of culture and civilization, as Kant understands them. So races that are incapable, or less capable, of progress in these dimensions would be incapable, or less capable, of developing the humanity that morality commands us to respect. And races that are capable of advancing in culture and civilization, but not through their own initiative, could not achieve "rational self-esteem" on their own. *On the other hand*, Kant repeatedly characterizes human beings as such as rational beings and as worthy of respect;[76] and his cosmopolitan society and kingdom of ends are repeatedly said to be the destiny of human beings generally, inclusive of all the peoples of the earth. But it is never made clear how the biologically inferior endowments of non-whites could be consistent with this destiny. What is clear is that the path Kant projects toward this end-state is marked, even prepared, by an unevenness of development among various races and peoples; and that from the start of the modern period, at the latest, progress

[73] "Universal History," pp. 43–44.

[74] See Kant's discussion of the humanity-as-an-end-in-itself formulation of the categorical imperative in the *Groundwork*, pp. 79–81.

[75] *Religion*, pp. 74–76. Accordingly, the derivation of the humanity-as-an-end-in-itself formulation turns on the idea of our "rational nature." On this point, see Wood, intro., pp. 124–132 (see n. 8 above), and his contribution to Jacobs and Kain (eds.), *Essays on Kant's Anthropology*, "Kant and the Problem of Human Nature," pp. 38–59.

[76] For instance, in the same discussion of the humanity formulation, *Groundwork*, p. 79.

in cultivation, civilization, and moralization is and will continue to be a process of diffusion from the West to the rest of the world. Not only will Europe eventually bring republican government to all other peoples; progress in the arts and sciences, as in technology and society, will also spread from there over the entire earth. And even in the sphere of religion, the rationalized, demythologized version of Protestant Christianity serves as an exemplar of moral religion for the rest of the world. In short, progress in non-European societies seems to mean gradual assimilation in central respects to European culture and civilization.[77] With regard to Kant's systematic intentions in practical philosophy, this projection raises an obvious problem: Is the convergence model of progress, with its attendant – even if not explicitly advocated – civilizing mission of the West, compatible with a future in which the passive recipients of development are on a cultural, political, and moral par with its active originators? The problem becomes all the more pressing as the factors behind developmental unevenness are said to include biologically rooted, and thus unalterable, inequalities of natural endowment.[78] Here too, it seems, Kant's pure ethics is not

[77] But not in all respects: Kant warns against the "amalgamation" [*Zusammenschmelzung*] of diverse peoples in a world state ("Perpetual Peace," pp. 102, 113) and against interethnic or interracial "mixture" [*Vermischung*] (*Anthropology*, p. 182).

[78] It seems that Kant himself was not as troubled by such inequalities as we might be. Thus, in *The Metaphysics of Morals*, he explains that civil equality, as he understands it, is not incompatible with a distinction between active and passive citizens, where "all women" and "underlings" (roughly, those who live from the sale of their labor) belong to the latter class and thus have no right to vote or other wise participate actively in government. Nor does he regard this difference in status as incompatible with their "freedom and equality as human beings" (pp. 91–92). Furthermore, whereas underlings may work their way up to active status, women are, by virtue of their natural endowments, permanently passive citizens. (On this point, see Susan Mendus, "Kant: 'An Honest but Narrow-minded Bourgeois'?," in H. Williams (ed.), *Essays on Kant's Political Philosophy* [University of Chicago Press, 1992], pp. 166–190.) Likewise, in "On the Common Saying: 'This may be true in theory, but it does not apply in practice'" [1793: VIII, 273–313], tr. Nisbet, in Reiss (ed.), *Kant: Political Writings*, pp. 61–92, Kant explains that the equality of subjects before the law is "perfectly consistent with the utmost inequality in the amount and grade of their possessions, whether in the form of material or mental superiority over others" (p. 75). Equality under the law does not mean equal right to make the law: "Anyone who has the right to vote on this legislation is a citizen ... The only qualification required by a citizen (apart, of course, from being an adult male) is that he must be his own master (*sui iuris*) and must have some property (which can include any skill, trade, or fine art or science) to support himself" (pp. 77–78). In the case of women, then, it is clear that Kant's understanding of republican

only complemented but also confounded by his impure ethics: the internal relation between the two made it possible for his universalistic humanism to be placed at the service of European expansionism, whatever his own intentions.

The tendencies toward monoculturalism that surface in Kant's account of progress, the insignificant role he envisions for *reciprocal* intercultural learning, is prefigured in his fundamentally monological conceptions of reason and rationality. Though the empirical materials that "practical anthropology" deals with are pervaded by contingency and particularity in his view, the normative standpoint from which they are reflectively judged is not. It is fixed once and for all by the pure rational principles, ideas, and ideals disclosed by the critique of reason. There is scant recognition of the inherent contestability of the latter enterprise, of the essentially social nature of reason and rationality, or of the inescapable interdependence of the universal and the particular. Factoring those into the self-understanding of practical anthropology would reveal its ineluctably interpretive and evaluative character. It would call into question the extramundane standpoint of transcendental philosophy, undermine the pure/impure structuring of moral and political theory, and make evident the intrinsically dialogical nature of the discourse of modernity. It would, in short, require a reconstruction of Kant's moral vision to make room for multicultural universalism and multiple modernities.

government was compatible with permanent inequalities rooted in biological differences. Thus there may be no theoretical bar, in his mind, to the "world republic" of federated national republics (the ideal form of cosmopolitan union) containing those and other such biologically based – and hence unalterable – inequalities. Perhaps we are being anachronistic when we see that as an inconsistency in his thought.