

## Robert Bernasconi

### WHO INVENTED THE CONCEPT OF RACE?

**W**HO INVENTED THE scientific concept of race? This question admits of a variety of answers depending on what one takes to be decisive about the concept and on whether one believes that what defines the moment in which a technical term is introduced is the first usage of the word in the required sense or the definition that secures its status and influence. It will quickly become clear that by “the inventor of the concept of race” I mean the one who gave the concept sufficient definition for subsequent users to believe that they were addressing something whose scientific status could at least be debated. The terms and basis of the definition might continue to be scrutinized, but, so long as the term was being used only loosely, it made no sense to contest the concept. The invention of the concept of race in this sense took place some time after the introduction of the broad division of peoples on the basis of color, nationality, and other inherited characteristics that could not be overcome subsequently, as religious differences could be overcome by conversion.<sup>1</sup> One need only think of the purity of blood statutes of fifteenth-century Spain that were used against the *conversos*, Jews who had converted to Christianity but who were still not accepted. Then there were the debates in sixteenth-century Spain when the opponents of Bartolomé de Las Casas justified the mistreatment of Native Americans on the grounds that they were not human. One can also look at the Atlantic trade in African slaves that began in the sixteenth century and was already a large operation in the seventeenth century. It was possible for the Spanish or the English to exploit Jews, Native Americans, and Africans, as Jews, Native Americans, and Africans, without having the concept of race, let alone being able to appeal to a rigorous system of racial classification. We have no difficulty identifying these as cases of racism, but they were not sustained by a scientific concept of race. However, the introduction of that concept lent an air of apparent legitimacy to these practices. By investing the concept of race with a scientific status, members of the academy certainly have in

the past contributed to making racism more respectable and have even seemed to provide a basis for it, but the academy of itself is now virtually powerless to undo those effects. However, we can at least try to throw some light on that history.

[. . .]

It is usually agreed that the term “race” was first used in something like its contemporary meaning at the end of the seventeenth century. Europeans had long been aware of the multiplicity of different peoples and had often embellished their sense of it with tales of fabulous monsters. Since the end of the fifteenth century, Europeans had been increasingly exposed to travel reports written by missionaries, traders and explorers that detailed some of the differences between peoples, although that was rarely their main focus of attention. On some occasions “specimens” were brought back by travellers to exhibit to the curious. However, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the primary issue raised by the diversity of peoples was theological and focused on the question of baptism.<sup>2</sup> It was not until the end of the seventeenth century that European scholars attempted to organize the mass of information now available to them and to sort the different peoples into a few groupings. In 1684 an anonymous essay, now usually attributed to François Bernier, acknowledged four or five different types. He did not give them all names, but they correspond roughly to Europeans, Africans, Orientals and Laplanders, while allowing for the possibility of two additional types, the Native Americans and the Hottentots. Within the first group, that included Europeans, he also placed Moroccans, Egyptians, and Indians. What made Bernier’s classification so important retrospectively was not the list itself, but the fact that he employed the term “race” for the purpose. Nevertheless, his title, “A new division of the earth, according to the different species or races of men who inhabit it,” with its equation of race and species, also indicates that the terminology was not yet fixed or precise.<sup>3</sup> The absence of any distinction between race and species is reflected in Leibniz’s response to Bernier.

I remember having read somewhere, but I cannot locate the passage again, that a certain traveler had divided humans into certain tribes, races, or classes. He gave one particular race to the Lapps and Samoyedes, another to the Chinese and neighboring peoples, another to Negroes, and still another to the Caffres, or Hottentots. Further, in America, there is a marvelous difference between the Galibs, or Caribs, who are very brave and indeed spirited, and the people of Paraguay, who seem to be children or novices all their lives. That does not prevent all human beings who inhabit the earth from being of the same race, which has been altered by different climates, just as we see that beasts and plants change their nature and improve or degenerate.<sup>4</sup>

The distinction between race and species that would preoccupy subsequent theorists, is here elided for lack of a clear terminology.

[. . .]

The idea of a single author of the concept of race is at best only a useful fiction, but I shall argue that, if any one person should be recognized as the author of the first theory of race worthy of the name, it should be the German philosopher Immanuel Kant. There is no shortage among Kant’s writings of remarks that would

today unquestionably be characterized as racist. Although the most notorious comment is his remark in *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, that the fact that someone as completely black from head to toe was clear proof that what he said was stupid,<sup>5</sup> it is, by no means the most problematic. Because I have discussed Kant's racism elsewhere,<sup>6</sup> I shall concentrate here on the philosophical motivation for his definition of race as a "class distinction between animals of one and the same line of descent (*Stamm*), which is unfailingly transmitted by inheritance" (AA VIII 100).

Kant expended more energy on securing the concept of race than one would ever guess from the secondary literature about him. In 1775 Kant published the first version of "Of the Different Human Races" (AA II 429–43) as the preliminary announcement for his lectures on *Physical Geography*.<sup>7</sup> Kant regularly lectured on Anthropology and on Physical Geography at the University of Königsberg. Both courses included discussions of race drawn from his own independent reading of the travelogues, which were still the main source of information for the natural scientists of his day. However, they did not provide the same level of theoretical discussion to be found in "Of the Different Human Races." Kant prefaced the first publication of the essay with a statement that the essay, like the lecture course it was advertising, was more like a game than profound investigation (AA II 429), but this warning was dropped when he expanded the essay for republication in 1777.<sup>8</sup> The two versions of this essay were in fact Kant's only publications between the 1770 inaugural lecture and the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in 1781. However, an even better guide to Kant's preoccupation with the concept of race is that he came to its defense during the 1780s, when he was completing the critical project. Even though "Of the Different Human Races" was reprinted again in 1783,<sup>9</sup> Kant published "Bestimmung des Begriffs einer Menschenrasse" in November 1785. In this essay Kant largely reiterates his earlier position. It is probable that he felt obliged to do so as a result of Herder's denial of race in the second part of his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, which had appeared in August of the same year. However, in 1786, under the title "Still More About the Human Races," Georg Forster attacked Kant's position. Georg Forster, who favored empirical science, challenged Kant's distinction between natural history and natural description, a distinction Kant had employed to justify giving a role to teleological explanation in science.<sup>10</sup> Georg Forster was better placed than most to marshal the information about the South Pacific which reached Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century through reports of the voyages of George Anson, Samuel Wallis, Phillip Carteret, Louis Antoine de Bougainville, and James Cook.<sup>11</sup> Georg Forster had accompanied his father on Captain Cook's voyage and assisted his father with the task of writing a report on the voyage.<sup>12</sup> It was small wonder therefore that Kant, in his reply early in 1788 in "On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy," retreated from some of his empirical claims and turned to a discussion of method (AA VIII 157–84).<sup>13</sup> This essay, which was predominantly concerned with race, was not in any sense an interruption of the writing of his major philosophical works. Indeed, it appears that it was in the course of this controversy that Kant recognized that he needed to expand his *Critique of Taste* into what we now know as the *Critique of Judgment* by adding the second part on the Critique of Teleological Judgement.<sup>14</sup> A number of

the most important questions posed in the course of the Critique of Teleological Judgment can be understood as suggested by issues Kant raised in his essay on race fifteen years earlier.

My claim about Kant's place in the construction of the scientific concept of race is not new. In the 1920s Walter Scheidt maintained that although Buffon was the first anthropologist, Kant was the originator of "the first theory of race which really merits the name."<sup>15</sup> There is no doubt that Scheidt had arrived at this conclusion after a careful study of the history of the concept, although perhaps because he was Director of the Rassenbiologische Institut of the Hanseatic University at Hamburg, there might have been suspicion that he had been misled by a desire to find support for the concept from such an exalted source. However, Kant's role in establishing the concept of race has been widely acknowledged by historians of the concept of race.<sup>16</sup> It is only philosophers who have ignored it, until Emmanuel Eze restated the argument for them.<sup>17</sup> Even so, a great deal more work needs to be done, both to establish the context of Kant's discussion of race with reference to his sources and to clarify the various aspects of Kant's theory of race that have been treated largely in isolation from each other. Before exploring Kant's theory, I will examine other possible candidates for the dubious honor of being the inventor of the concept of race.

The Swedish researcher, Carolus Linnaeus, certainly contributed to what would subsequently become race thinking in the twelve editions of his *Systema naturae sive regna tria naturae* that were published from 1735 until his death. Linnaeus was the first to include human beings within a formal classification of animals and plants. He included under the heading *homo sapiens* four geographical varieties, corresponding not only to the four regions of the world then recognized by Europeans, but also to the medieval theory of the four humors.<sup>18</sup> Although a great deal is sometimes made of the fact that they were not organized hierarchically, Linnaeus's descriptions included not only physical differences but also differences in character, clearly derived in large part from stereotypes already emerging in the travel literature. So one finds in the tenth edition of 1758, after the feral or wild man, the following classes: *homo americanus*, who was allegedly obstinate, content, free, and governed by habit; *homo Europaeus*, who was allegedly gentle, very acute, inventive and governed by customs or religious observances (*ritus*); *homo Asiaticus*, who was allegedly severe, haughty, covetous, and governed by opinions; and *homo Africanus*, who was allegedly crafty, indolent, negligent and governed by caprice.<sup>19</sup> However, although Linnaeus took great care in making his classifications and subjected them to constant revision, he made little attempt to clarify the status of the varieties thus differentiated. There was a tension in his works between his theoretical commitment to the constancy of species and the clear evidence to the contrary that was available to him.<sup>20</sup> The above list was followed by a record of *homo monstrosus* after whom Linnaeus proceeded to *homo troglodytes*. Linnaeus also appears to have been willing to try to accommodate in his *Systema natura* that for which he did not have clear evidence.<sup>21</sup>

From the outset, Buffon presented his theory as an alternative to that of Linnaeus. He began the publication of his *Histoire naturelle générale et particulière* in 1749 with a discussion of methodology that rejected the classifications of Linnaeus as arbitrary.<sup>22</sup> In spite of the fact that Buffon tended to disdain questions of classification and nomenclature, it has sometimes been claimed that Buffon was

the originator of the concept of race.<sup>23</sup> The importance of Buffon's definition of species and the means by which he secured it is undeniable. To Buffon, a species was "a constant succession of similar individuals that can reproduce together" (HN IV 384–5). The definition, presented in his essay on the ass from 1753, was widely disseminated, so that, for example, it is quoted verbatim in Diderot's *Encyclopédie*.<sup>24</sup> The definition was accompanied by an account of how one separates one species from another: the mark of separation lay where a pair of individuals are unable to reproduce with each other across successive generations. Often known as Buffon's rule, it seems to have been expounded by John Ray in the seventeenth century.<sup>25</sup> According to Buffon, species were fixed and constant, although he did concede that the general prototype that was found in the first individual and that was imprinted in all subsequent individuals left some room for variation (HN IV 215–16). This variation was represented by the various types, breeds, or races, but those terms themselves remained without clear definition.<sup>26</sup>

The argument that Buffon introduced a determinate concept of race is hampered by his failure not only to propose a definition of race as he did of species, but also to use the term with any consistency. The best evidence that he was working toward a precise notion of race is to be found in "On the Degeneration of Animals" where, in 1766, Buffon indicated that quasi-permanent change from an original stock could take place as a result of climate, geography and especially food. In this context Buffon came to acknowledge "constant and general characters by which one recognizes the races and even the different nations which compose the human genus" (HN XIV 316). However, this formulation is not as decisive as it might appear to be. In 1753 in his essay on "The Ass," Buffon had already applied his rule and the notion of degeneration to the variations within the human species. There he had focused on the differences between Blacks and Whites, Laplanders and Patagonians, but the addition of Giants and Dwarfs to the list, as well as mention of the enormous legs of certain people in Ceylon and the occurrence of six fingers and toes in certain families, shows that he did not consider that his framework was sufficient to establish a new category (HN IV 387–9). Indeed, he explicitly warned against doing so. Having identified the difference between two species on the basis that they cannot give rise to a succession of individuals that can mix, he added:

This is the most fixed point that we have in Natural History; all other resemblances and differences that we can grasp in the comparison of beings, are neither so constant, real, nor certain. These intervals are also the sole lines of separation that one will find in our work. We shall not divide beings otherwise than they are in fact. Each species, each succession of individuals which reproduce and cannot mix will be considered apart and treated separately, and we shall not use families, kinds, orders and classes which are set by Nature. (HN IV 385–6)

Even after 1766 Buffon demonstrated no clear commitment to the terminology of race, still less an interest in clarifying its theoretical status.

A word should also be said about Blumenbach's claim to being the originator of the anthropological concept of race.<sup>27</sup> Although his name is often mentioned in

this regard, Kant's credentials over against Blumenbach are easily secured. Kant's first essay on race, "Of the Different Human Races," was published in 1775, some months before Johann Friedrich Blumenbach submitted *De generis humani varietate nativa* as his dissertation for the doctorate in medicine to the University of Göttingen at the age of twenty-three.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, one needs to attend to the history of the publication of Blumenbach's treatise. It was twice republished, in 1781 and 1795, but the revisions between the first and second editions were extensive and those between the second and third were such that the latter is better thought of as a new book, albeit published under the same title. All three editions were written in Latin, and it was not until the third edition, which was the first to be translated into German, that the terms *gens* and *gentilitius* began to predominate in a way that suggests that Blumenbach had begun to develop a concept of race. In the first edition he had relied almost exclusively on the same general term that had been used by Linnaeus: *varietas*.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, while it is true that Blumenbach's system of classification was more complex than Kant's, which was based almost solely on color, in the first edition Blumenbach did not include any theoretical reflection on the status of these varieties, other than to say that the different human varieties run into each other so that no definite limits can be drawn between them (GHV1 40–1; NVM 98–9), a position he repeated in the third edition (GHV3 285 and 322; NV 203–4 and 224; NVM 264 and 275). Indeed in his *Handbuch der Naturgeschichte* Blumenbach excitedly acknowledges that Kant was the first to distinguish precisely races and varieties.<sup>30</sup> By setting out clearly the distinction between race and variety, where races are marked by hereditary characteristics that are unavoidable in the offspring, whereat the distinguishing marks of varieties are not always transmitted, Kant introduced a language for articulating permanent differentiations within the notion of species (AA VIII 180n). Buffon had not argued for a clear distinction along these lines because he was not concerned with organizing in a systematic way the raw data provided by travellers.

Another indication of Blumenbach's relation to Kant can be found in the former's defense of color as a way of differentiating the races. From the outset Kant relied almost exclusively on color for his classification of the races, even though this led to severe difficulties. Already in 1775, the year of Kant's first essay on race, it was becoming clear that the appeal to color as a criterion could not be sustained without anomalies. For example, in that year, John Hunter of Edinburgh included under the label "light brown," Southern Europeans, Sicilians, Abyssinians, the Spanish, Turks, and Laplanders, and under the label "brown," Tartars, Persians, Africans on the Mediterranean, and the Chinese.<sup>31</sup> In 1786 Forster directly challenged Kant's appeal to color by presenting him with the case of two people of two different races having a child that was the same color as both the parents.<sup>32</sup> Color was simply not a viable indicator. It is ironic that at the very time that Kant was giving the concept of race intellectual coherence, his criterion for distinguishing the different races was collapsing. And yet it is some measure of the growing proximity of Kant and Blumenbach that, although in 1775 Blumenbach had dismissed color as an indicator of human varieties, on the grounds that so many additional factors contribute to the differences (GHV1 50–7; NVM 107–13), some twenty years later, with specific references to Kant's 1785 and 1788 essays on race, he granted that color is the most constant character of the human varieties (GHV3 114–15; NV 91; NVM 207).

Some commentators have made much of Kant's own acknowledgment of his debt to Blumenbach, but the balance of the debt goes in the other direction, as I shall show later. It is not usually noticed that in his essay on teleology, which is one of the places where Kant praised Blumenbach's notion of a formative drive or *Bildungstrieb* (AA VIII 180n), Kant also argued for a distinction between "race" and "variety" (AA VIII 163–5). Kant again acknowledged the importance of the notion of *Bildungstrieb* in the *Critique of Judgment* but in the context of showing Blumenbach's conformity with Kant's longstanding attempt to unite the teleological and mechanical frameworks (AA V 42).<sup>33</sup> The growing proximity of Kant and Blumenbach is confirmed by Christoph Girtanner's *Über das Kantische Prinzip für die Naturgeschichte* of 1796.<sup>34</sup> Girtanner dedicated his book on race to Blumenbach, with whom he had studied from 1780 to 1782, and in his *Anthropology* Kant endorsed Girtanner's book as "in keeping with my principles" (AA VII 320). Not only is Kant's chronological primacy secured, but so is the importance of his theoretical contribution, even if it was Blumenbach and the Göttingen school who, by undertaking empirical research, such as the measurement of skulls, set the tone for nineteenth-century research in Germany not just for the science of race but the biological sciences generally. Unlike Kant, Blumenbach did not base his account on Buffon's rule of fertile progeny, which he recognized as an entirely impractical criterion for scientists to have to utilize, condemning them to endless attempts to persuade different types from different parts of the world to copulate (GHV3 67–9; NV 59–60; NVM 188–9). Blumenbach relied on morphological considerations and the application of a revised version of Buffon's notion of degeneration. However, it was through Blumenbach that Kant's concept of race came to have an impact on the larger scientific community. Kant's writings on race seem to have disappeared from view until the advent of Darwinism reopened some of the theoretical issues, and interest in them was revived.<sup>35</sup>

[. . .]

Buffon was a particularly important figure in the debate against polygenesis not only because he was an unambiguous supporter of the claim that there was only one human species (HN III 529–30), but especially because his "rule" appeared to provide scientific support for this claim. Buffon had argued that any two animals that can procreate together are of the same species, if their issue can also procreate. Following this rule it was clear that all dogs were of the same species, but that a horse and an ass were not because their issue, a mule, cannot procreate. The fact that all human beings, however different they are, are able to procreate and have fertile offspring, led Buffon to the conclusion that they all belong to the same species. It is a testimony to Buffon's importance that Henry Home, Lord Kames, defended polygenesis largely by attacking Buffon.

Kames introduced his *Sketches of the History of Man* by asking "whether all men be of one lineage, descended from a single pair, or whether there be different races originally distinct."<sup>36</sup> It quickly became clear that Kames favored the second alternative. Kames even had some fun at Buffon's expense with the latter's notion of degeneration. According to Kames, people degenerate in a climate to which they are not suited by nature, except around Charleston where Europeans die so fast from the heat that they do not have time to degenerate (SHM. I 11). However,

Kames's serious point was that people do not adapt to a new climate, but that different races are fitted by nature for different climates (SHM I 10). Hence Kames posed the following question to Buffon:

But is he seriously of opinion, that any operation of climate, or of other accidental cause, can account for the copper colour and smooch chin universal among the Americans, the prominence of the *pudenda* universal among Hottentot women, or the black nipple no less universal among female Samoides? (SHM 112)

Although Kames seems to have had little doubt as to the conclusion that should be drawn from the evidence, he was reluctant to express it directly, placing it in quotation marks so as to avoid having to take full responsibility for it:

That God created many pairs of the human race, differing from each other both externally and internally; that he fitted these pairs for different climates, and placed each pair in its proper climate; that the peculiarities of the original pairs were preserved entire in their descendants. (SHM I 38–9)

That the Biblical account of the creation of a single pair is “not a little puzzling” was as much as he was willing to say outright at the outset. Later in the book he returned to the topic that had occupied La Peyrère and argued for the separate origin of the American Nations (SHM II 70–2). However, even here, in an effort to assuage believers in the Biblical account, he proposed a way of reconciling his account with theirs:

supposing the human race to have been planted in America by the hand of God later than the days of Moses, Adam and Eve might have been the first parents of mankind, i.e. of all who at that time existed, without being the first parents of the Americans. (SHM II 75)

Voltaire, by contrast, not only contested the Biblical account openly. His opposition to the Bible seems to have been one of his main reasons for adopting polygenesis.

In his adherence to polygenesis, Voltaire was more concerned with polemic than with argument. In his *Essai sur les mœurs et de l'esprit des nations* he was satisfied with the claim that “only the blind could doubt that the Whites, the Blacks, the Albinos, the Hottentots, the Laplanders, the Chinese, the Americans, are entirely different races.”<sup>37</sup> This was not meant as an exhaustive list. Voltaire was also open to the possibility of further types that had disappeared. Elsewhere, albeit in a text that was first published posthumously in 1784, Voltaire was even more direct in declaring that “bearded Whites, wooly haired Blacks, yellow-skinned peoples with their long manes, and beardless men do not come from the same man.”<sup>38</sup> However, Voltaire, who had been a leading advocate of the importance of Indian and especially Chinese civilization, was critical of Africa. He offered a hierarchical model in which Blacks were not only not at the highest level, but adding insult to injury, placed explicitly above “apes and oysters.”<sup>39</sup>



Kant's 1775 essay on race included an attack on the theory of "local creations" in the context of which Voltaire was mentioned explicitly (AA II 440; IR 19).<sup>40</sup> Kant's interest in defending monogenesis emerged in other writings also. In January 1786, Kant published "Speculative Beginning of Human History" in which he argued that the speculation of philosophy about the first beginnings coincided with the account to be found in Genesis, including the fact of a single original pair (AA VIII 110).<sup>41</sup> Two years later, Kant returned to the issue when Georg Forster revived the theory of "local creations."<sup>42</sup> Fully aware that polygenesis was deprived of the rhetoric of human brotherhood as a tool to combat racism, Forster simply responded: "Let me ask whether the thought that Blacks are our brothers has ever anywhere even once abated the raised whip of the slave driver was put away."<sup>43</sup> Although polygenesis lent itself to those who wanted to defend the enslavement of Africans, one cannot establish a correlation between these two positions.<sup>44</sup> Although it is significant that the concept of race was given precision in an effort to combat polygenesis, that does not constitute an ethical defence of the concept, any more than La Peyrère's good intentions in introducing Preadamism are relevant to assessing its merits. However, it does alert us to the complexity of the issues being discussed.

The fact that the scientific concept of race was developed initially in Germany rather than in Britain or America suggests that it was not specifically the interests of the slaveowners that led to its introduction, but rather, as Kant's essays themselves confirm, an interest in classification and above all the attempt to provide a theoretical defense of monogenesis.<sup>45</sup> The appeal of monogenesis in large measure lay in its conformity to the Biblical account, but it also lent itself to discussions of "human fraternity," so that within the context of the late eighteenth century the idea of race was a resource for those who opposed slavery, just as polygenesis lent itself to the upholders of slavery, without there being any necessary connection between one's position on the monogenesis-polygenesis dispute and one's position on slavery. Nevertheless, none of this means that there was not a strong connection between the concept of race and racism. What the natural historians and philosophers in Europe knew about the different human varieties or races came from travel reports that were increasingly being written with an eye to the debate over slavery.

[. . .]

Already in "Of the Different Human Races," Kant was concerned with the kind of causality that produced the races. Kant proposed a review of the entire human genus over the whole earth with a view to finding either the natural or the purposive causes of the various deviations, depending simply on whichever kind of cause was most readily discernible (AA II 435; DHR 14). More specifically, Kant attempted to explain differences in skin color, as this was the basis on which he distinguished the four fundamental races: Whites, Blacks, Hindustanic, and Kalmuck. Kant's explanation of the production of these differences was in terms of the effects of air and sun, but he argued that these developments must have been preformed and could not be understood as simply a product either of chance or the application of mechanical laws alone. Kant argued that by the solicitude of nature, human beings were equipped with seeds (*Keime*) and natural predispositions (*Anlagen*) that were developed or held back depending on climate (AA II 434–5; DHR 13–14).

That is to say, the seeds of the races were latent from the start in everyone, and the appropriate seed was actualized to serve a purpose that arose from the circumstances. The thrust of Kant's account, therefore, was to support the use of teleology within biology as opposed to providing merely mechanical explanations, as had become the tendency. Mechanical explanations would allow for the effects of climate to produce further changes in species or parts of the species. This was a possibility Kant rejected, just as he rejected all evolutionary theories. Such changes that had occurred were all preformed. They were also irreversible.

Although Kant had already indicated in 1775 that race is an ex-speciation which cannot return to the original stem, it was only in 1777 that he made absolutely clear that the races, once formed resist further remodeling (AA II 442; DHR 21). This was crucial. He emphasized the same point in the 1785 essay (AA VIII 105) and again 1788 (AA VIII 166). Race cannot be undone by further differences in climate. It is permanent. Whichever germ was actualized by the conditions, the other germs would retire into inactivity.<sup>46</sup> It was also in 1777 that Kant first identified the stem genus as White (AA II 441; DHR 20). Buffon had already argued in 1749 that "White appears to be the primitive color of Nature" (HN III 502).<sup>47</sup> However, Kant was not rehearsing Buffon's argument which relied on the claim that Blacks can have White children but that the reverse cannot happen. Kant did not concede until 1785 that, because it is now impossible to reproduce the original stock, we will never be able to tell for sure what it was like (AA VIII 82). See also (AA V 420; CJ 306).

In appealing to the idea of "pre-existing seeds" Kant was adopting a view that had arisen in the seventeenth century under the influence of Malebranche and that came to be associated with certain works of Charles Bonnet in the early 1760s.<sup>48</sup> Buffon had explicitly rejected the language of germs when he dismissed attempts to refer generation back to God, on the grounds that they placed it beyond the reach of human investigation (HN II 32–3). However, it can be argued that both Bonnet and Buffon were trying to solve the same problem that faced all mechanical theories of generation of how a complex order could be created from an originally chaotic arrangement of particles. Indeed, Buffon's appeal, in his essay on the horse, to the idea of a general prototype of every species that is found in the first of its kind, which in turn acts as an external model and internal mold of all the individuals of the species (HN IV 215–16), was not so distant from Bonnet.<sup>49</sup> Kant's introduction of Bonnet's vocabulary in an essay whose main framework was formed by Buffon was not therefore as extraordinary as it might otherwise appear. Nevertheless, no reader of Kant could underestimate the significance of the fact that he replaced Buffon's simply mechanical explanation of the diversity of human types with an account that appealed to teleological causes.<sup>50</sup>

[. . .]

Early discussions of the various human types were by no means always focused on Africans. A great deal of attention and animosity was reserved for Lapps and often Native Americans were placed below all the other types. However, insofar as color was regarded as the most striking characteristic differentiating the various types and insofar as Whites considered themselves clearly superior to everyone else, then one obvious way of organizing these types hierarchically that occurred to Europeans

was from white to black.<sup>51</sup> Even before the last quarter of the eighteenth century, which was when the proslavery faction became directly involved in providing descriptions of Africa that served their cause, European travellers to Africa were only too happy to support this growing prejudice against Africans by exaggerating what they observed in an effort to gain the public's attention.<sup>52</sup> The blackness of Africans was not only a subject of theoretical speculation, it became the characteristic around which all the prejudices against Africans were gathered. Already in 1728 Ephraim Chambers wrote: "The origin of *Negroes*'s [sic], and the cause of that remarkable difference in complexion from the rest of mankind, has much perplexed the naturalists; nor has any thing satisfactory been yet offered in that head."<sup>53</sup> That it had been possible at one time to pose the question without any hint of the prejudice with which it subsequently became infused can be illustrated by turning to Sir Thomas Browne. When he explored the question "Of the Blackness of Negroes," it was a strictly theoretical inquiry, and even if he did not go so far as to ask why Whites were white, in the course of dismissing the account of the "curse of Ham," he did not neglect to ask why observers would consider it a curse to be that color.<sup>54</sup> For Browne it was quite clear that beauty could not "reasonably" be associated with one color over another, as beauty is determined by what custom leads one to regard as natural: "And by this consideration of Beauty, the Moors also are not excluded, but hold a common share with all mankind."<sup>55</sup> The praise that is sometimes lavished on Kant for having come to a similar insight is for that reason not fully deserved (AA V 234; CJ 82).<sup>56</sup> He was repeating a standard observation of the time, but it is noteworthy that the emphasis is no longer, as in Bernier, that there are beautiful women everywhere, but that each culture has its own idea of what constituted human beauty.

The problem, of why Blacks were black, obsessed scientists throughout the eighteenth century. Some anatomists sought and sometimes claimed to find a physiological explanation, such as black bile.<sup>57</sup> Although most natural scientists were inclined to include some environmental explanation in terms of air, food, or climate, not least because it could easily be reconciled with a belief in Adam as the source of all mankind,<sup>58</sup> on its own this ran counter to the evidence that skin color was transmitted largely unchanged across generations. Buffon favored the environmental explanation of color but he was unusual in being prepared to draw the consequences. He insisted in 1749 that if Africans were brought North their skin color would lighten, albeit slowly and that possibly they would end up as white as northerners (HN III 523–4). In his essay "On the Degeneration of Animals" Buffon even described a possible experiment to establish this. He proposed transporting some Blacks from Senegal to Denmark, the country of white skin, blonde hair and blue eyes. If the Blacks were enclosed "with their women" and all possibility of crossbreeding excluded, he suggested that we would learn how long it would take to "reintegrate (*réintégrer*) in this respect the nature of man" (HN XIV 314). The term "reintegrate," of course, had its source in Buffon's belief that white was the original color. A similar question arose in the course of Kant's debate with Forster. Kant held that one showed one's "true" color only in a mild climate: "one can more correctly judge in France the color of a Negro, who has lived there a long time, or better still was born there, insofar as that determines his or her class distinction from other men, than one can judge it in the fatherland

of the Blacks" (AA VIII 92). Indeed, Kant claimed that the true color of the South Sea Islanders was not yet known for certain and would not be until one of them was born in Europe (AA VIII 92), a proposition to which Georg Forster, who had taken the trouble to travel to the South Pacific, objected strongly.<sup>59</sup> However, one important characteristic of Kant's theory is that he excluded the possibility of any such reintegration as described by Buffon. This was a decisive difference because it established the distinction between, on the one hand, race as a permanent characteristic that is unfailingly inherited and, on the other hand, characteristics, such as hair color, sickness or deformity, for which there was only a tendency to hereditary transmission (AA VIII 93–4). It was this distinction that in "On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy" was redrawn as a distinction between race and variety, thereby challenging Blumenbach to introduce a similar distinction, as noted earlier (AA VIII 180n).

Kant speculated about the physical basis for blackness, appealing to iron particles in 1777 (AA II 440) and to phlogiston in 1785 (AA VIII 103). But the most important consequence of Kant's interest in the question of the color of Africans was that it seems to have kept him focused on the question of the adequacy of mechanistic explanations offered in isolation from teleology. In Kant's first essay on race the purposive nature of racial (which meant for him color) differences was assumed but not argued on the basis that because neither chance nor mechanical laws could have brought about the developments that enabled organic bodies to adapt to the climates into which they first moved, those developments must be construed as preformed (AA II 435; DHR 14). He was more direct in the 1785 essay when he wrote that the purposive nature of color was visible in the Negro race (AA VIII 103).<sup>60</sup> However, for the other races, Kant was obliged simply to assume that color was purposive. And yet it was from the presence of purposiveness that Kant inferred the existence of seeds (AA VIII 102). The blackness of Blacks provided Kant with one of his most powerful illustrations of purposiveness within the biological sphere. But perhaps it worked as a powerful example among his White audience because it addressed their fascination with the fact of Blackness.

However, the issue in "On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy," as in the second part of the *Critique of Judgment*, is a much larger one and it arises in relation to a new point of contact between Kant and Blumenbach. What brought Kant and Blumenbach together was Kant's recognition that in his notion of *Bildungstrieb* or formative drive, Blumenbach had gone beyond natural description and an account of mechanical forces to posit a teleology in nature. Like his book on human varieties, Blumenbach's essay on the *Bildungstrieb* appeared in three very different versions. The first, published in 1780, was barely twenty pages.<sup>61</sup> The following year it was expanded into a treatise of some 87 pages.<sup>62</sup> In 1789, Blumenbach published a text of 116 pages on the *Bildungstrieb* that was reprinted two years later.<sup>63</sup> Blumenbach had discovered the *Bildungstrieb* while conducting some experiments on polyps while on holiday. He found that if their arms or tentacles were cut off, they would grow again within a few days, albeit they would be smaller (B3 28–9). On this basis he came to posit in the unformed generative matter of organized bodies a lifelong drive that initially takes on a determinate form, maintains it lifelong, and reproduces itself where possible, if it is in any way mutilated (B3 31).

Because Blumenbach's essay was an attack on Haller's conception of preformed seeds, it appears to be in stark contrast with Kant's theory of race, which also appeals to seeds. However, the appearance is somewhat deceptive.<sup>64</sup> Blumenbach's argument against preformed seeds was based on the existence of hybrids. Indeed, in the 1781 edition, Blumenbach even appealed to the fact that the mixing of pure varieties, such as Blacks and Whites, produces mulattoes and blendings (B2 60), an example which lay at the heart of Kant's reflections on race. The theory of seeds that Blumenbach is attacking is the same as that found in the theory of evolution that Kant rejects in section 81 of the Third Critique. Indeed, if Kant ends that section by applauding Blumenbach's account of the *Bildungstrieb*, he has done much more than take over this notion from Blumenbach (AAV 424; CJ 311). The whole way Kant frames the issue as a question of the advantages of the theory of epigenesis over that of evolution was taken from Blumenbach (B3 13–14).<sup>65</sup> I judge Kant to have been quite genuine in his praise for Blumenbach when in 1790 he wrote to thank Blumenbach for sending him *Über den Bildungstrieb* (B3) in which Blumenbach's combination of the physico-mechanical principle of explicating organic nature was in line with his own recent work (AA XI 185).<sup>66</sup> It is worth noting that although Blumenbach had only recently arrived at the theory of epigenesis, Kant had long maintained it, as is reflected in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.<sup>67</sup> The transformation of Blumenbach's philosophy of science in the ten years after 1788 was largely toward a form of Kantianism.<sup>68</sup> However, Kant preferred to emphasize the conformity of his views with those of Blumenbach, because Blumenbach brought to Kant a scientific legitimacy that Kant was unable to provide on his own account. The advantage to Kant is nowhere clearer than in Blumenbach's adoption of the Kantian language of race. Even though it is far from clear that Blumenbach fully recognized the status Kant gave to the concept of race, which is one of the subjects of the next section, he came to frame his discussion of human varieties, like Kant, in terms of the conjunction of the physico-mechanical and teleological principles (GHV3 82–3; NV 69; NVM 194).

[. . .]

That Kant's three essays on race are important sources for understanding the genesis of the *Critique of Judgment* has been recognized by a number of Kant scholars.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, Girtanner, Kant's contemporary, already saw the relevance of the *Critique of Judgment* for Kant's discussions of race.<sup>70</sup> Kant seems to have decided to address the vexed problem of the grouping of species by taking the model he had developed in his investigation of race and extending it to cover broader groupings of species.<sup>71</sup> In drawing on this model Kant not only described how creatures of a less purposive form gave birth to others "better adapted to their place of origin" (AA V 419; CJ 305), thereby recalling the way climate served to develop the races, he also returned to the language of "predisposition": "nothing is to be taken up into the generative force that does not already belong to one of the being's undeveloped original predispositions" (AA5 420; CJ 306). For Kant, when certain individuals undergo accidental change leading to the altered character being taken up into the generative force (*Erzeugungskraft*) and thereby becoming hereditary, this has to be judged as the development of a purposive predisposition already in the species for the sake of its preservation:

If we find that the altered character of these individuals becomes hereditary and is taken up into their generative force, then the only proper way to judge it is as the development, on [a given] occasion, of a purposive predisposition that was originally present in the species and that serves the preservation of the kind (*Art*). (AA V 420; CJ 305–6)<sup>72</sup>

This sentence so clearly evokes what Kant had said about racial differences that it is no surprise to find one English translator introducing “race” as a translation of *Art* in the last sentence.<sup>73</sup> If Kant did not mention “race” explicitly in the second half of the *Critique of Judgment*, it is perhaps because he knew from his debate with Herder how controversial it still was and that it might interfere with the general acceptance of his theory.

Herder’s polemic against Kant in his *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Humankind* and Kant’s response in his reviews of the first two parts of Herder’s book came to a head around the notion of race. Although an opponent of polygenesis,<sup>74</sup> Herder, who had attended Kant’s lectures on *Physical Geography* in which the concept of race had been championed, explicitly denied the reality of race: “there are neither four nor five races, nor are there exclusive varieties on earth.”<sup>75</sup> Herder’s questioning of race did not stop him, for example, from citing Camper’s studies on the angle of the head which places the head of Africans and Kalmucks closer to apes than Europeans, and which allegedly was Nature’s means of discriminating the varieties of creation as they approximate to the most perfect form of beauty in human beings (IGM 134–35). But Herder believed that the language of race was divisive. He opened his criticism of the concept of race in these terms:

Nature has provided for each kind and given each one its own inheritance. She has distributed the apes in as many species and varieties and spread them out as far as she could spread them; you human, however, should honour yourself. Neither the pongo nor the gibbon is your brother, whereas the American and the Negro certainly are. You should not oppress him, nor murder him, nor steal from him; for he is a human being just as you are: you may not enter into fraternity with the apes. (IGM 255; PH 25–6)

Herder understood peoples as the fundamental units of history and, although he primarily conceived of them in cultural terms, their biological basis was retained in his works, as when he wrote of “the original root-character of a nation” (*die ursprüngliche Stammgebilde der Nation*) (IGM 255–6; PH 26). Whereas Kant was among those who advocated a division into only four or five kinds, Herder advocated recognition of the diversity of human peoples; whereas Kant focused on color divisions, Herder saw continuity: “the colors run into one another” (IGM 256; PH 26). Like Blumenbach, Herder believed that if we only knew more about the different peoples, we could perhaps complete the shadings of the portraits of these peoples without finding a single break (IGM 231).<sup>76</sup> Whereas Kant regarded the division of races as permanent, according to Herder, “the characters of peoples are gradually extinguished in the general run of things” (IGM 685).

Herder disagreed with Kant on the role the latter gave to seeds. Herder in the first part of the *Ideas* complained: “No eye has ever seen these preformed seeds, lying ready ever since the creation; what we observe from the first moment of a creature’s genesis are effective *organic powers*” (IGM 171). In his anonymous review of the first part of Herder’s *Ideas* Kant merely noted this difference and attacked Herder as the one who was explaining the obscure by the more obscure (AA VIII 48 and 53–4; OH 31 and 37). In his review of the second part of the *Ideas*, in which Herder had denied race explicitly, Kant took up the argument more directly. Herder had acknowledged that the inner vital principle modifies itself according to variations in external conditions, most notably climate. Kant proposed that if these adaptations were limited to a certain number of variations and were such that, once established, they could no longer revert to the original form or change into another type, then it would be legitimate to reintroduce the contested language of seeds and original dispositions (AA VIII 62; OH 48). In this way Kant attempted to persuade Herder that his objections to the notion of seeds applied to an account of seeds that was not Kant’s own and that Herder could readily accommodate Kant’s conception, properly understood. However, it might seem Kant did not have a good response for Herder’s accusation that the seeds were somewhat mysterious. Kant described them as limitations that cannot be rendered comprehensible (AA VIII 62–3; OH 68).

That is why, when Kant referred Herder’s hostility to classification based on hereditary colorization to Herder’s not yet having “clearly determined the concept of a race” (AA VIII 62; OH 47), something more was at stake than the conception of seeds. At issue was the conception of scientific investigation that afforded them a status. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant distinguished those people who assume that there are certain hereditary characteristics in each nation and race and those who insist that in all such cases nature made the same provision for all and that such differences that one does find are due to external and accidental conditions (KrV A667, B695). Kant negotiated the two positions by granting that we cannot speak from insight into the nature of the objects concerned. He made clear, however, that looking for order in nature, such as Leibniz and Bonnet did in proposing what came to be known as the chain of being, is a legitimate and excellent regulative principle of reason (KrV A668; B696). This same insight governed all Kant’s writings on race and is most clearly expressed in his observation that the word *variety*, but not the word *race*, belongs to the description of nature and that nevertheless an observer of nature finds the word *race* necessary from the viewpoint of natural history (AA VIII 163). This is what underlies Kant’s crucial explanation of the status of the concept of race, whereby it corresponds to nothing in the world, but nevertheless is “necessary from the viewpoint of natural history”:

What is a *race*? The word certainly does not belong in a systematic description of nature, so presumably the thing itself is nowhere to be found in nature. However, the *concept* which this expression designates is nevertheless well established in the reason of every observer of nature who supposes a conjunction of causes placed originally in the line of descent of the genus itself in order to account for a self-transmitted

peculiarity that appears in different interbreeding animals but which does not lie in the concept of their genus. (AA VIII 163)<sup>77</sup>

A similar insight at a more general level can be found in the *Critique of Judgment*. If one applies what Kant says about regulative concepts in the *Critique of Judgment* to his discussions of race, then Kant is saying that in the present state of our knowledge the idea of race imposes itself. It is also what underlies his observations in notes written when preparing his response to Forster, which read: “to accept that any part of a creature which adheres constantly to the species is without purpose is just like accepting that an event in the world has arisen without a cause” (AA XXIII 75). As Kant understood it, racial differences called for a purposive account.<sup>78</sup> To this extent, Kant was right to say that Herder had not yet clearly understood what he meant by the concept of race. Nevertheless, Herder’s debate with Kant about race for all of its misunderstandings was a philosophical debate that shows that the concept had finally reached sufficient precision in Kant to allow one to say he brought it to fruition.

The scientific concept of race underwent many changes after Kant introduced it. At times the reality of race was not in question. Race was a given. However, now that the reality of race is being questioned by Appiah on the grounds that it is no longer in conformity with our best scientific knowledge, one must still ask whether we can do without it. In response to Appiah, Lucius Outlaw has argued, “As we struggle to realize social justice with harmony in America, given this nation’s history of race relations, we are unable to do away with the notion of ‘race.’”<sup>79</sup> When he writes that we cannot do away with the notion of race, Outlaw seems to be proposing an argument about strategy within a particular context, rather than a Kantian style argument about whether or not race still imposes itself on us according to some regulative principle of reason. But if we acknowledge, as Appiah does, that our current ways of talking about race are the residue of earlier views, then it is prudent to develop a deeper understanding of the history of race thinking as well as of racial practices.<sup>80</sup>

## Notes

- 1 See Richard Popkin, “The Philosophical Bases for Modern Racism,” *The High Road to Pyrrhonism*, San Diego, Austin Hill Press, 1980, pp. 79–102.
- 2 For example, Lewis Hanke, *Aristotle and the American Indians*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1959, esp. pp. 44–73. John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1975, pp. 454–5. See Robert Bernasconi, “Locke’s Almost Random Talk of Man: The Double Use of Words in the Natural Law Justification of Slavery,” *Perspektiven der Philosophie*, 18, 1992, pp. 293–318.
- 3 Anon. “Nouvelle division de la Terre, par les differentes Espèces ou Races d’hommes qui l’habitent, envoyée par on fameux Voyageur à Monsieur \*\*\*\*\*[sic] à peu près en ces termes,” *Journal des sçavans*, Monday 24 April, 1684, pp. 148–55; trans. “A new division of the earth, according to the different species or races of men who inhabit it, sent by a famous traveller to Mons. , [sic] nearly in these terms,” in T. Bendshe, “The History of Anthropology,” Appendix 1, in *Memoirs Read before the Anthropological Society of London*, vol. 1, 1863–64, pp. 360–4. Bendshe’s translation has now been reprinted



- in *The Idea of Race*, eds. Robert Bernasconi and Tommy Lott, Indianapolis, Hackett, 2000, pp. 1–4.
- 4 G. W. Leibniz, *Otium Hanoverium sive Miscellanea*, 2nd ed., Leipzig, Christian Martin, 1737, pp. 37–8. That the essay attributed to Bernier is meant is confirmed at *Miscellanea*, pp. 158–9.
- 5 Kant, *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen*, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin, de Gruyter, 1902, vol. II, p. 255; trans. John T. Goldthwait, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1973, p. 113. Whenever possible German reference will be to the Akademie Ausgabe, abbreviated as AA followed by the volume number. On Kant’s “witticism” see Ronald A. T. Judy, *(Dis)forming the American Canon*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1993, esp. pp. 108–17.
- 6 Robert Bernasconi, “Kant as an Unfamiliar Source of Racism,” in *Philosophers on Race*, eds. T. Lott and J. Ward, Oxford, Blackwell, forthcoming.
- 7 Two very different editions of the *Physische Geographie* were published in Kant’s lifetime: the authorized version in two volumes edited by Friedrich Theodor Rink and published by Gobbels and Unzer in Königsberg in 1802 has formed the basis of all subsequent editions, but the unauthorized edition in four volumes published by Gottfried Bollmer of Mainz and Hamburg between 1801 and 1805 remains a largely neglected source of information about Kant’s extensive knowledge of the travel literature of his day.
- 8 This version can now be found in a new translation by Jon Mark Mikkelsen in *The Idea of Race*, pp. 8–22. Henceforth DHR.
- 9 I. Kant, “Von der verschiedenen Racen der Menschen,” *Der Philosoph für die Welt*, ed. J. J. Engel, Reutlingen, Joh. Georg Fleischhauer, 1783, Part 2, pp. 100–31. The Akademie Ausgabe does not list this edition, which my cursory examination suggests is an unchanged version of the 1777 text.
- 10 Georg Forster, “Noch etwas über die Menschenrassen,” *Werke* 8, ed. Siegfried Scheibe, Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1991, pp. 142–3.
- 11 See P. J. Marshall and G. Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1982, pp. 258–98.
- 12 Johann Reinhold Forster, *Observations made during a Voyage round the World*, eds. Nicholas Thomas et al., Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1996. On Georg Forster’s role in the book, see Thomas P. Saine, *Georg Forster*, New York, Twayne Publishers, 1972, p. 24.
- 13 An English translation by Jon Mark Mikkelsen is given in chapter 2. Because references to the Academy edition are given in parentheses within the main body of the translation, I have not included references to the translation in this paper.
- 14 See F. C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason. German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1987, p. 155.
- 15 Walter Scheidt, “Beiträge zur Geschichte der Anthropologie. Der Begriff der Rasse in der Anthropologie und die Einteilung der Menschenrassen von Linné bis Deniker,” *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie* 15, 1924, p. 383; trans. “The Concept of Race in Anthropology and the Divisions into Human Races from Linneus to Deniker,” *This is Race*, ed. Earl W. Count, New York, Henry Schuman, 1950, p. 372. It is worth noting that Count also provides an English translation of “Von der verschiedenen Racen der Menschen,” but it is incomplete and follows more closely the 1777 edition than the 1775 edition in spite of giving the earlier date. “On the Distinctiveness of the Races in General,” *This is Race*, pp. 16–24.
- 16 For example, Wilhelm A. Mühlmann, *Geschichte der Anthropologie*, Bonn, Universitäts-Verlag, 1948, p. 60 and Earl W. Count, *This is Race*, p. 704.

- 17 Enmanuel Eze, "The Color of Reason: The Idea of 'Race' in Kant's Anthropology," *Anthropology and the German Enlightenment: Perspectives on Humanity*, ed. Katherine M. Faull, Lewisburg, Bucknell University Press, 1995, pp. 219–20.
- 18 Carolus Linnaeus. *Systema naturae*, Facsimile of the First Edition, eds. M. S. J. Engle-Ledeboer and H. Engel, Nieuwkoop, B. de Graaf, 1964. See Gunnar Broberg, "Homo Sapiens. Linnaeus's Classification of Man," *Linnaeus. The Man and His Work*, ed. Tore Frängsmyr, Canton, Science History Publications 1994, pp. 156–94.
- 19 The Latin text of the 1758 edition is quoted by T. Bendyshe, "The History of Anthropology," *Memoirs Read before the Anthropological Society of London*, vol. 1, 1863–64, pp. 424–6. A partial English translation can be found in Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black*, Baltimore, Penguin, 1969, pp. 220–1. However, I have modified Jordan's translation to reflect the ambiguity of *ritus*.
- 20 James L. Larson, Reason and Experience. *The Representation of Natural Order in the Work of Carl von Linné*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1971, pp. 98–9.
- 21 Londa Schiebinger, *Nature's Body. Gender in the Making of Modern Science*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1993, pp. 80–1.
- 22 George Louis le Clerc, Comte de Buffon, "Premier Discours. De la manière d'étudier et de traiter l'Histoire Naturelle," *Histoire Naturelle, Générale et Particulière, avec la description du cabinet du Roi*, Paris, De l'imprimerie royale, 1749, vol. 1, pp. 1–62, esp. 37–40. All further references to this edition are designated HN followed by the volume number.
- 23 See, for example, Michèle Duchet, *Anthropologie et Histoire au siècle des lumières*, Paris, François Maspero, 1971, pp. 270–3 and Philip Sloan, "The Gaze of Natural History," *Inventing Human Science*, eds. Christopher Fox, Roy Porter and Robert Wokler, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1995, p. 135.
- 24 Eds. D. Diderot and d'Alembert, *Encyclopédie on Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers*, Elmsford, NY, Pergamon Press Reprint of 1777 edition, vol. 5, p. 957.
- 25 Frank W. P. Dougherty, "Buffons Bedeutung für die Entwicklung des anthropologischen Denkens im Deutschland der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts," *Die Natur des Menschen*, eds. Gunter Mann and Franz Dumont, Soemmerring Forschungen VI, Stuttgart, Gustav Fischer, 1990, p. 255.
- 26 Paul L. Farber, "Buffon and the Concept of Species," *Journal of the History of Biology*, 5 (2), 1972, p. 278.
- 27 For example, M. F. Ashley Montagu, *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1945, p. 28.
- 28 Ivan Hannaford presents Kant's "On the Different Races of Man" as an answer to Blumenbach, but he focuses on the *Anthropology* and seems largely unconcerned with Kant's essays on race. See *Race. The History of an Idea in the West*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, pp. 218–19. It is not clear to me why the chronology is so often ignored so as to make Kant's essay a response to Blumenbach. More than one commentator, while stating correctly that Blumenbach was born in 1752, even moved the date of the first edition of *De generis humani varietate nativa* forward from 1775 to 1770. Kenneth A. R. Kennedy, "Race and Culture," *Main Currents in Cultural Anthropology*, eds. Raoul and Frada Naroll, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1973, pp. 142 and 151. See also Michael Banton, "The Classification of Races in Europe and North America: 1700–1850," *International Social Science Journal*, 39 (1), 1987, p. 47.
- 29 Io. Frid. Blumenbach, *De generis humani varietate nativa*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck, 1776. Henceforth GHV1. See also the second edition: Io. Frid. Blumenbach, *De generis humani varietate nativa*. Göttingen, Vandenhoeck, 1781. Henceforth GHV2. The third edition was the only one translated into German. *De generis humani varietate nativa*, Göttingen,

- Vandenhoeck et Ruprecht, 1795; trans. Johann Goctfried Gruber, *Über die natürlichen Verschiedenheiten im Menschengeschlechte*, Leipzig, Breitkopf und Hartel, 1798. Henceforth GHV3 and NV respectively. The first and the third edition are translated by Thomas Blendyshe in Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, *On the Natural Varieties of Mankind*, London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1865. Henceforth NVM. Blumenbach's linguistic usage is discussed by Eric Voeghin, "The Growth of the Race Idea," *Review of Politics*, 2, 1940, p. 297.
- 30 J. F. Blumenbach, *Handbuch der Naturgeschichte*, fifth ed. Göttingen, Heinrich Dieterich, 1797, p. 23n. Blumenbach also praised the precision of the distinctions by which Kant authorized the concept of race and other related terms in his conversations with Gruber. See NV 259–61.
- 31 John Hunter, "An Inaugural Disputation of the Varieties of Man," appended to Blumenbach, *On the Natural Varieties of Mankind*, p. 367.
- 32 Forster, "Noch etwas über die Menschenrassen," p. 148.
- 33 See the translation by Werner S. Pluhar, *Critique of Judgment*, Indianapolis, Hackett, 1987, p. 311. Henceforth CJ.
- 34 Christoph Girtanner, *Über das Kantische Prinzip für die Naturgeschichte*, Göttingen, Vanderoek und Ruprecht, 1796. On Girtanner, see Phillip R. Sloan, "Buffon, German Biology and the Historical Interpretation of Biological Species," *British Journal for the History of Science*, vol. 12, no. 41, 1979, pp. 137–141.
- 35 Kant's essays on race were reprinted with other related works and some commentary by Fritz Schultze in *Kant und Darwin*, hena, Hermann Dufft, 1875.
- 36 This formulation of the question is found first in the second edition. Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Sketches of the History of Man*, Edinburgh, William Creech, 1778, vol. 1, p. 2. All subsequent references will be to the first edition: *Sketches of the History of Man*, Edinburgh, W. Creech, 1774. Henceforth SHM (followed by the volume number).
- 37 Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations*, Oeuvres complètes, vol. 11, ed. Louis Moland, Paris, Gamier Frères, 1878, p. 12.
- 38 Voltaire, *Trasté de métaphysique*, ed. W. H. Barber, *The Complete Works of Voltaire*, vol. 14, Oxford, The Voltaire Foundation, 1989, p. 423.
- 39 *Ibid.*, p. 452. Voltaire also advocated the idea of a hierarchy of "degrees descending from man to the animal" when he placed albinos beneath Blacks (*négres*) and Hottentots but above apes. *Essai sur les mœurs*, vol. 2, Oeuvres complètes, vol. 12, pp. 367–8.
- 40 Blumenbach also specified his opposition to polygenesis. GHV1 40–1; NVM 98. GHV3 65–6; NV 58; NYM 188.
- 41 I. Kant, "Conjectural Beginning of Human History," *On History*, ed. Lewis White Beck, Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1963, p. 54. Henceforth OH.
- 42 Ludwig Uhlig, *Georg Forster*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer, 1965, pp. 57–62.
- 43 Georg Forster, "Noch etwas über die Menschenrassen," p. 154.
- 44 Hans-Konrad Schmutz, "Friedrich Tiedemann (1781–1861) und Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752–1840) – Anthropologie und Sklavenfrage," *Die Natur des Menschen*, eds. C. Mann and F. Dumont, pp. 353–63, esp. 354.
- 45 Nevertheless the advocates of slavery came to see that the science of racial differences could be used to support their case. This is never more clear than in the transmission of the European science of race to the USA. See, for example, the presentation of Julien Joseph Virey's *Histoire naturelle du genre humain* in J. H. Guenebault, *Natural History of the Negro Race*, Charleston, D. J. Dowling, 1837.
- 46 See Arthur O. Lovejoy, "Kant and Evolution," *Forerunners of Darwin: 1745–1859*, eds. Bentley Glass, Owsei Temkin, and William L. Straus, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1959, p. 188.

- 47 Later, in 1775, in the second volume of the *Suppléments* Buffon explored the possibility that the Black race might be older than the White race. This led him to speculate in 1778 that Whites were an improved race, the first truly civilized culture, and indeed the only variety of mankind worthy of being called people. See also J. H. Eddy, "Buffon, Organic Alterations, and Man," *Studies in History of Biology*, vol. 7, eds. William Coleman and Camille Limoges, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984, p. 35.
- 48 See Peter J. Bowler, "Preformation and Pre-existence in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of the History of Biology*, 4 (2) 1971, pp. 221–44; and Elizabeth B. Gasking, *Investigations into Generation*, London, Hutchinson, 1967.
- 49 This is the argument of Peter J. Bowler, "Bonnet and Buffon: Theories of Generation and the Problem of Species," *Journal of the History of Biology*, 6 (2), 1973, pp. 259–81.
- 50 Jean Ferrari, "Kant, lecteur de Buffon," *Buffon 88*, ed. Jean Gayon, Paris, Vrin, 1992, p. 159.
- 51 Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa. British Ideas and Action, 1780–1850*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1964, p. 39.
- 52 "Travellers have exaggerated the mental varieties far beyond the truth, who have denied good qualities to the inhabitants of other countries, because their mode of life, manners and customs have been excessively different from their own." John Hunter, "An Inaugural Disputation on the Varieties of Man," p. 352.
- 53 *Cyclopaedia: Or an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* (1728), s. v. "Negro's [sic]." Cited by J. H. Eddy, "Buffon, Organic Alterations and Man," *Studies in the History of Biology*, eds. William Coleman and Camille Limoges, vol. 7, 1984, p. 25.
- 54 Sir Thomas Browne, *Pseudoxia*, Works, vol. 2, ed. Charles Sayle, Edinburgh, John Grant, 1927, pp. 383–4.
- 55 *Ibid.*, p. 385.
- 56 Sandor Gilman gives Kant too much credit for what appears to be a common trope. See *On Blackness without Blacks*, Boston, G. K. Hall, 1982, pp. 33–4. Compare also Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, eds. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 199.
- 57 J. H. Eddy, "Buffon Organic Alterations and Man," pp. 25–7.
- 58 A. Owen Aldridge, "Fejoo and the Problem of Ethiopian Color," *Racism in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Harold A. Pagliaro, Cleveland, The Press of Case Western University, 1973, pp. 265 and 275.
- 59 Georg Forster, "Noch etwas über die Menschenrassen," pp. 134–7.
- 60 It seems to me that it is to this passage that Kant must be referring when he wrote in 1788 that in a short essay on human races he had tried to show the necessity of resorting to teleological principles where theory proves inadequate (AA VIII 159). For an alternative, see J. D. McFarland, *Kant's Concept of Teleology*, Edinburgh University Press, 1970, p. 61n.
- 61 J. Blumenbach, "Über den Bildungstrieb und seinen Einfluss auf die Generation und Reproduktion," *Göttingisches Magazin der Wissenschaft und Literatur* 1, no. 5, 1790, pp. 247–66.
- 62 Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, *Über den Bildungstrieb und das Zeugungsgechäfte*, Göttingen, Johann Christian Dieterich, 1781. Henceforth B2.
- 63 Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, *Über den Bildungstrieb*, Göttingen, Johann Christian Dieterich, 1791. Henceforth B3.
- 64 Kant went out of his way to show that the language of preformation could still be used to describe the theory of epigenesis Blumenbach embraced (AAV 423; CJ 311). Furthermore, Girtanner persisted with the language of seeds. *Über das Kantische Prinzip*, p. 11

- 65 It is worth noting that section 80 of the *Critique of Judgment* with its praise of comparative anatomy, especially bone structure, was already clearly about Blumenbach.
- 66 I thus disagree with James Larson's understanding of the letter in "Vital Forces: Regulative Principles or Constitutive Agents," *Isis* 70, 1979, p. 237.
- 67 See J. Wubnig, "The Epigenesis of Pure Reason," *Kant Studien* 60, 1968–69, pp. 147–57.
- 68 See Timothy Lenoir, "Kant, Blumenbach, and Vital Materialism in German Biology," *Isis*, 71, 1980, p. 77. Unfortunately, in this essay Lenoir ignores Kant's 1775 essay, so that Kant's originality is not fully appreciated.
- 69 In addition to the works by Lovejoy, Beiser, Lenoir, McFarland, and Zammito listed elsewhere in these notes, see Paul Bommersheim, "Der Begriff der organischen Selbstregulation in Kants *Kritik der Urteilskraft*," *Kant Studien* 23, 1919, pp. 209–20; Manfred Riedel, "Historizismus und Kritizismus. Kants Streit mit G. Forster und J. G. Herder," *Kant Studien*, 72, 1981, pp. 41–57; and John H. Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1992, pp. 213–18.
- 70 Christoph Girtanner, *Über das Kantische Prinzip für die Naturgeschichte*, pp. 17–30. See also Theodor Elsenhans, *Kants Rassentheorie und ihre bleibende Bedeutung*, Leipzig, Wilhelm Engelman, 1904, pp. 40–52.
- 71 Timothy Lenoir, "Teleology Without Regrets. The Transformation of Physiology in Gernsaisy: 1790–1847," *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Science*, 12, 1981, pp. 307–8.
- 72 This passage was important to Girtanner. He quoted it at *Über das Kantische Prinzip für die Naturgeschichte*, p. 20.
- 73 J. H. Bernard in *Critique of Judgment*, New York, Hafner, 1951 at p. 269.
- 74 J. G. Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung des Menschheit*, eds. J. Brummack and M. Bollacher, Frankfurt, Deutscher Klassiker, 1994, p. 11.
- 75 J. G. Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie des Geschichte der Menschheit*, ed. M. Bollacher, Frankfurt, Deutscher Klassiker, 1989, p. 256. Henceforth IGM. A translation by Tom Nenon of the crucial chapter can be found in *The Idea of Race*, pp. 23–6. Henceforth PH.
- 76 Blumenbach insisted on the same point particularly in the first two editions of his treatise. GHV1 40–1 and 50; NV 98–9 and 107. See also GHV2 48–9 and 64.
- 77 Few commentators have recognized the importance of these sentences. Exceptions include Philip R. Sloan, "Buffon, German Biology and the Historical Interpretation of Biological Species," pp. 133–4 and Andrea Figl, "Immanuel Kant und die wissenschaftliche Werke des Rassismus," *Zeitschrift für Afrika Studien* 13/14, 1992, pp. 10–11. Unfortunately, this second essay came to my notice too late to take full advantage of it.
- 78 Herder and Kant shared the idea that the history of mankind should be written with reference to a conception of nature according to which nothing arises aimlessly. However, they approached the task very differently. For example, Herder had a greater respect for the distinctness of different peoples than Kant and believed that every people contributed to the idea of humanity by virtue of the realization of their own dispositions. See R. Bernasconi, "'Ich mag in keinen Himmel wo Weisse sind'," *Acta Institutionis Philosophiae et Aestheticae* (Tokyo), vol. 13, pp. 69–81. I intend to explore elsewhere the question of Kant's difficulties rewriting his cosmopolitanism with his view of races. Some indication of the problems can be found in Mark Larrimore, "Sublime Waste: Kant on the Destiny of the 'Races'," in *Civilization and Oppression* ed. Catherine Wilson, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, Supplementary volume 25. pp. 99–125.
- 79 Lucius Outlaw, *On Race and Philosophy*, New York, Routledge, 1996, p. 157.
- 80 K. Anthony Appiah, "Race, Culture, Identity," in *Color Conscious*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1996, p. 38.