

Philosophical Skills: Research Tutorial

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Overview

1. Interests and broad questions
2. Article example
 - a. Argument
 - b. Research and writing process

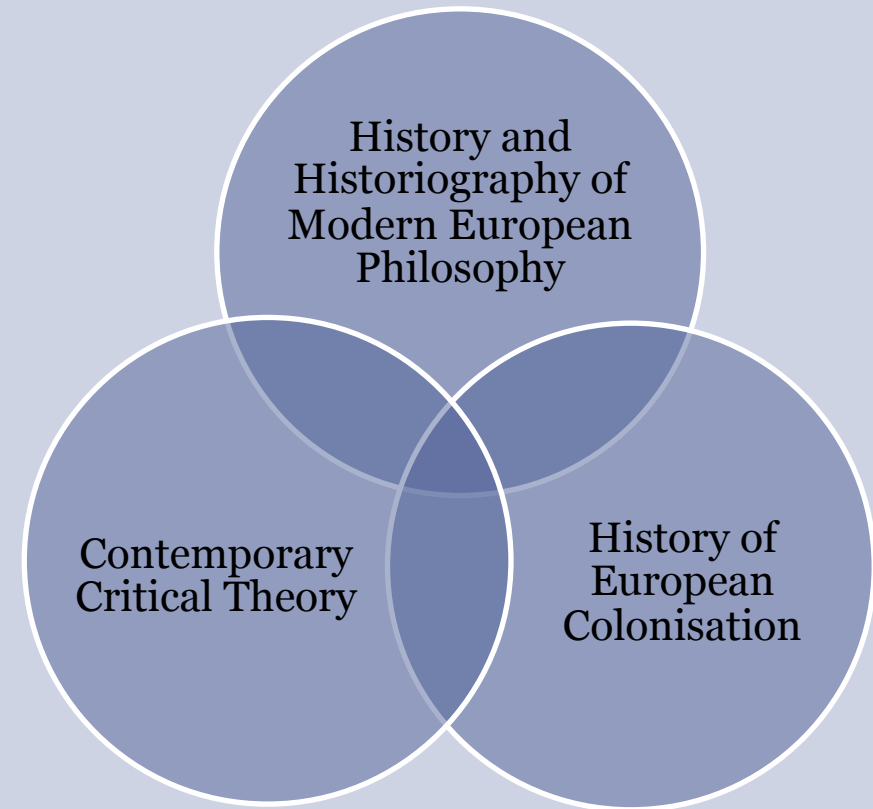
Interests and Broad Questions

What is the significance of past European colonisation across the globe to the history and practice of philosophy today?

Assuming there is or should be one:

How can we reckon with the intellectual and material heritage of European colonial empires without either:

1. Excusing it away?
2. Falling into facile denunciations?



Article Example

Krogh, M.L. 2022. 'Tutelage or assimilation: Kant on the educability of the human races'. *Radical Philosophy* vol. 213, 43-56.

On Kant's essays on race and their significance to Kantian moral and political universalism.

Tutelage or assimilation?

Kant on the educability of the human races

Marie Louise Krogh

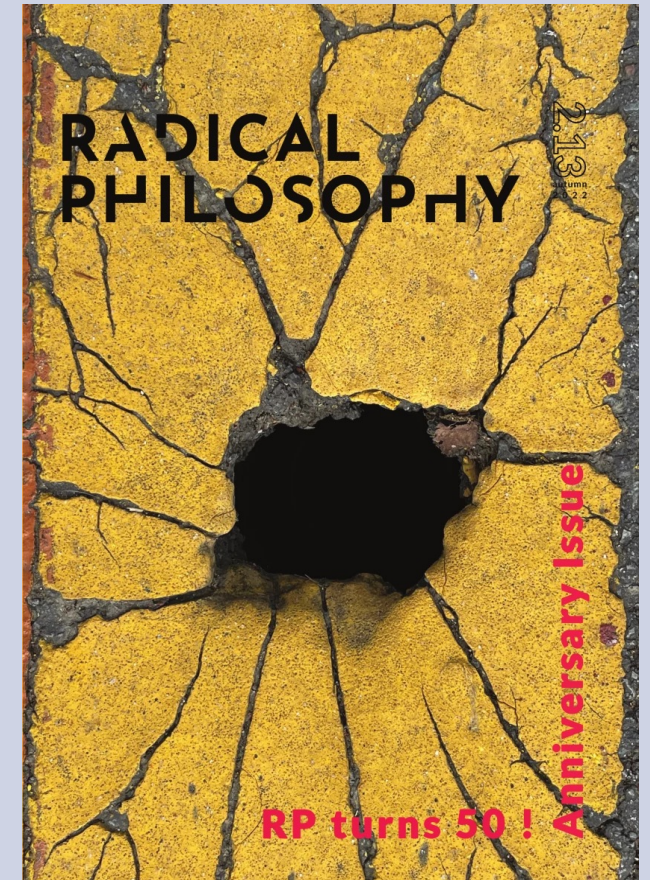
Der Mensch kann nur Mensch werden durch Erziehung.
Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Pedagogy*, 1803.¹

Few topics have in recent years caused more controversy in studies in the history of philosophy than the issue of Immanuel Kant's conception of race and its significance for the universalism of his moral and political philosophy. In this article, I turn to these debates to make the case that it matters not simply that we recognise the centrality of Kant's conceptual work in natural history to his critical philosophy, but also how we subsequently conceive of the importance of such a realisation to the universalisms of later works in the Kantian tradition of philosophy and critical theory. I do so in three steps. First, I introduce Kant's natural historical conception of race and present an abridged history of the reception of Kant's works on race that has taken place since Emmanuel C. Eze's seminal 'The Color of Reason: The Idea of "Race" in Kant's Anthropology' was first published in 1995. I do this in order to discuss some of the different interpretative strategies that have been leveraged to deal with the perceived divide between Kant's racism and his moral universalism. Second, I will make the case that what I call the 'Schillerian' reading of how to bridge this divide presents the standpoint from which we can refuse a false choice between what Pauline Kleinigeld famously termed Kant the 'inconsistent moral universalist' and Kant the 'consistent ingegalitarian'.² Third, I will show that this Schillerian reading can be grounded in Kant's own reflections on pedagogy, which thus far have been absent from discussions of how to understand the function and significance of Kant's concept of race. By recovering Kant's reflections on pedagogy and demonstrating their links to the theory of race, I wish to emphasise how the nexus

between Kant's racism and his concept of race might be expressed not only in relation to the brute domination of slavery and colonial exploitation but also in the ideological conception of an educative function attributed to the white race: a function which can be fulfilled by softer powers but which fundamentally assumes a relation of inequality up until the point where those who are to be educated can be said to assume their own maturity (*Mündigkeit*). From this perspective, Kant's writing on race leaves us with a somewhat starker choice when it comes to his universalism: we can view it either as a false universalism for the white race only, or as a universalism that also implies an assimilationist regime. To conclude, I will make the case that though the former scenario – that of a false universalism – may be more obviously offensive, the latter – that of an implied assimilationist regime – is the more insidious of the two, because it presents itself as no racism at all.

(Re)placing race in the history of philosophy

Every so often, an interventionist reading in the history of philosophy is produced, such that the field in which it intervenes is forced to reassess, discard or defend its basic tenets. For Kant studies broadly conceived, Eze's 1995 essay 'The Color of Reason: The Idea of "Race" in Kant's Anthropology' can be said to have constituted such a reading, as it forced a reckoning with Kant's conception of race, and in particular with its place and function within his critical system.³ What Eze brought back to public memory was the fact that Kant had been an eager participant in eighteenth-century debates on the possibility of a systematic knowledge of organised living



The Kantian Hierarchy of Human Races

	'Red' Americans	'Blacks'	'Yellow' Indians	'Whites'
Drives and passions	Affects and passions obliterated in an adaptational accident (1788), a very low instinct for reproduction (1781)	Full of affect and passions (<i>passim</i>)	Have drives, incentives and composure (1781)	All incentives and drives of the species, with all their possible combinations (1781)
Aptitude for work	Hardly any, even under constraint (1775)	Reduced by the adaptation to warm southern climates, their 'use as free labourers' can be problematic (1788)	Reduced by the adaptation to warm southern climates, 'absence of a taste for work' (1788)	Aptitude for sustained and intensive labour, 'perseverant' in character
Aptitude for culture	An incapacity to understand the examples set by colonial settlers (1788)	Can be trained and educated to work under orders (1788)	Can develop culture in the highest degree, but only in art (1781/1790), non abstract techno-pragmatic dispositions (1798)	Can reach the highest degree of culture, the achievement of the autonomy of the will, in conformity with the concept of the human species (1790)
Role in history	None, likely to die out (Antropology Pillau)	No role to play in 'revolutions' (1781)	No role to play in 'revolutions' (1781)	A decisive role to play, in an exclusive or quasi-exclusive manner (1781)

Translated and adapted from Raphaë Lagier, *Les races humaines selon Kant* (Paris: PUF, 2004), 185

Tutelage or assimilation?

Previous understandings of what the significance of Kant's concept of race is to his moral and political universalism:

- Kant is an inconsistent egalitarian (Kleingeld 2007, Boxill and Hill 2001)
- Kant is a consistent inegalitarian (Eze 1995, **Bernasconi 2003**, Mills 2014)

Do we have to accept this division? I argue that if we read the essays on race through the lens of a requirement of all 'non-white' races to *assimilate*, we can see the division as a false choice.

‘We must seek the continuous progress of humankind toward perfection in the occident, and from there its dissemination around the Earth [*Verbreitung auf der Erde suchen*].’

Immanuel Kant, Refl.1501, [AA:XV, 788-89]

Educative predispositions in the *Lectures on Pedagogy* and their correspondence with racial characteristics.

“Red Americans” ‘acquire no culture [*Bildung*]

0.

“The Black race” ‘acquires culture, but only a culture of slaves; that is, they allow themselves to be trained’

1. A technical predisposition whose telos (aim) is skilfulness [*Geschicklichkeit*]

“Yellow Indians” ‘acquire culture in the highest degree’ it is only in the ‘arts and not in the sciences. They never raise it up to abstract concepts’

2. A pragmatic predisposition whose telos is prudence [*Klugheit*]

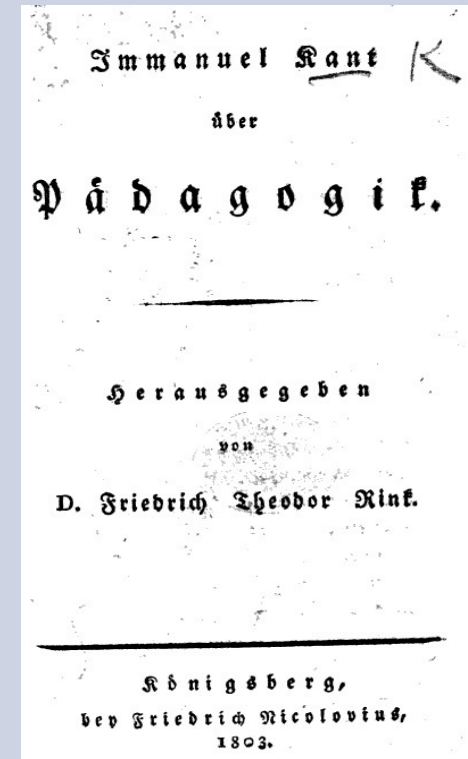
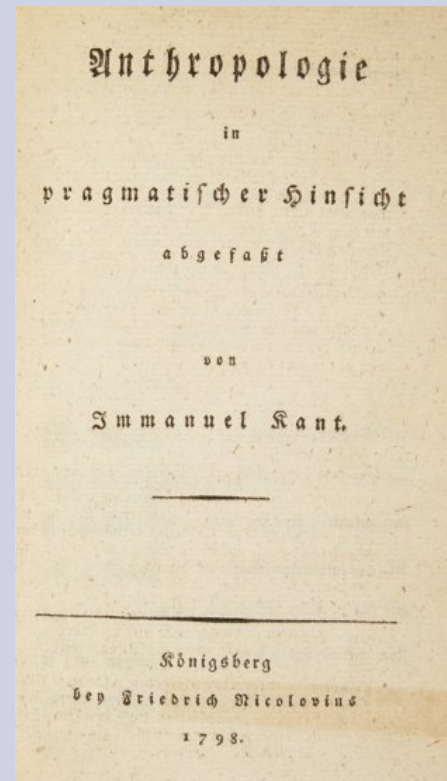
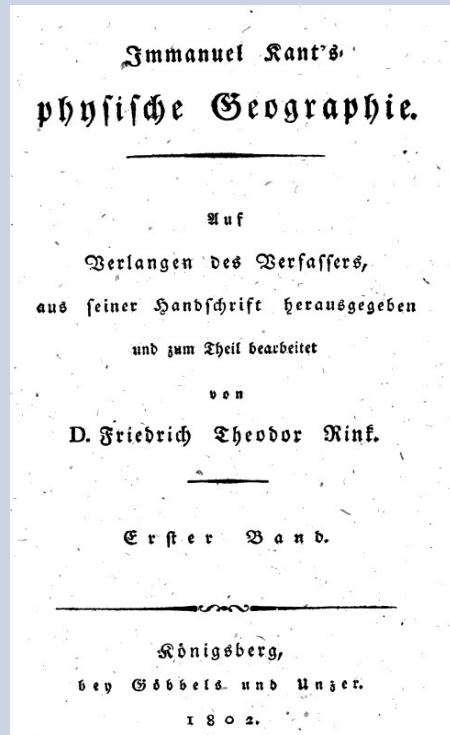
“The white race” ‘contains all incentives and talents in itself’ and ‘Whenever any revolutions have occurred, they have always been brought about by the whites’

3. A moral predisposition whose telos is morality [*Moralität*]

Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View and Lectures on Pedagogy, in *Anthropology, History, and Education*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 418-419 and 444.

Menschenkunde, in *Lectures on Anthropology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 320–21.

Article Example: Research and Writing



Article Example: Research and Writing

From 0 to published paper:

Fall 2016: First reading of Kant's three essays on the concept of race, his practical philosophy and historical philosophy contemporary essays on his concept of race (Eze, Hill and Boxill, Kleingeld, Bernasconi, Spivak).

Spring 2017: First presentation of a paper on the systematic place of the essays on race among Kant's writings.

Fall 2017: First draft of a Ph.D. chapter on the Kant's concept of universal history and the function of race therein. Mostly expository material.

2020: First reading of David Lloyd's *Under Representation: The Racial Regime of Aesthetics* (2018) which discusses Frantz Fanon's work on education and assimilation. Realisation that no one had considered how Kant's writings on pedagogy and education might connect the works on race and Kant's natural historical conception of the human species to the moral conception of the human species. Read Kant's writings on pedagogy and rewrite chapter to develop this line of argumentation.

Winter 2021: Refinement of argument centred on the concept of *assimilation*: through that, we can eschew the false choice between seeing Kant as either an inconsistent egalitarian or a consistent inegalitarian. Present new paper at conference.

Spring 2022: Submission to *Radical Philosophy*, accepted conditional upon revisions.

Fall 2022: Publication.



Questions?



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