An Intersectional Decolonial Feminist Critique of Kant

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THESIS

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DEDICATION

Para Abu, Abi, Hermana, Kike, Mamey, y Papo. Gracias por sentirme, oirme, y entenderme como filosofa y por alimentar las mejores partes de mi alma. Para Maria Lugones. Gracias por afilarme los dientes; for calling me back to my wild tongues.

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SUMMARY

In this dissertation, I put forth a critique of Kant's account of womanhood to show the morally significant exclusions and erasures of non-white women in his moral theory. In Chapter 1, I argue that we need new methodological approaches to tackle the issues of racism and sexism in Kant. Following Dilek Huseyinzadegan, I lay out my methodology of constructive complicity which entails taking *all* of Kant's works as relevant to our scholarship and our lives, placing Kant in the dark side of the Enlightenment, borrowing tools from US based Black feminists and Decolonial feminists, and grounding my orientation towards Kant in these traditions (their commitments and values). In Chapter 2, I review some of the literature on Kant's racism, sexism, and heterosexism. I show that the pervasive lack of intersectional analyses and the prioritization of Kant's ideal theory over his non-ideal theory has prevented us from seeing the depth and complexity of racist and sexist exclusions in Kant's moral theory. In Chapter 3, I ask bell hooks' question "Which women?" and trace the metalanguage of race (Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham) in Kant's discussion of womanhood and civilization. I argue that Kant's account of womanhood is implicitly white and that it renders non-white women (and their kin) incapable of participating in moral development. Lastly, I argue that we need Kant's racist-sexist anthropological account to determine whom the Categorical Imperative's Formula of Humanity applies to, showing that the former cannot be neatly excised from the latter. In Chapter 4, I argue that the mainstream approach to teaching Kant's moral theory results in epistemic harms whereby minoritized students are asked to disembody and abandon their racialized, gendered, and sexualized positionalities and see themselves as unproblematically included in Kant's moral theory. I suggest that we need to teach Kant in radically different ways to reduce or avoid these harms, and I offer Maria Lugones' decolonial feminist account of 'world'-travel as a promising approach

CHAPTER 1: THESIS DESIGN (METHODOLOGY)

"By now, it should be clear that at least those of us who research and/or teach Kant have a burden to understand and reckon with the legacies of his raciology"

--Huaping Lu-Adler

13. **Introduction**

This dissertation is my answer to the call made by numerous academics and intellectual activists to confront and grapple with the racism, sexism, and other systems of oppression and domination that shape academia and our societies. I aim to show that Kant's moral theory is marked by systemic erasures and exclusions especially of non-white women that have been historically obscured and ignored. I am interested in tracking these erasures not just for the sake of achieving an accurate interpretation of Kant's theory. By tracking these erasures through an intersectional framework of analysis, I want to show that specific aspects of the dominant culture and mainstream practices in academic philosophy have led Kant scholars to ignore and reproduce the erasure of non-white women. These aspects include our use of single-axis forms of analysis, our tendency to privilege abstraction and pay insufficient attention to gender, race, sexuality, coloniality and the historical context of knowledge production, our practice of marginalizing women of color feminist theorists and their contributions to philosophy, and our tendency to ignore the embodied experiences of our minoritized students and the harms they are submitted to in our classrooms. I also want to shed light on the ways in which gender, race, and sexuality are co-constructed in Kant in ways that produce and reify colonial logics in order to trace how our own racist, sexist, and heterosexist ideologies and the systems they shape and are shaped by are constructed in similar ways. As others have shown, Kant's theory of race was widely influential and shaped racist ideologies that

are prevalent today.[1] Because Kant's theory of race (as well as his moral theory) was immensely influential on our own racist ideologies and systems, it is important to understand how his ideas about race were intrinsically tied to his ideas about gender, sexuality, civilization, and morality. I also hope to shed light on the harms that we perpetuate when we teach Kant's moral theory in the standard ways by ignoring, dismissing, or understating the aforementioned erasures, exclusion, and colonial logics. Lastly, I suggest that we should adopt decolonial feminist practices such as 'world'-travel to teach Kant's moral theory in ways that address, reduce, and ameliorate the harms that result from our current standard practices.

By taking a self-consciously intersectional approach to Kant, I aim to show that race, gender, and sexuality are co-constructed in Kant's moral theory in ways that erase and exclude non-white women (and their kin) from the moral community and the future of civilized/moral humanity. My approach is intersectional in that it aims to shed light on the interlocking of gender, race, and sexuality (capturing what single axis or mono-categorial analyses of Kant's views of race and gender have distorted, obscured, or ignored). I hypothesize that race, gender, and sexuality are mutually constituted, intermeshed, intrinsically interconnected and cannot be properly understood and analyzed in isolation. By attending to the co-construction of race, gender, and sexuality, I show the coloniality of gender as it is expressed in Kant and reproduced by mainstream and even critical Kant scholarship.

14. **My Method: Constructive Complicity**

Most scholarship on Kant's moral and political theories focuses on his views about cosmopolitanism, universalism, egalitarianism, and other ideas that seem to support anti-oppression, anti-racism, anti-sexism, and other social justice causes. However, these views, and their supposed

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[1] See Park Bernasconi 2001, Park 2013, Huseyinzadegan 2018, Lu-Adler 2023 for important discussions on the influence Kant's racist views have had on racist ideologies and practices prevalent today.

support of social equality and justice, are at odds with problematic racist, sexist, Eurocentric, Orientalist, and colonial views that Kant expresses. Kant's problematic views have mostly been dismissed as marginal or as mistakes in his theory that can be resolved through internal critique. Dilek Huseyinzadegan examines some of the approaches that feminist Kantians have taken to deal with Kant's problematic views and introduces a new methodology that better avoids the risks and perils that plague other approaches.

Huseyinzadegan (2018) describes constructive complicity as "a methodology that establishes the continued relevance of *all* of Kant's claims for our present" (p. 2 my emphasis). According to Huseyinzadegan, by taking on Kant's problematic claims as relevant for our present, we will do better philosophy and construct theories that are less likely to reproduce the problems in his theory. She observes that, as feminist philosophers, we hope that our work does not reproduce the structural problems (such as racism, sexism, and colonialism) that are exemplified by Kant's works. But, she argues, we cannot realistically hope to avoid reproducing these problems unless we "are vigilant about incorporating the full picture of Kant's and Kantian philosophy into our feminist appropriations" (p. 1). This, she suggests, requires that we change our approach to Kant's philosophy.

Setting the stage for her proposed methodology, Huseyinzadegan identifies two dominant approaches taken by Kantian feminists in appropriating Kant's theory for feminist purposes. The first approach is to salvage components of Kant's theory that can be used for feminist purposes and discard the problematic (racist, sexist, Eurocentric, etc.) parts that are at odds with feminist goals and values. The second approach is to read Kant against himself and reject his problematic views as un-Kantian, mistakes that are incompatible with his broader philosophy. Huseyinzadegan argue that in rushing to formulate a better Kantianism, these approaches risk reenacting Kant's problematic views because they are too quick to assume or conclude that these views can be neatly cut out of

Kant's core theory, leaving the feminist friendly views untouched. Furthermore, the theorists who read Kant against himself and deem the problematic views un-Kantian risk misrepresenting Kantian philosophy while ignoring its role in disseminating problematic ideologies and contributing to the contemporary social problems in academia and society at large (p. 3).

These approaches gloss over Kant's problematic views in order to get to the "real philosophical work" of constructing Kantian theories and arguments based on his seemingly unproblematic and progressive views. In doing so, they foreclose the possibility of examining how his problematic views "may spill over to our present" (p. 10). When the scholarly goal is to formulate a better Kantian theory, we focus on the topics Kant took as philosophically important while ignoring urgent (and philosophical!) questions that might shed light on how Kant's problematic views have shaped our world. For example, while focusing on Kant's views on objectification, we fail to ask how Kant's Orientalism shaped our very white and Eurocentric philosophical canon (Park, 2013).

Furthermore, some of these approaches exhibit what Freeland (2000) calls an "ideological position regarding the canon" (Huseyinzadegan, 2018, p. 10).[2] When we say that anything useful for feminist purposes is Kantian and that every objectionable view is un-Kantian, we illegitimately reify the image of Kant as a philosophical hero who is unproblematically and *uniquely* deserving of his powerful status (and the space he takes up) in the philosophical canon. When we do this, we excuse and ignore the problematic aspects of canonical philosophies while shaping our theorizing according to their standards, looking to them for "justification and legitimacy" (p. 10). This uncritical glorification of canonical figures preserves the immense influence that a select group of thinkers, most of whom are white, male Europeans, and their philosophies have. We also unthinkingly accept

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[2] See also Dilek Huseyinzadegan and Jordan Pascoe 2021.

or minimize the gravity of their potentially harmful (e.g., Eurocentric) ideas, methods, etc. as quintessentially philosophical and unquestionably valuable, while crowding out other marginalized voices, methods, perspectives, and ways of doing philosophy.

In addition to the problems just mentioned, another harmful effect of our ideological position towards the canon is that it leads us to ignore, marginalize, and refuse the work of other theorists who do not enjoy the same canonical status as Kant. Jordan Pascoe and Dilek Huseyinzadegan describe this phenomenon, saying that it is "somewhat strange that scholarship on Kant runs on two parallel but separate tracks when it comes to inquiries about the gender and the race of the Enlightenment while in fact feminist political theorizing has ample resources to question the universality of Kant's ideal of humanity from Black, intersectional, and decolonial perspectives" (Huseyinzadegan & Pascoe, 2022, p. 34). They argue that Kantian Feminism as well as Kant Studies have persistently refused resources provided by scholars from these traditions. Kantian feminists choose to focus on figures working in the (Western) Enlightenment traditions, assuming that its concepts, philosophies, and texts are preconditions "for the discourse of women's liberation, and for the political gains that women have won" (May-Schott, 1997, pp. 320-321). They do so while ignoring the various ways in which these tools have been used (often by white feminist and westernized feminists in the Global North) to justify and reinforce the oppression and imperial domination of women of color/women of the Global South and their people. This results in further marginalization of scholars whose work we should be engaging with and listening to if we want to do better scholarship and ameliorate the harms perpetuated when we keep our spaces, canons, discourses, classrooms, and scholarship, etc. white, masculinist, and European/Eurocentric.

In order to avoid these problems, Huseyinzadegan (2018) argues, we should take a comprehensive approach that emphasizes the continuity between Kant and us. She thus offers the methodology of constructive complicity that can help us reduce these problems if not avoid them all

together. Rather than focusing on the parts of Kant that are not obviously problematic, constructive complicity requires us to highlight the problematic parts and take them seriously. Instead of dismissing Kant's objectionable views as marginal, we should treat them as central elements of the philosophy we inherit from Kant. Building on post-colonial theorist Gayatri Spivak's work, Huseyinzadegan argues that we are in a better position to analyze and critique our political and philosophical problems today "if we presume a line of continuity between [Kant's] problematic claims and our present…" (p. 2). This is what it means to recognize Kant's problems as our inheritance, as our problems, problems *for us*.

According to Huseyinzadegan, we should neither excuse Kant, ignore his problematic views, or cancel him as irrelevant to us because he is racist, sexist, and imperialist. If we cancel Kant, we are distancing ourselves from him, erroneously assuming and signaling that we exhibit none of his problematic attitudes and beliefs, that we have left these problems in the past, that our worlds, tools, and houses don't bare "his" problems' marks; that we can easily rid ourselves of these problems by discarding and condemning them (Lu-Adler, 2023, p. 321). We thereby miss the opportunity to understand and address the ways in which those very problems show up in our works and in our lives. Huseyinzadegan gives us a third option: we should both highlight Kant's problems and use his philosophy as a mirror to better understand how we inherit, enact, and reproduce them.

Instead of dismissing Kant's problems as marginal claims, limitations of the man himself (not endemic to his theory as a whole), a methodology of constructive complicity requires us to, first, admit that we, as Kant scholars, are complicit in "the problems Kant's text exemplifies" (Huseyinzadegan, 2018, p. 3). Second, constructive complicity requires that we highlight these problems and inherit them as our own. In other words, we need to acknowledge that as Kant scholars in a profession and society structured by the problems that Kant's texts exemplify, we have a hand in enacting, reproducing, and disseminating (often by ignoring) these problems. Because we

are complicit with Kant's problems, we must acknowledge that they are our own and center them as urgently in need of addressing and ameliorating through our scholarship, teaching, etc.

Consider, for example, Kant's claim that "Egyptians were merely grasping" at mathematic concepts until the Greeks "turned it into a systematic science" (Huseyinzadegan, 2018, p. 13). In his book, Peter Park (2013) follows this claim through historical analysis to show that Kant's Eurocentric definition and history of philosophy played a central role in defining what philosophy is and who counts as a philosopher. Park shows that Kant's successors enacted his Eurocentric view of "genuine" philosophy as systematic by including only systematic and scientific (Western) philosophy in textbooks and in the (Western) philosophical canon. In mainstream academic philosophy, we still operate under this biased definition of philosophy, and our privileged position as Kant scholars is a direct consequence of Kant's and Kantians' Eurocentric ideas, their dissemination and enactment. Because of this history, our way of doing philosophy is more readily taken up, and our work on a powerful canonical figure is more likely to be published and centered in academic spaces.

Furthermore, having inherited, accepted, and internalized a very specific and Eurocentric set of ideas about what philosophy is and who counts as a philosopher, we ourselves are likely to ignore or dismiss other ways of doing philosophy, and other philosophers, as unphilosophical. By ignoring our complicity with Kant's problems, we uncritically accept as natural his definition of philosophy, the status of (Western) canonical figures, and the privileges it grants some of us at the expense of others. Because we ignore these conditions as (in part) the effects of Kant's problems, we fail to acknowledge them as problems we inherit, enact, and reproduce. We reproduce these problems when we don't question the role Kant's Eurocentrism plays in shaping our discipline, ignoring who and what ways of thinking it erases and marginalizes in academic philosophy spaces and discourses. Lastly, when we ignore these problems in the classroom, we are likely to enact and perpetuate the

notion that some of our students, their ways of thinking, and their own philosophical traditions are inferior and unphilosophical.

Approaching Kant through the methodology of constructive complicity would require us to first recognize that we do not occupy a neutral position with regards to Kant's Eurocentrism: we are complicit in it because it structures our realities, and we reproduce it when we uncritically play by the rules of the Kantian tradition that have become unquestioned norms in (some of) our worlds. Second, it would require us to highlight these problems by centering them in our discussions, research, and teaching, and to tackle this problem as our problem. Tackling this problem as our own means acknowledging our own Eurocentrism, how it shapes our positions, attitudes, beliefs, and actions, and recognizing that we have obligations to diagnose and combat it.

By taking on all of Kant (the good, the bad, and the ugly), we can linger on the problematic parts of his theory and thereby "recognize the legacy" of his racism, sexism, Eurocentrism and other problematic views "in our lives" (Huseyinzadegan, 2018, p. 3). This methodology offers "a more honest interpretation of [Kant's] work and of our philosophical-political challenges today" (p. 3). Through this methodology, Kant's problematic views are revealed as tools with which we can combat their various echoes and manifestations in our own lives. But the question of how Kantian tools can be used for feminist purposes without reproducing Kantian problems remains. Huseyinzadegan answers this question by formulating it in terms of Audre Lorde's now famous claim that the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.

In her speech "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House" Lorde argues that we cannot hope to dismantle the various systems of oppression that shape our lives unless we "take a good look at ourselves and at the ways in which we consciously and unconsciously might have inherited the patterns and tools of white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy" (p. 11). This insight is important for Huseyinzadegan's purposes because Kant's tools are the master's tools in

that his works are considered master texts in philosophy: "they are master texts in the sense of inaugurating and legitimizing a certain way of doing philosophy, they designate certain social identities as masters, and they are currently revered and reproduced in our field with more frequency than others" (p. 11). As master texts, they shape the house we live in, our minds, and our ways of thinking.

Though Huseyinzadegan (2018) argues that we might be able to use some Kantian tools to dismantle oppressive systems, she argues that they are limited and must be used with caution. She therefore modifies Lorde's claim, arguing that the master's tools alone(!) will never dismantle the master's house (p. 11).[3] Following Lorde's insight, she argues that we cannot hope to properly diagnose our house's problems without first using other tools to critique and understand how the master's tools are systemically interconnected, and how they shape our house, lives, and minds. Thus, Huseyinzadegan argues that we "first need to acknowledge the problems of the entire house, analyze how these tools may have shaped our world and worldview, and critique the tools as well as the house" (p. 12). So, approaching Kant through a constructive complicity methodology requires that we acknowledge and account for his problematic views and the role they play in his broader system, how these views have shaped our world and minds, and critically examine what we are doing when we are reproducing Kantian arguments and theories. We must determine if our appropriations foreclose the possibility of thinking seriously about the problems we find in Kant, or if they enable

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[3] In her essay "Philosophy and Philosophical Practice: Eurocentrism as an Epistemology of Ignorance," Linda Matín Alcoff (2017) writes "The transcendental delusion, then, was born out of a very specific European experience that it then had no tools to analyze, reflect upon, or correct" (p. 399). She helpfully points out that the very tools used by Eurocentric knowledge production help to obscure the ways in which European philosophies were shaped by the specificities of the dominant European culture and the historical and geographical context from which European philosophers theorized. Because the tools in question emphasize and prioritize abstraction and universality, they cannot reveal or help us analyze their false claims to universality and the erasures and exclusions that these claims depend on. Intellectual abstraction from the particular is presented as the right tool for philosophical thinking, and this tool is by definition incapable of revealing the delusion. The tool of abstraction can never attend to the particulars in ways that would reveal Eurocentric exercises in abstraction as always already shaped by the particular and reveal such moves as steeped in and reproducing delusions.

us to "evade responsibility for the problems of the master's house in which we live" (p. 17). In order to avoid the various problems discussed above, Huseyinzadegan suggests that "each time we write on Kant we clarify our standpoint and methodology without committing to the ideology that Kantianism will be immediately good" (p. 20). I now turn to this task by detailing how I adopt a methodology of constructive complicity in my project.

First, I take Kant's racism, sexism, and colonial views as deserving of careful attention and suspicion—as powerful Kantian tools the import and significance of which must be critically investigated in the context of Kant's larger system. Second, instead of relying on the master's tools, e.g. privileging abstraction, I borrow oppositional tools from US based Black feminist and decolonial feminist traditions (attending to the intersections of race, gender and sexuality, tracking the erasure of non-white women at these intersections, and uncovering the metalanguage of race in Kant's texts). Because these tools were forged specifically for exposing and dismantling oppressive systems of racism, sexism, heteronormativity, and colonialism, they are particularly well suited for the task at hand: exposing problems in the master's tools and their effects on our minds, world, and worldview for the purposes of dismantling the master's house. The Kantian tool I criticize and reject is the implicitly white construction of womanhood. I show that Kantian feminists often deploy this tool without challenging its racist construction. In refusing tools offered by women of color feminists, they fail to recognize the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality as likely sites of ungendering, erasure, and exclusion (Huseyinzadegan & Pascoe 2023, p. 9). My analysis traces a direct line between Kant's racialized (white) conception of gender and our own, as well as our inability to recognize the whiteness that implicitly shapes such conception.

Third, having established a need for new tools, I analyze Kant's writings on gender by using Black feminist tools. I suspiciously read for racist erasures and exclusions where our Kantian tools revealed only casual (even benign or flattering), shallow (not deep) and race-neutral sexism. Tracing

these racist exclusions, I reveal the co-construction of race and gender in Kant. Fourth, oriented by the powerful coalitions between US Black feminist and decolonial feminist lineages, I identify the co-construction of race, gender, and sexuality as a colonial imposition–the coloniality of gender. By acknowledging Kant's problems as our own, I challenge how our and our field's (commitments to) whiteness, Eurocentric methods and epistemologies, and to theorizing a "better Kant" (or rescuing canonical figures in general) leads us to reproduce the erasure of non-white women and ignore their race-based exclusion from normative gender.

Lastly, I take constructive complicity even further by arguing that we reproduce Kant's problems in the classroom when we teach a whitewashed Kant, ignoring or underplaying his dehumanizing, Eurocentric, heteronormative, and racist views of people of color that depict them as incapable or ill fit for moral development and progress. I argue that in teaching this version of Kant, we reproduce colonial power and epistemic harms while uncritically reproducing the problematic ideologies and views that plague Kant's moral theory. But far from suggesting that we should cancel Kant, stop teaching and reading his work, I argue that we should continue to teach Kant because his problems are our own. However, we must change the story we tell about Kant and Kantianism, being radically honest about the good, the bad, and the ugly, so as not to disseminate lies that obscure the serious problems in Kant, Kantianism, philosophy, and society at large. To this end, I suggest that we teach Kant through pedagogical methods grounded in anti-oppression movements. This approach will support students in grappling with Kant's problems instead of glossing over them and accepting his worldview without a critical awareness of the problems they are ignoring or inheriting (or both), and in doing so, enabling, or amplifying their harmful machinations.

As we saw above, Huseyinzadegan argues that constructive complicity requires us to use other (non-Kantian) tools when engaging with Kant's theory. I want to add that in order for the methodology of constructive complicity to do the work we want it to do, we must choose and use

our "other tools" wisely. I submit that in order to choose and use these tools wisely we must 1) identify the lines directly connecting Kant's problems to ours that are relevant to our conditions and projects, 2) choose tools that help us diagnose these problems and motivate our choices about how to proceed, while exposing the limits of our Kantian tools, and 3) we must honor and inherit the traditions from which we borrow tools.[45] Our choice of "other tools" must be determined by the specific lines of complicity and inheritance between us and Kant that we want to shed light on, otherwise the tools we choose might be as inadequate for the task at hand as Kant's own. Below I show how "putting Kant in his place" helps us track specific lines of complicity and problems that deserve our critical attention, and explain how this exercise informed my choice of "other tools." Furthermore, to avoid using these "other tools" in appropriative, exploitative, and otherwise misguided ways, I contextualize them in their specific traditions and highlight the core themes from these traditions that guide my project. Lastly, I identify and describe the specific tools I borrow and use.

3. Putting Kant in His Place

I identify the lines that connect us to Kant which I track through my project by putting Kant in his place, a practiced described by philosophers Jordan Pascoe and Dilek Huseyinzadegan (Huseyinzadegan & Pascoe, 2021). Putting Kant in his place requires us to engage with his theory by first locating him in Western Europe during the Enlightenment period. But more importantly, it

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[4] See Bowman and Rebodella-Gómez (2020) for excellent discussions of the marginalization of knowledges that do not try to meet Enlightenment standards and what happens when different practitioners adopt these knowledges. They write, "…often, knowledge that does not (try to) meet Enlightenment norms is ignored or treated with contempt when it comes from those who have a historical or cultural claim to it, though academics without an apparent personal stake can sometimes be lauded for "rescuing" marginalized knowledges. When this kind of knowledge is addressed in the academy it tends to be excavated, decontextualized, and appropriated into Enlightenment contexts" (pp. 32-33).

[5] See Kristie Dotson (2013) for an account of what it means to inherit Black women's theoretical productions in the anti-black context of academic philosophy. I follow Dotson in thinking carefully about the appropriate ways to engage with marginalized and historically erased theoretical productions and philosophies created by women of color, especially when doing so in white dominated spaces like academic philosophy. The following discussions include my attempts to spell out how we might inherit Black and decolonial feminist of color theories in ways that fight against various epistemic injustices.

requires us to locate Kant in what decolonial theorists have named "the dark side of the Enlightenment."

The dark side of the Enlightenment refers to the violence of colonial expansion and civilizing missions that took place during this time, violence that is often ignored and obscured in dominant imaginaries of history. The dominant Western narrative depicts the Enlightenment as the age of reason during which "dogma, tradition, and authority, were replaced "with reason, debate and institutions of truth seeking" (Pinker, 2018). However, this narrative obscures the ways in which the Enlightenment and Enlightenment period knowledge production were directly connected to colonization and the mission to civilize or impose "civilized" ways of being on non-white, non-European people. Postcolonial and decolonial feminists argue that coloniality is the underbelly or dark side of the Enlightenment and modernity and we must acknowledge the two as happening hand in hand.

Locating Kant in the dark side of the Enlightenment involves rejecting narratives that depict the Enlightenment and modernity as synonymous with progress and liberation from parochial and oppressive systems and ways of thinking. While Kant scholars often contextualize Kant's work by attending to the scholarly debates he was engaged in as well as attending to the political and historical context that he found himself in, their contextualizations are often shaped and limited by Eurocentric perspectives. They focus on dominant debates among scholars and historical events depicted from these limited perspectives. This results in ignoring the dark side of the Enlightenment and non-European perspectives on relevant historical and geopolitical events and circumstances. I join decolonial scholars in shedding light on the links between Enlightenment theories such as Kant's that have been celebrated as morally advanced, on the one hand, and the project of colonization and the ensuing coloniality, on the other hand. As such, I locate Kant in the dark side

of the Enlightenment to reveal the connections that have been obscured by dominant academic practices that fail to put Kant in his place.

In locating Kant in the dark side of the Enlightenment, I identify us as connected to him through a history of colonial violence that was buttressed by and produced racist, sexist, heterosexist, Eurocentric and other harmful systems of domination and oppressive ideologies. Instead of thinking of Kant's racism, sexism, and heterosexism as personal mistakes, I see them as connected to the imposition of the colonial difference through which non-white non-European people were conceptualized and treated as less than human. The colonial difference is constructed by the over-representation of the white European man as human, and the dehumanization of non-white non-European people through colonial violence and through racist Eurocentric stereotypes of people of the Global South as savages (Wynter, 2003). Because we inherit the project of Western knowledge production through Kant, the tools that allow us to track the problems we inherit must be critical of and resistant to this project. In other words, we must choose tools that allow us to be epistemically disobedient.

4. Epistemic Disobedience

Putting Kant in his place (in the dark side of the Enlightenment) also requires us to center his role in the Western production of knowledge through zero-point epistemology. When we acknowledge Kant's role in Western knowledge production, we recognize that critically engaging with the direct line of coloniality that links us to him requires that we practice epistemic disobedience.

Argentinian decolonial literary critic Walter Mignolo (2009) argues that in order to advance decolonizing projects and contribute to decolonial knowledges, we have to delink "from the illusion of the zero point epistemology" (p. 160). Borrowing Colombian philosopher Santiago Castro-Gomez's (2021) phrase "hubris of the zero point," Mignolo theorizes zero-point epistemology as the

violent assumption at the core of Western knowledge production that the knowing subject is disembodied, transparent, and "untouched by the geo-political configuration of the world in which people are racially ranked and regions are racially configured" (p. 159). Zero-point epistemology refers to dominant ways of thinking about knowledge production through which euro-centered epistemology and knowledge production hide it's "geo-historical and bio-graphical locations" (p. 160). In hiding the particular subjectivities, positionalities, and locations from which it emerges, Eurocentric knowledge presents itself as universal, as a universally valid view from nowhere. It does so by implicitly depicting the dominant knowledge producers, white, European, cisgender, heterosexual, middle class, able-bodied, etc. men, as the universal subject whose role is to speak for and about the "Others."

By concealing the place, standpoint, and political interests of white European knowers, zero-point epistemology ignores how these subjective conditions and characteristics, which are not shared by other knowers, shape the knowledge produced. By ignoring the particularity of their positions as knowers and the particular interests that inform their knowledge production, dominant knowers conceal the colonial domination that is enacted and justified by Western knowledge and knowledge production. In other words, by advancing and adhering to the ideology of zero-point epistemology, colonial European thinkers created knowledge that justified and enabled the domination, colonization, enslavement, and genocide of non-whites, non-Europeans, and other "non-desirables." By presenting racist, heterosexist, ableist, etc. knowledge as objective, universally valid, scientific and philosophical truth, members of the white-European ruling class established and justified oppressive systems and practices.

Grappling with the consequences that colonial power has on knowledge production, Mignolo argues that to resist the systems of colonial power that shape our worlds, we must delink from the delusion of zero-point epistemology as well as delink from dominant epistemologies and

ways of knowing. He suggests that we can delink by practicing epistemic disobedience. Mignolo, along with other decolonial scholars, argues that the positions of power from which white Europeans were able to create dominant knowledge and impose it on others as universal truth (the illusory zero-point from which racism and white supremacy was made into science) were created by systems of colonial power that animate and sustain the colonial, white supremacist, cis-heteropatriarchal project of domination and oppression. Thus, to combat these systems of colonial power and promote decolonization, we must expose zero-point epistemology as a tool of domination and delink from dominant ways of thinking and producing knowledge. Epistemic disobedience is the practice and methodology through which we disobey the norms, practices, and methods of zero-point epistemology and other dominant ways of producing and validating knowledge.

In order to shed light on the line of colonial violence that connects us to Kant, I choose to delink from dominant zero-point epistemologies by borrowing tools from scholars whose lives have been shaped by this violence and whose work is designed to dismantle colonial systems of oppression. These scholars intentionally and methodically resist the hegemony of Western knowledge production by exposing its false claim to universality, and centering oppositional knowledge and worldviews produced by women of the Global South and other groups subjected to colonial power and rule. As we will see below, these traditions reject the myth of the zero-point (universal objectivity) insisting that their specific subjectivities, standpoints, and positionalities matter (they are philosophically relevant) and shape their theories in important ways.

5. **Philosophical Tradition: What is Black Feminism?**

Before we delve into the specific tools that I borrow from the Black feminist tradition, let me spell out how I'm thinking about the Black feminist tradition, the lineages of this tradition that I see myself as following, and what it means for me to work in coalition with this tradition as a non-

Black woman. These preliminary remarks are important because Black feminist theory (and intersectionality) travel widely in academia, and they are often used in appropriative, reductive, and otherwise distorted ways that do injustice to the tradition and its practitioners. It is common for scholars to misrepresent Black feminist theory as a monolith, use Black feminist tools without giving due attention to the tradition and its history, and use Black feminist theory without giving due credit to the Black women who created it. For this reason, I want to model how academic philosophers can engage with Black feminist theory in ways that honor its heterogeneity, its roots, and the women whose intellectual labor we are indebted to. Scholars like Jennifer Nash have criticized the notion of ownership that underlies critiques of Black feminism's travels, being used for differing purposes by non-Black scholars. In my discussion, I'm not concerned about establishing or defending Black feminist theory as the property of US based Black feminists. However, I do believe it is important to engage with Black feminist theory in ways that avoid harmful practices that co-opt, erase, and decenter Black women and Black feminist legacies.

Black feminist thought is not a monolith. Though there are many ways of thinking about Black feminism, I am most compelled and influenced by Black feminist thinker and sociologist Patricia Hill Collins's conception of Black feminist thought as defined both by its core themes as well as by the standpoint of the group that creates it (Collins, 2020). Collins argues that in defining Black feminist thought, we should avoid the materialist assumption that only certain people (African American women) can produce Black feminist thought, and that being Black and/or female necessarily "generates certain experiences that automatically determine variants of a Black and/or feminist consciousness" (p. 379). But, she says, we must also avoid the idealist position according to which "ideas can be evaluated in isolation from the groups that create them" (p. 380). According to Collins, we must define Black feminist thought without appealing to a fictitious Black feminist consciousness supposedly exemplified by the experiences of *all* those who are Black and/or female,

while also recognizing that the central ideas that make Black feminist thought what it is are fundamentally grounded in the experiences of Black women and their Black feminist consciousness. Our definitions must acknowledge "the special angle of vision that Black women bring to the knowledge production process" and how it shapes Black feminist thought (p. 380).

Collins begins her explanation of Black feminist thought with the following preliminary definition: Black feminist thought is "specialized knowledge created by African-American women which clarifies a standpoint of and for Black women. In other words, Black feminist thought encompasses theoretical interpretations of Black women's reality by those who live it" (p. 387). This conception of Black feminist thought is helpful because it sheds light on the characteristic themes which run through it, explaining that and how these themes are rooted in Black women's common experiences of being Black in societies that devalue and denigrate women of African descent. Afrocentric as well as feminist values and standpoints are two central themes that characterize Black feminist thought.

Collins follows Black feminist sociologist Deborah K. King's definition of feminist consciousness to explain what marks thought as feminist. Collins quotes King, "Any purpose, goals, and activities which seek to enhance the potential of women, to ensure their liberty, afford them equal opportunity, and to permit and encourage their self-determination represent a feminist consciousness…" (King, 1987, p. 2). Collins adds that "[T]o be Black or Afrocentric, such thought must not only reflect a similar concern for the self-determination of African-American people, but must in some way draw upon key elements of an Afrocentric tradition as well" (Collins, 1989, p. 751). I follow Collins in understanding Black feminist theory as theory that is 1) rooted in African-American women's experiences and standpoints, 2) embodies certain justice oriented and liberatory concerns and practical goals regarding women and African-American people more generally, and 3) uses tools from the Afrocentric tradition to achieve its liberatory purposes.

6. Core Themes: Resisting Multiple Oppression

A legacy of struggle and resistance against racism and sexism are important themes that characterizes Black women's standpoint as articulated in the US based tradition of Black feminist theory. Related to the struggle against racism and sexism is the elucidation of how race, gender, and class oppression interlock, or are co-constructed and interact with each other to create multiple oppressions. Black feminist investigations into interlocking systems of oppression and the intersectional nature of identity shed light on how oppression works in general, how white supremacist cis-heterosexist-patriarchy harms multiply oppressed people, and how it oppresses Black women in particular. Black feminist analyses of interlocking systems of oppression and the oppression of people at the intersections of oppressed identities also show how mainstream movements and theories advanced by relatively dominant groups (those who are not multiply oppressed) erase, ignore, and obscure multiple oppression and reify rather than disrupt or abolish oppressive systems. I follow this critical aim of intersectional theorizing by showing that mainstream approaches to Kant whitewash his moral theory by ignoring Kant's exclusions and erasures of non-white women.

7. Core Themes: Black Women's Standpoint & Resisting Eurocentrism

Despite their many differences, African American women inhabit a standpoint that is epistemically privileged. They have an epistemically privileged standpoint because they can see things that people in positions of privilege and power ignore or cannot see. To illustrate this epistemically privileged position, Collins gives the example of a Black woman domestic worker who says that her white middle class clients might think the clothes they wear but do not buy, wash, or iron appear in their closets as if by magic. In this example, the racially and socioeconomically privileged white people are ignorant of what the Black woman domestic worker knows: how things really happen; what it takes for their lives to run the way they do. The Black feminist tradition affirms the special

insights that Black women are uniquely situated to understand and it centers these insights as valid knowledge that must be articulated and used to resist domination.

Furthermore, Black feminist thought pays close attention to the ways in which systems of oppression obstruct Black women from expressing their "collective, self-defined Black feminist consciousness." Obstructions to Black women's collective power and consciousness result from the dominant groups' interest in repressing oppressed people's perspectives and thereby enforcing dominant narratives and ideologies that obscure systemic oppression and perpetuate it. Thus, important goals of the Black feminist tradition are to speak truth to power, express and elucidate African American women's collective consciousness, reject "the standpoint of the more dominant group," (Collins 1990) and dismantle the systems that harm multiply oppressed peoples. Articulating and developing Black feminist thought is a key component of fighting racist sexism and other oppressive systems. The articulation of the different strands of Black feminist thought crucially involves resisting Eurocentric norms and narratives that devalue and denigrate all things African while drawing on Afrocentric traditions to create counternarratives, liberatory frameworks, methods, epistemologies, and more.

While centering back women's experiences to fight oppression, Black feminist thought affirms a necessary connection between theory and action: in articulating Black women's standpoint Black feminists resist dominant oppressive narratives (theory) and seek to transform the material conditions of oppression (action). Collins describes the Black feminist approach of embracing a connection between thought and action as a both/and approach, and she lifts up the lives and work of Black women activists and scholars who merged "intellectual work with activism" (Collins, 1990). In this way, Black feminists have developed their own epistemologies and theories of knowledge which call into question Eurocentric notions of what counts as knowledge, who counts as a legitimate knowledge producer, and who and what academic knowledge and theory are for. After

exploring the core themes that characterize Black feminist thought, Collins formulates the following

expanded definition:

> "…Black feminist thought consists of theories or specialized thought produced by African-American women intellectuals designed to express a Black women's standpoint. The dimensions of this standpoint include the presence of characteristic core themes, the diversity of Black women's experiences in encountering these core themes, the varying expressions of Black women's Afrocentric feminist consciousness regarding the core themes and their experiences with them, and the interdependence of Black women's experiences, consciousness, and actions   Black feminist thought is of African-American women in that it taps the multiple relationships among Black women needed to produce a self-defined Black women's standpoint. Black feminist thought is for Black women in that it empowers Black women for political activism" (Collins, 1990).

8.   Latina Decolonial Feminism in Coalition with US based Black Feminism

If Black women's standpoint is central to Black feminist theorizing, can I as a non-Black,

white passing Latina engage in Black feminist thought and work as part of the Black feminist

tradition? Different Black feminist scholars will give different and conflicting answers to this

question. For example, according to Black feminist scholar Jennifer Nash, I could understand myself

as a Black feminist scholar producing Black feminist thought. In her book *Black Feminism Reimagined*

Beyond Intersectionality, Nash (2019) advocates for an expansive conception of Black feminism

according to which Black feminism welcomes "anyone with an investment in Black women's

humanity, intellectual labor, and political visionary work, anyone theorizing Black genders and

sexualities in complex and nuanced ways" (p. 5). According to her politically motivated conception

of Black feminism, Black men and non-women, white people or non-Black people of color can be

Black feminist scholars, who can speak "on and for Black feminist theory, and as Black feminist

theorists, even as they make their claims from different identity locations" (p. 5). I find Nash's

expansive conception of Black feminism very compelling, particularly because of the political goals

that motivate it. She explains that an expansive conception of Black feminism shifts its content from

"a description of bodies to modes of intellectual production" (p. 5). This shift, she argues, allows us

to capture the intellectual tradition's expansive reach which always defies attempts to limit it by

restricting it to "embodied performances" (p. 5). Moreover, such a definition also resists the forces that trap Black feminists and Black women academics by forcing them to perform and embody their intellectual investments in ways prescribed by a white dominated academe.

Though I find Nash's arguments very compelling, I think Patricia Hill Collins' conception of coalition between Black feminists and scholars who are not Black women but who engage with Black feminist theory best describes how I see my work. Collins is also committed to an expansive conception of Black feminism, rejecting restrictive definitions that reduce Black feminism to biological or material facts about bodies. However, unlike Nash, she does not suggest that scholars who are not Black women can be Black feminist scholars. Instead, she argues that members of other groups can make contributions to Black feminist thought by grounding their scholarships, teaching, analyses, and activism in Black women's self-defined standpoints. In her discussion of the role that scholars who are not Black women play in Black feminist theorizing, she emphasizes the importance of forming coalitions between Black feminists, on the one hand, and white and non-Black people of color, on the other hand. In emphasizing coalitional work, Collins affirms the importance of self-definition: Black feminist thought and theory must be defined by the experiences of Black women. Members of other groups can contribute to Black feminist theorizing by being in coalition with Black feminist scholars, but Black women who develop a Black feminist consciousness from their lived experiences and standpoint occupy a central and essential role in producing and defining Black feminist thought and theory.

Following Collins in this project, I see myself not as a Black feminist scholar but as a non-black Latina feminist scholar working in coalition with Black feminists and their work. US based Black feminist thought (and intersectionality specifically) has been greatly influential in helping Latina feminists understand our own gender oppression and develop our own theories of oppression and resistance. Black feminist theory has inspired Latina feminists like María Lugones

and helped them achieve novel insights regarding the colonial systems of oppression that are enacted through the categories of race and gender. To my mind, Lugones' engagement with Black feminist thought is a prime example of the deep coalitional work which she and Collins describe as an integral part of feminist scholarship and activism. Following Lugones example, I see my work as occupying the fertile ground of coalitional collaboration and dialogue between U.S. based Black feminists and Latina decolonial feminists.

As I mentioned before, I see my work as bringing US based Black feminist theory and decolonial feminist theory together to expose the colonial co-construction of gender, race, and sexuality that create systemic erasures and exclusions that we inherit through Kant's theory. Decolonial feminism is an emerging concept and framework that was spearheaded by philosopher MaríaLugones. Lugones is part of the decolonial tradition that challenges the Western constructions and depictions of the "Other," following postcolonial studies. Decolonial feminist critiques spell out and condemn the different ways in which knowledge produced by the West and through Eurocentric/Western frameworks shapes and is shaped by what decolonial theorist Anibal Quijano called the coloniality of power. The coloniality of power refers to "…the structures of power, control, and hegemony that have emerged during the modernist era, the era of colonialism, which stretches from the conquest of the Americas to the present" (Martinot, n.d.).[6] Through decolonial feminist critiques, decolonial feminisms aim to show that knowledge produced in and by the West constructs, justifies, and normalizes structures and systems of power that oppress colonized people and those with non-dominant identities and positionalities. Grounded in decolonial theory and the Global South women's lived experiences, decolonial feminisms challenge masculinist, Western,

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[6] https://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~marto/coloniality.htm#:~:text=The%20Coloniality%20of%20Power&text=The%20%22coloniality%20of%20power%22%20is,the%20Americas%20to%20the%20present.

bourgeois frameworks, epistemologies, and ways of seeing that are dominant in academia and in our everyday lives.

Decolonial feminist critiques shed light on the epistemic violence at the heart of Western knowledge production. Epistemic violence is harm that has to do with knowledge and knowing. As postcolonial scholar Gayatri Spivak conceives of it, epistemic violence refers to the harms through which marginalized groups are silenced. In privileging Western epistemic practices (ways of knowing), dominant groups dismiss the knowledge and ways of knowing of the oppressed, erase them and their worldviews, and present European/Western knowledge as objective and universal truth. Though decolonial and Black feminist theorizing both shed light on epistemic violence done to marginalized groups, decolonial feminist critiques emphasize that such violence is an integral part of colonization and the coloniality of power, which outlives colonization and is at play in systemic oppression to this day.

9. Framework: Intersectionality

The central tool I borrow from the US based Black feminist tradition in the framework of intersectionality. As I mentioned before, much of the work done on issues of race and gender suffer from what Patricia Hill Collins calls "monocategorical" approaches. In her essay "Toward a New Vision: Race, Class and Gender as Categories of Analysis and Connection" Hill Collins (1993) describes the monocategorical approach as a form of analysis that operates according to a single category whether it be race, gender, class, etc. but ignores the ways in which these and other social categories overlap, intersect, and co-construct each other. Intersectional approaches seek to remediate monocategorical approaches by departing from the insight that all identity is intersectional, systems of oppression that harm people based on their identity are interlocking, and that social categories cannot be conceptually pulled apart without generating epistemic and other kinds of violence and obfuscations.

Feminist theorist Jasbir Puar (2012) describes "intersectionality" as a term coined by Black feminist legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw amidst emerging "activist and theoretical discourse about "difference" developed over several decades by Black feminists in the United States such as Audre Lorde, bell hooks, Angela Davis, and The Combahee River Collective" (p. 51). The term intersectionality was coined by Crenshaw to show that the categories of gender and race were conceived of as "irreconcilable binary options" in US law and to show the devastating consequences that this has for Black women who are victimized by sexual violence and discrimination in the workplace (p. 52). Though Crenshaw coined the term itself, intersectionality as an approach and way of thinking about identity and systemic injustice has been used in various ways by different Black feminist theorists before Crenshaw.

My use of intersectionality as an analytic and framework of analysis is informed by various intersectional approaches to theorizing oppression employed by Black feminists before and after Crenshaw's coinage of the term. These approaches expand the meaning of intersectionality beyond Crenshaw's intended use in critical legal analysis. I see intersectionality as grounded in Black women's standpoint and experiences at the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, class, and other social categories that shape their oppression. Though the particular strand of intersectional approaches I draw from are grounded in US Black women's standpoint, these approaches can and should be used to explore and express other standpoints and theorize other groups' identities and oppressions.

I use intersectionality as an analytic framework that reveals how the identity categories of race and gender are co-constructed and how multiply oppressed people's identities are erased or rendered illegible by ideological systems that conceal the intersectional nature of identity. I am particularly interested in revealing how people who are multiply oppressed are erased by theories and ideologies that ignore the intersectional nature of all identities and fail to register whiteness as a race.

These theories erase multiply oppressed people like non-white women by naturalizing whiteness as racially neutral (or unwittingly reifying the naturalization/neutralization of whiteness), building neutral whiteness into other categories such as feminine gender, and othering non-white racialized people, depicting them as ungendered or differently gendered, as racialized variations of the neutral/natural and properly gendered white body. In using intersectionality to shed light on the erasure of non-white women in Kant's theory and in feminist scholarship on Kant, I think of intersectional critique in similar ways as Crenshaw by tracing the harmful effects of frameworks that conceive of race and gender as "irreconcilable binary options."

I also follow bell hooks' implicit use of intersectionality as a framework by showing that the term woman is presented as race neutral in Kant when in fact it refers to women who are raced as white. Whereas the term woman, as used by Kant, is often assumed to pick out a racially inclusive gender category I show that it in fact picks out a racialized gender category that has whiteness as neutrality baked into it, thereby excluding and erasing non-white women.

I take Patricia Hill Collins' approach of linking the intersectional nature of identity to the various interlocking systems of oppression that shape our socio-political realities. For me, as for Hill Collins, intersectional analysis goes beyond the level of identity to reveal and critique what she calls the matrix of domination: the interlocking systems of oppression (patriarchy, systemic racism, coloniality, heteronormativity, etc.) that construct, enforce, and operate according to identity categories to systemically harm people. This way of thinking about interlocking systems is particularly helpful in showing that Kant's patriarchal framework not only justifies the subordination of white women but also justifies the systematic exclusion of non-white people from the community of people capable of morality.

Lastly, I draw from Black feminist historian Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham in uncovering and tracking the metalanguage of race: the covert ways in which race is appealed to and referred to

without being explicitly mentioned. The metalanguage of race reveals the various ways in which many social categories such as gender are covertly racialized in insidious ways that are difficult to notice. The meta-language of race helps me identify the places in Kant's *Anthropology* where race is not explicitly mentioned but it is nonetheless doing significant conceptual work.

Though hooks, Hill Collins, and Brooks-Higginbotham have very different projects and methods, bringing them together in a heterogeneous intersectional approach is generative. I find it helpful to use a broad conception of intersectionality to bring together diverse intersectional approaches and spell out links between the phenomena that each approach is designed to capture. I hope this broad and heterogenous intersectional approach helps us better understand the operations of race, gender, and sexuality in reifying and justifying systems of multiple oppression through Kant's moral theory. The specific tools that make up my intersectional framework reveal exclusion from womanhood, expose racism as covertly operational in discussions of womanhood as a mark of civilization, and link racist sexist construction of feminine identity to interlocking systems of subjugation. In so doing, these tools forge an entryway for a decolonial critique of race, gender, and sexuality in Kant by uncovering their co-construction and imposition on non-white women, an imposition that can then be revealed as rooted in colonial power.

10. Asking "Which Women?"

I adopt the Black feminist methodology of centering Black women by asking "Which women?" It is important to ask this question when engaging with Kant's theory for several reasons. First, as Black women theorists and Black feminists have argued, non-white women and specifically Black women have been implicitly and surreptitiously excluded from the category and concept of womanhood. Black women have been calling attention to and problematizing the historical and present-day exclusion of non-white women from the category "women."

Many point to Sojourner Truth's 1851 speech "Aren't I a Woman" as the earliest recorded example of a Black woman highlighting the violent ways in which Black women are not considered to be women. Truth gave her speech at the Women's Rights Convention in Akron, calling attention to the fact that the women's rights movement erased and neglected non-white women, their oppression, and their livelihoods. White women, Truth suggests, are seen and treated as exemplifying the feminine characteristics of being weak and in need of paternalistic treatment, whereas Black enslaved women like Truth are expected to be just as strong as the men and do not receive the paternalistic protections that the patriarchal society grants white women. With her powerful testimony of the abuse inflicted on her as an enslaved Black person, Truth identifies the conceptual, ontological, and material exclusion of Black women from the category of womanhood. Black scholars within and outside the Black feminist tradition have inherited Truth's insights and continue to shed light on this exclusion by theorizing the ways in which Black women are ungendered (Hortense Spillers), depicted as unfeminine and less than human through degrading controlling images (Patricia Hill Collins), excluded from historie, accounts and texts about women (bell hooks), and more.

I find bell hooks' exposition of the racist exclusion of non-white women from the category "woman" especially helpful in thinking about the importance of approaching theoretical discussions of womanhood through a Black feminist lens that problematizes the racist assumptions built into the category "woman." In her book *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, hooks (2014) argues that the term woman in the United States specifically has been assumed to refer only to white women, to the exclusion and erasure of non-white women. She writes, "In America, white racist ideology has always allowed white women to assume that the word woman is synonymous with white woman, for women of other races are always perceived as Others, as de-humanized beings who do not fall under the heading woman" (pp. 138-39).

Though in this passage hooks speaks specifically about white feminists excluding non-white women, elsewhere she suggests that both white men and women carried out this racist exclusion. The fact that "white feminists did not challenge the racist-sexist tendency to use the word "woman" to refer solely to white women" (p. 140) shows how deeply entrenched racist-sexist ideology is, and it is evidence of white feminism's complicity in racist-sexism—something that we will see is alive and well to this day. hooks shows how these erasures and exclusions show up in Julia Cherry Spruill's book *Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies* which was first published in 1938 and again in 1972. Though, the title of the book led hooks to believe that in it she would find information about different groups of women in American society, to her surprise, she found that Spruill's work only discussed white women. This shows that the word women was understood by the author, her audience, and various authoritative reviewers to mean "white women." She remarks that if someone were to write a book by the same title that only discussed Black women, "the title would be automatically deemed misleading and unacceptable" (p. 138).

hooks also discusses Helen Hacker's 1975 essay "Women as a Minority Group" in which Hacker draws an analogy between Black people and women, asking the reader to understand women's oppression as analogous to Black people's oppression. According to hooks, this strategy, often used by white feminists, of comparing Black people and women has the effect of erasing Black women (all the women are white and all Black people are men), and deflecting "attention away from" white women's "own racial caste status" (p. 141). These examples show that in the United States, it is acceptable, expected, and seen as unproblematic to use the word women to refer only to white women and this way of thinking and talking about women erases non-white women. hooks explains that in a racially imperialist nation such as the United States, the dominant race (white) is assumed to be neutral, and this racist ideology results in a

conception of womanhood that is raced such that Black and other non-white women are excluded from the category and their positionalities, status, lived experiences, oppression, etc. as women are erased.

I draw several important lessons from hooks' work which I use to inform my project. First, hooks' arguments show that the word woman has historically been used in racist-sexist ways that assume whiteness and exclude/erase non-white women. Second, the assumption of whiteness that underlies the concept and category woman has the effect of excluding non-white women and thereby erasing them such that discussions of women completely fail to take non-white women and their lives into account. This makes it so that our analyses and understandings of sexism, patriarchy, misogyny, and other systems that harm women completely ignore how these systems harm non-white women. Third, hooks' analysis highlights that it is particularly important to be aware and suspicious of the racist-sexist assumptions often baked into the concept "woman" when we engage with texts that discuss women. Because the term woman is raced (assumed to refer to white women), we cannot assume that when a text (or person, for that matter) uses the word woman, the term refers to all women. As a matter of fact, hooks' analysis suggests to me that we must approach discussions about women with great suspicion, being ever vigilant about racist-sexist exclusions that could be at play.

I, thus, follow hooks in reading for the erasure and exclusion of non-white women in Kant's philosophy. I engage his work on gender by asking "where are the non-white women in this text?" and suspiciously looking for erasures and exclusions. Because the gender and race questions have been asked by different camps in Kant scholarship, many feminist critiques of Kant don't attend to the intersection of race and gender. By attending to the intersections of race and gender and their co-construction, I show that Kant's conception of womanhood is raced to the exclusion of non-white women. Asking hooks' question allows me to show that

Kant ungenders non-white women, excluding and erasing them from his account of gender and gender relations. At this point, it is important to note that Kant does not treat all non-white races the same and his theory has very different implications for say Black, Indigenous, Asian, and other women. It is therefore important to resist the homogenization of all women of color by engaging careful analyses of each group's status in Kant. I hope my general analysis of the racist-sexist exclusion of women of color from the category woman will provide the foundation for more specific analyses.

11. Exposing The Coloniality of Gender

The most important decolonial feminist tool I use in my project is that of the coloniality of gender. Drawing on intersectional analyses from the Black feminist tradition, Lugones (2016) examines the co-construction of race and gender in the modern/colonial gender system to reveal what she calls the coloniality of gender. According to Lugones, an important tool of colonization and ongoing colonial rule is the modern/colonial gender system that was and continues to be imposed on colonized people.

The modern/colonial gender system defines gender in heterosexist, binary, patriarchal, and generally Eurocentric ways. Furthermore, Lugones argues, this gender system defines proper gender as a marker of civilization that can only be achieved by white Europeans. Lugones explains that the modern/colonial gender system was used to draw the colonial difference according to which white people are defined as human by contrast to the sub-human, ungendered, non-white (and thereby sub-human) "Other." The intersectional frameworks produced by Black feminists set the stage for a decolonial feminist critique of the coloniality of gender through which "we see not only the erasure of Black and brown women at the intersection of categories like race and gender but, further, that the oppressive racialization, gendering and sexualization of those bodies is a colonial imposition" (Velez, 2019, 400).

In my project, I follow the Black feminist practice of tracking the erasure and exclusion of Black women through the construction of racialized (white) gender or womanhood. In tracking these erasures and exclusions, I draw on decolonial feminisms to expose racialized gender as a colonial construction. While Black feminist insights lead me to ask who is included in Kant's conception of women, Lugones' work leads me to look at Kant's appeals to civilization as places where the coloniality of gender is established through the exclusion and erasure of non-white women. These two approaches help me see Kant's claim that the feminine gender can only be expressed in civilized societies as revealing a deep racist sexism structured by colonial logics that buttress and reinforce the colonial difference through dehumanizing constructions of people harmed by colonialism and coloniality.

12. Racism, Racist Exclusions, and Ideological Formation

There are important ongoing debates about how to understand the very concept of racism. In her latest book *Kant, Race, and Racism: Views from Somewhere*, Huaping Lu-Adler shows that Kant scholars are often unclear about which conception of racism they are employing and the detrimental effects this lack of clarity has for our conversations and scholarship on the topic (Lu-Adler, 2023, 76-95). For the purposes of my project, I think of racism as a characteristic of a theory by which it establishes racist exclusions.[7] By racist exclusions, I mean exclusions of a group of people on the basis of their supposed membership in a racialized group or category. I understand a moral theory to be racist, in this specific sense, if it excludes racialized human beings from the moral community based on their racial status.[8] Though the racist exclusion of

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[7] In Chapter 3, I argue that Kant's *moral theory* is racist. My approach is different from those that ask whether Kant's *racial theory* is racist (e.g., Hill and Boxhill (2001)). My claim that Kant's moral theory is racist does not depend on the claim that his racial theory is necessarily racist.

[8] I do not mean to suggest that this is the only or even the most important sense in which a moral theory can be racist. My project highlights racist exclusions as one important feature of Kant's moral theory that marks it as racist. Though I will not argue for this here, I believe there are myriad ways in which theories, systems, institutions, people, etc. can be racist and I think it is important to remain open to the possibility that Kant's theory is racist in more than one way.

non-white women from the moral community depends on Kant's view that they are incapable for expressing the feminine characteristics, my contention is not that Kant was a racist because he held problematic beliefs about non-white women, but that his theory is racist because it excludes non-white women from participating in moral development.[9]

Establishing that Kant's moral theory is racist in this way does not require us to show that Kant himself was racist by appealing to his psychology or speculating about Kant's mind and heart. It does not require us to decide whether racism is volitional or cognitive because it does not investigate racism as a feature of a person (their cognitive or conative characteristics), but rather as a feature of a theory. Furthermore, my account of Kant's moral theory as racist does not depend on whether we interpret Kant's theory of race as hierarchical or as non-hierarchical.[10] After establishing that Kant's moral theory is shaped by racist exclusions of non-white women, I shift focus (in Chapter 4) from racism as racist exclusion to a broader understanding of racism as ideological racial formation. Here, I attend to the ways in which Kant's racist views helped reify ideological formations that shape our worlds and minds today. I focus primarily on the epistemic injustices created by racist ideological formations and suggest strategies to reduce and transform these formations and their resulting harms.

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[9] My analysis of racism in Kant's moral theory thus avoids the pitfalls of individualistic or atomistic approaches to Kant's racism (see Lu-Adler 2023, 76ff & Mills 2003).

[10] See Lu-Adler (2023) pg. 78-84 for an excellent discussion of hierarchical versus non-hierarchical accounts of Kant's theory of race. I'm grateful to Reza Mesayebi for raising the question whether racial exclusions might always depend on racial hierarchies during a symposium for Lu-Adler's book at Rhur University Bochum (2023). Regardless of how we answer this important question it is enough, for my account, to show that Kant thought non-white women were incapable of expressing feminine gender in the ways required for participating in society's moral development. I show that this is the case without attributing to Kant a hierarchical account of race.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON KANT'S RACISM AND SEXISM

1. Introduction

Most Kant scholars have long ignored Kant's racism and sexism, painting a picture of Kant's philosophy as unquestionably robustly egalitarian, universalist, and uniquely important for understanding and fighting oppression and promoting social justice. However, in the last decades, feminist philosophers and philosophers of race have brought attention to Kant's troubling racist, sexist, and heterosexist views. Some Kant scholars have argued that Kant's theory is shaped by morally significant racist and sexist exclusions that undermine the supposed moral universalism that his theory has been taken to defend. Others have pushed back, arguing that the charges of deep sexism and racism (deep in the sense that they compromise Kant's universalism) are misguided.[11] In this chapter, I lay out some of the key perspectives on and arguments about Kant's racism and sexism. I begin by discussing scholars who argue that Kant's moral and political theories are not deeply sexist and racist.[12] These scholars make up the Inclusive Universalism Camp because they aim to show that, despite his problematic racist and sexist views, Kant's theory exemplifies an egalitarian universalism that does not exclude people based on race or gender. I then discuss work by scholars who are more critical of the racism and sexism in Kant's theory—I call this group the Deep Exclusions Camp. The Deep Exclusions Camp is broken down into two subcategories, those who think Kant is a Consistent Inegalitarian and those who think he is an Inconsistent Egalitarian. The former group argues that Kant's entire theory is racist, not just the empirical stuff but also the abstract/ideal theory.[13] The latter group thinks Kant's racism is in many ways limited to his empirical claims which are fundamentally incompatible with his more abstract/pure theory. As I engage with the different arguments, I highlight

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[11] See Mikkola 2011, Varden 2015 & 2022, Hay 2013.

[12] Though I focus on Kant's moral theory, I also discuss his political theory because the two are intertwined in places where Kant's antagonisms infect and inflect his moral theory.

[13] As I argue below, I tend to agree with Charles Mills (005), contra Fleischacker (2023), that there is no non-question-begging way to draw a distinction between what makes up Kant's core moral theory and what does not.

important insights that will inform my own engagement with Kant's work in Chapter 3. I discuss points where my analysis differs from theirs, as well as the lessons I draw from their work to help me formulate what I hope will be a more nuanced and generative analysis of Kant's racism and sexism through my reconstruction of his account of womanhood.

2. Inclusive Universalism

2.1 Mikkola Against the Deep Sexism Charge

In her paper "Kant on Moral Agency and Women's Nature" Mari Mikkola (2011) defends Kant against feminist philosophers who accuse him of constructing a deeply sexist moral theory—she calls the critical complaint the charge of deep sexism. According to the deep sexism charge, Kant's theory is fundamentally sexist because he argues that women are morally deficient, they lack a capacity to be guided by principles, and they are controlled by inclinations. The charges of deep sexism point to views Kant expresses throughout his corpus: women are *coquettes* (*Anthro,* 7:305), serious intellectual endeavors destroy women's merits (*Obsevations,* 2:229), women are disingenuousness and unserious (*Obsevations,* 2:229 & *Anthro* 7:307), women act from inclinations and sentiment but not from duty and principles (*Obsevations* 2:231). Though Mikkola emphasizes sexist remarks from Kant's empirical works and what some call his pre-critical works, it is important to note that feminists have shown that his sexism shows up in his critical works as well. For example, in the *Metaphysics of Morals* Kant speaks of the natural superiority of men that gives a man the right to be his wife's master (*MM* 6:279).

Mikkola argues that it is difficult to pinpoint exactly "*how* women are meant to be morally deficient" according to Kant. There are several ways in which we can understand "the moral deficiency women supposedly exhibit" and Kant's remarks on these topics, she says, are "vague and inconsistent" (Mikkola, 2011, p. 92). After considering several interpretations according to which Kant's theory could be deeply sexist, she argues that only one interpretation would show his theory to be "seriously problematic from a feminist perspective" (p. 92). According to Mikkola, Kant's depiction of women's

shortcomings can be understood as deeply sexist only if we understand him as claiming that women are "*innately incapable* of morality" (p. 92). She goes on to argue that Kant was not committed to this view and is therefore not guilty of deep sexism: his project is not deserving of "strong feminist condemnation" (p. 92).

Mikkola argues that the deep sexism charge only holds, that Kant's views on women are "only seriously problematic" (p. 99), if Kant attributes moral deficiencies to women's "innate inability to act from duty" (p. 99). If Kant thinks that women are contingently morally deficient, but they can (*in theory*) change and take themselves out of their morally inferior state, then his theory is not deeply sexist. Such a theory cannot be deeply sexist because it allows for the *possibility* of moral equality among the sexes. For example, Mikkola admits that Kant thinks women are less likely to act from duty and more likely to act from selfish concerns, as feminist critiques have charged. However, she does not think that this claim betrays deep sexism in Kant because it doesn't imply that women are *necessarily* determined (because of their *very nature*) to act from inclination. She suggests that to determine whether this claim expresses deep sexism, we must consider what Kant thought the source of this morally deficient tendency is. If he thinks that women's propensity to act from inclination is a result of their deficient moral education and not their nature, then Kant does not think that women *qua* women are incapable of morality (p. 98). This would rescue Kant from the charge of deep sexism, because "alternative moral education" could come in to repair women's deficiencies (p. 98).

Drawing on Louise Antony, Mikkola argues that Kant is only committed to deep sexism if Kant claims that women are deficient by nature in a deterministic sense. Antony argues that when we try to show that something naturally possesses or lacks a trait, we must presuppose a deterministic or a normative premise. "Either we must presuppose a deterministic premise, whereby what is true of x by nature cannot be changed…Or we must presuppose some normative premise, whereby what is true of x by nature is good for x, the wider society, some interested party, etc." (p. 99). Mikkola argues

that Kant is not guilty of deep sexism because though he seems to be committed to a normative premise about what women should do/be, he is not committed to a deterministic premise about what women are determined by nature to do/be. According to her, in so far as he thinks that women are rational, he must have thought that they could overcome their moral deficiencies and set their own ends, even if he thought it was not desirable for them to do so (p. 100). Mikkola's analysis relies heavily on Kant's claim that men and women are both rational beings (*Anthro* 7:303), and the claim that even men fail to act morally most of the time (*Observations* 2:232).

It is not clear to me, from what Mikkola says, why the claim that it is merely undesirable (but not impossible) for women to set their own ends is not deeply sexist. But her reasoning seems to be that if nothing in women's nature prevents them from acting rationally and setting their own ends, they could in principle become moral agents and this would show that Kant's account of moral agency is not itself sexist. She places great emphasis on Kant's descriptions of women as beings endowed with reason, insisting that as long as he grants them the capacity to reason, they could (in theory) develop their rational abilities and becomes full-fledged moral agents. She relies on a quote from the *Anthropology* where Kant says that men and women are "rational beings" (*Anthro,* 7:303). According to Mikkola, Kant's sexist remarks don't imply that women's nature prevents them from setting their own ends, so Kant's moral theory leaves room for women to become full-fledged (non-deficient) moral agents. But the problem with Mikkola's argument is that she does not take into consideration Kant's full story which includes an account of how rational agency is developed. According to Kant, human beings are not born as fully developed rational agents and not all rationality amounts to moral agency. Rather, they must develop rational agency through a process that Kant lays out in his anthropological-teleological account of moral development. I will argue that this account sets up insurmountable barriers that keep women from developing full moral agency because their doing so would be inimical to humanity's moral development.

Mikkola suggests that if someone can reason, then, according to Kant, they have the potential to develop full rational (and thus, moral) agency. She argues that since Kant attributes rationality to women, he must think that they have the potential to develop full moral agency. But two problems arise for her interpretation. First, Kant uses the term rationality in many ways and whether an attribution of rationality amounts to the attribution of moral agency, or the potential for developing moral agency, depends on what kind of rationality Kant is talking about in the relevant passages. One sense of the word rationality in Kant is the rationality needed to pursue means to the ends set by inclinations and desires. Another sense is the rationality required to set ends. In the passage from the *Anthropology* that Mikkola draws on, Kant is speaking about rationality as the use of reason to pursue the ends that Nature sets for human beings, i.e., the end of preserving the species through sexual intercourse and the maintenance of domestic unions (*Anthro*, 7:303). This shows that the kind of rationality at stake in this passage does not amount to the kind of rationality that enables agents to set their own ends. In other words, it is not the kind of rationality that endows someone with moral agency/moral status because it is merely the capacity to pursue ends but not the capacity to set one's own ends.

A second problem for Mikkola's account is that Kant does not think of rationality as moral agency as something that people can develop outside of the social process, social processes through which Nature's and humanity's ends are collectively promoted. According to Kant, we develop rational and moral capacities in the context of social relations that, when engaged in correctly, promote our individual development in tandem with humanity's (our collective) natural and moral ends. Furthermore, as many have recently argued, Kant thinks we need an anthropological and teleological understanding of ourselves and our social (gendered, raced, sexual) relations in order to identify what we are capable of as individuals and what roles we can and are designed (by Nature) to play in

promoting humanity's ends.[14] In other words, for Kant, whether we can develop certain individual

capacities (whether moral or not) depends on whether our social context supports their development.

Furthermore, whether we should develop such capacities depends on whether doing so promotes

humanity's ends. Therefore, in order to understand what capacities, abilities, characteristics, etc. the

differentially gendered beings for whom Kant writes his moral theory can and should develop, we

cannot simply appeal to a definition of rational agency and check if we have a capacity for it. According

to Kant, we also need to appeal to his teleological and anthropological accounts of moral development.

Kant's moral theory includes his anthropological and teleological accounts of humanity because

he thinks we need anthropology to apply the abstract moral insights of his ideal theory to our human

existence as embodied creatures (Lu-Adler, 2023). According to Kant's teleological account of

judgment in moral anthropology, human beings are entitled to assume that Nature has set up certain

ends for us and use these assumed ends to make judgments about how to shape our lives and

societies; to answer questions about moral education, politics, etc. according to what best promotes

Nature's ends. Kant tells us that this is precisely what he is doing in the *Anthropology's* discussion of

womanhood. He says, "[O]ne can only come to the characterization of this sex [women] if one uses

as one's principle not what we make our end, but what nature's end was in establishing womankind;"

(7:305). Here Kant spells out the role that women play in the development of humanity's natural and

moral ends. He goes on to say that nature's ends for womanhood "(1) the preservation of the

species, (2) the cultivation of society and it's refinement by womankind" (*Anthr* 7:305-306).

A few lines earlier Kant explains that women promote Nature's ends by expressing the feminine

characteristics. It is by being beautiful and charming that they attract men and get them to submit in

marriage; and it is through their loquacity, emotionality (tears), and their general tendency to be

driven by inclinations that they dominate in the household and refine men (*Anthro* 7:303-304). These

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[14] See Lu-Adler 2023, Marwah 2019, Huseyinzadegan 2018 & 2019, Baumeister 2022.

passages suggest that, according to Kant, specific social (gender and sexual) relations and roles need to be established and played out for moral development to take place. It is only through these relations that we can develop culture, moral decency, and eventuality morality. This means that what we as individuals can and cannot do according to his moral system is not determined by an abstract conception of moral agency that we either meet or fail to meet in virtue of being rational beings. Rather, what we can and cannot do, what we should and should not develop, is determined in large part by the social roles we are given based on our gender (among other things) and whether developing certain capacities and characteristics is compatible with our role in promoting humanity's moral and natural ends. Kant thinks different people (men and women) must play different social roles to bring about humanity's moral development, and playing these roles means developing specific traits and capacities. Because of this, whether someone is able to develop their rational abilities and exercise their capacity to set their own ends depends on whether doing so is compatible with the role they play in the social/collaborative project of developing moral humanity.

I don't think Mikkola's arguments against the charge of deep sexism are successful because they ignore important parts of Kant's teleological anthropological account of moral development and the serious constraints this account places on women based on their nature. Kant suggests that women are, in important ways, inferior by nature in so far as we are entitled to presuppose that Nature designed them to promote humanity's ends at the expense of the opportunity to develop rational agency. Kant says that the feminine characteristics were designed by Nature to facilitate society's civil and moral development. For these purposes, Nature designed womankind with specific natural ends that are different from men's ends. Furthermore, these ends are promoted through the expression of the very characteristics, e.g., weakness, coquettishness, fearfulness, docility, loquaciousness, vanity, that make women morally inferior to men and prevent them from developing full moral agency (7:306). Here, we see that Nature provided women with the feminine characteristics for the purposes of

facilitating humanity's moral development, and it is these very characteristics that make women inferior to men as their capacity to set ends is concerned. So, it seems to follow that women are (in this respect) inferior to men in virtue of their natural ends.

However, there is a sense in which the feminine characteristics are not strictly natural insofar as Kant thinks they can only be expressed in civilized societies. In so far as the feminine characteristics can be expressed or not be expressed depending on the civil conditions in which women find themselves, we might think that Mikkola is right that in different social conditions women would not have to sacrifice their moral agency for the sake of developing humanity's ends. Maybe Kant leaves open the possibility that women can change their station and leave their inferiority behind after all. But in his anthropological account of moral development, Kant is not just describing women's contingent social condition. Kant is in fact endorsing a set up in which women develop characteristics that make them deficient moral agents (though instrumentally useful). In other words, even if Kant thinks that women can change their station and acquire other characteristics, he does not think that they should. But the claim that women should not develop certain (masculine) capacities is not as morally benign or surmountable as Mikkola suggests. The moral significance of this claim is made evident in Kant's remarks about moral education where he tells us that if women are not given the right education, and they develop masculine traits, this will destroy the mechanisms that are necessary for humanity's moral development.

In the *Observations*, Kant tells us that we must attend to the difference that Nature "sought to establish between the two human genders," basing all judgments of praise and blame on the characteristics that are proper to each gender: the beautiful for women and the sublime for men. He says that in these matters, we must recognize that men and women are different in kind and should be educated (and we might say socialized through praise and blame) according to the respective ends that Nature set out for them. Thus, women's education should be geared towards promoting the

beautiful feminine characteristics (2:228). Kant goes on to explain why women should be educated in feminine activities that develop the beautiful and not the sublime. He says that "[D]eep reflection and a long drawn out consideration are noble, but are grave and not well suited for a person in whom the unconstrained charms should indicate nothing other than a beautiful nature" (*Observations* 2:229). According to Kant, even if a woman could undergo laborious learning, this would destroy "the merits that are proper to her sex" and "weaken the charms by means of which she exercises her great power over the opposite sex" (*Observations* 2:229).

In these passages we see that being "feminine" and embodying the feminine characteristics is not a morally neutral possibility among many other morally viable options available to women. Rather, moral development (for beings like us) requires that women develop and express feminine characteristics. According to Kant's teleological story, women should not acquire the masculine characteristics that enable them to develop full moral agency because that would destroy their feminine characteristics. Such a miscarriage of gendered education would be morally disastrous because, as we saw above, women's charm and other feminine characteristics are necessary for the social operations that make humanity's moral development possible. So, according to Kant's moral framework, it is necessary that women develop the feminine characteristics and that they refrain from developing the masculine characteristics that might help them develop a fuller moral agency.

But there is a further complication. It is difficult to see how it is even possible for women to develop their moral agency (like the one men ought to develop) if doing so is inimical to humanity's moral development. As I argued earlier, Kant thinks that an individual's moral development happens within the social context wherein different social agents collaboratively bring about humanity's moral development. If women developing masculine characteristic that promote their rational agency threatens humanity's moral development, and if individual moral development takes place in the

context of humanity's collaborative moral development, it seems that women's development of rational agency undermines the very conditions of its possibility.

So, it seems like it is not even theoretically possible for women to develop full rational agency within Kant's framework. Even if Kant is describing how women happen to be in the contingent conditions of his patriarchal society, he is at the same time endorsing this feminine way of being as the one Nature intended and one that is necessary for the purposes of developing men's moral decency, and thereby humanity's moral ends. When he describes what women should do, Kant is not saying that it would be preferable for women to be this way and that it would be morally indifferent if they were otherwise. Rather, he is saying that women *must* be this way *if humanity is to achieve its moral purpose*. This means that if women were to be otherwise, it would be inimical to morality (here I leave aside questions of whether women would be blameworthy for being "unfeminine" but simply note that if they are "unfeminine" something has gone terribly wrong in terms of humanity's moral vocation, according to Kant).

I have argued that Mikkola underestimates the depth of Kant's sexism because she does not pay enough attention to Kant's teleological and anthropological views and the limits they place on women's ability to develop the masculine characteristics that promote full moral agency. It is significant for my purposes that her argument against the deep sexism charge depends on underestimating the implications of Kant's anthropological and teleological views for his broader moral theory. As we will see below, many scholars have misunderstood or mischaracterized important aspects of Kant's sexism because they underestimate the normative weight of Kant's anthropological claims regarding womanhood. Like Mikkola, many assume that Kant's ideal principles can be understood in abstraction of the teleological and anthropological accounts that Kant lays out. But as we saw above, these accounts provide important context and place restrictions on how the ideal principles apply to beings like us and how beings like us develop the moral

capacities that are described abstractly in the ideal theory. Furthermore, as we will see below, the anthropological account sets up norms about race and gender that many miss when they gloss over the empirical or non-ideal parts of Kant's theory.

2.2 Varden on Gender and Sexuality

Helga Varden has also taken up the issue of Kant's sexism, arguing that the accusations of deep sexism against Kant are misguided and unwarranted. Varden, like many others who defend Kant, focuses on Kant's distinction between the a priori principles that ground morality and empirical principles that, according to Kant, can never ground a moral system. She points out that one of the most important claims Kant makes is that moral principles, and morality more generally, cannot be based on empirical knowledge gained from our senses and our observations. Furthermore, Kant is very intentional in identifying when he is engaging in the kind of empirical investigations that cannot determine or ground our moral principles, and distinguishing between that kind of theorizing and theorizing that is *a priori* and thus appropriate for formulating moral principles. Based on these observations, Varden warns us that accurate and faithful readings of Kant must take account of when Kant is engaging in each kind of theorizing and interpret his writings accordingly.

According to Varden (2015), Kant sees himself as engaging in moral anthropology when he makes sexist remarks about women's characters and their inferior abilities. Since Kant is engaged in moral anthropology which deals with empirical knowledge, he clearly does not think that what he observes about women can tell us anything about morality, nor can these observations inform our understanding of morality. Varden says, "Kant's apparently sexist remarks predominantly occur not in his moral works on freedom, but rather in his other (less popular) normative works, and especially in his historical, anthropological, aesthetic, and religious pieces" (p. 657). Kant's sexist remarks do not appear in his works on freedom, and Varden takes this as definitive evidence that Kant did not take these remarks to show anything about women's moral abilities or their moral status. In other words,

Kant thinks that the claim that women are controlled by their inclinations is an empirical claim and, according to his theory of what grounds morality, nothing regarding women's moral status could be legitimately derived from such claims. Therefore, Varden concludes that Kant's sexist claims are completely compatible with his theory being deeply egalitarian and with Kant attributing equal moral status to men and women.

I think Varden is right to claim that, according to his own moral theory, Kant's empirical claims about women cannot be, on their own, grounds for determining the moral status of those he thinks are included in the category women. Kant explicitly says that we cannot ground claims about morality (including people's moral status) on empirical claims—such as anthropological claims about how different people tend to behave or the weaknesses that are exhibited by the different sexes. It follows from this central Kantian tenant that we cannot infer that women have a particular moral status from empirical claims about their characters which are based on experience—even if Kant himself does seem to make these fallacious inferences about non-white people for most of his life.

However, even if Kant thinks that men and women have equal moral status, that does not mean that he thinks their equal moral status entitles them to the kind of treatment and respect that we think (equal) persons deserve. Kant describes women as passive citizens, and he thinks that they are unfit to govern themselves because they lack the ability to reason according to principles and determine their actions accordingly (MM 6:314). He thinks that women, even if they are in some sense moral equals to men, must be controlled and taken care of by their husbands; just as one would control and take care of children who lack the capacities for full moral agency. These are troubling views we must grapple with even if it turns out that Kant leaves open the possibility for women to work themselves up to active citizenship status.

According to Varden, since Kant is committed to the view that morality cannot be grounded on the sort of empirical claims he makes about women, he cannot be accused of the sort of sexism

that would make his theory deeply inegalitarian. However, Kant's discussion of women as passive citizens that need to be taken care of like children shows that women enjoyed a kind of formal equality in Kant's system that did not necessarily translate to being seen as deserving of equal or fair treatment. Even if Kant thinks that men and women are moral equals in a formal sense, he clearly thinks that women are profoundly different from men and that they ought to be treated differently in many regards—as we saw in the discussion on moral education in the previous section. It's unclear how formally including women in the category of moral beings saves Kant from the kind of deep sexism that makes his theory deeply inegalitarian. Furthermore, the unequal status of women in Kant's theory does not require us to think, contra Varden, that morality is *grounded* on his empirical views about women.

In Varden's defense of Kant we again see a prioritization of Kant's ideal theory and the assumption that the empirical works and the anthropological views can be discarded as morally insignificant. The limits that the latter two impose on the application of the ideal norms is glossed over too quickly. In relying on a supposedly neat distinction between the ideal and the empirical, Varden is too quick to conclude that whatever is said in the empirical writings cannot have significant consequences for women and their place in Kant's moral theory. She assumes that because the empirical views cannot *ground* morality, they have no normative consequences for women. However, just because an empirical claim cannot *ground* morality, it does not mean that it cannot have significant consequences for how the ideal moral theory applies to our material realities. As we see in the example above, women might have formal equality in the ideal theory, but the empirical characteristics that Kant attributes to them mean that their formal equality does not translate into equal treatment and substantive equality. Kant's theory is deeply sexist because even though he does not *ground* morality on sexist empirical claims, these claims *inform* his theory of morality in ways that result in women having a lower moral status (in the substantive, not formal or nominalist, sense). The nuanced

distinctions between empirical claims grounding morality versus their informing morality is obscured when we hold onto the strict distinction between the ideal and empirical works, assuming that the empirical claims cannot have morally significant implications for how Kant's theory applies to people with different social identities.

Varden might insist that even if women were largely confined to the category of passive citizen in Kant's time, Kant's ideal principles ensured that they could change their station. After all, Kant thought justice required that no laws be passed which would prevent people, e.g., women, from becoming autonomous and emancipating themselves from the paternalistic rule of others. Varden writes, "…I argue that Kant maintains that one cannot rightfully deny women the possibility of working themselves into active citizenship and that men do not have an unconditional, perpetual right to be in charge of the home" (Varden, 2015, p. 677). However, though Kant argued that people should be able to work their way into active citizenship, it is by no means obvious that he thought women were able to do so or that he had women in mind when he talked about the possibility of such a transition.

Varden's analysis relies on the assumption that Kant's term *Mensch* is gender neutral, referring to both men and women. However, Pauline Kleingeld and others have argued that this is not a fair assumption to make: *Mensch* is not used in a gender-neutral way in Kant (Kleingeld, 1993). Another reason to doubt that Kant thought women should become active citizens, is that he speaks disparagingly of women who have more active roles in society. He suggests that women who exercise their reason and participate in the sciences are ridiculous and that they are somehow acting in ways that are not proper to their gender. Moreover, even if Kant thought that women should work their way up from passive citizenship to active citizenship, that does not show that Kant escapes the charge of deep sexism. The fact that Kant did not see women's role in society as truly political is itself deeply sexist. Varden suggests that Kant thought it possible (though very unlikely) for women to become

active citizens by engaging in scholarly work and legal-political activities (Varden, 2015, p. 679). But women's independence and full autonomy should not hinge on them engaging in activities that are deemed political from an androcentric perspective. Kant's treatment of women is not just problematic because he saw them as morally deficient (even if he granted them moral status and the capacity for independence) but because he saw their way of moving through the world as less autonomous and less worthy of the kind of respect and dignity that human adults deserve (even if he didn't claim that this was part of their nature).

On the most charitable interpretation of Kant's sexist views, he still thinks that to become politically active and independent, women must engage in activities traditionally reserved for men and adopt traditionally masculine ways of being. He thinks the burden is on women to change instead of recognizing that their subjugation is an issue of structural injustice and not a personal failing. It seems to me that Kant's insistence that people should be able to work themselves to active citizenship (even if it does apply to *all* women regardless of race which, I argue below, it does not) does not save him from the charge of deep sexism. As Jordan Pascoe writes (using the language of African feminist philosopher Nkiru Nzegwu), "…Kant's public sphere is monosexed, and all claims to equality are measured against the male standard: women, as passive citizens, may make a claim to equality only when they can prove themselves on par with (male) citizens. When women enter the public sphere, they do so in the political garb of men: there is no political "female principles" and thus no place for women *as women* in the public arena" (Pascoe, 2019, p. 93).

As we will see bellow, Varden's work on Kant has taken up the issue of gender and sexuality in brilliant ways that have opened new paths in Kant scholarship. Whereas feminists have engaged Kant through feminist critiques of gender, she is one of the first to investigate the intersections of gender and sexuality in Kant with immense care and rigor. However, by omitting race from her intersectional framework, Varden misses problems with Kant's theory that only become apparent

when we look at race. I think a proper understanding of Kant's account of gender, and womanhood specifically, can only be achieved by engaging his work through an intersectional framework that includes race. As I will argue in Chapter 3, in the *Anthropology,* Kant lays out an account of womanhood that is racialized and racist. Here, Kant says that the feminine characteristics are only expressed in civilized societies, and he identifies white European societies as those that are civilized. This means that, according to Kant, only white European women are proper women. Furthermore, as we saw above, Kant thinks that women secure their place in society, including the protection and care of their husbands, by using their feminine characteristics to charm men, get them to marry them, and form a lasting union. Because women depend on the feminine characteristics to secure even the status of passive citizen in society, it seems as though Kant is committed to excluding non-white women from even the status of passive citizenship. So, even if Varden is correct that women always have the possibility of working their way up to active citizenship, it turns out that this is possible only for certain women, i.e., white women.

As I mentioned, I think one of the reasons why Varden misses this point is because she is not looking specifically for the ways in which race and gender might intersect in Kant's account of womanhood. In the literature on Kant's racism and sexism, there are certain passages that are read for Kant's views on women and those that are read for Kant's views on race. But rarely do people take an intersectional approach to these passages so as to identify the various ways in which racial norms are built into Kant's account of gender. It is particularly important to read Kant suspiciously looking for biased norms that generate racist exclusions and erasures because these norms are difficult to spot. For example, Kant does not specifically mention race in the passages where he lays out account the racist account of womanhood. He defines womanhood in terms of civilization which he elsewhere defines in terms of race. Because of this, it is important to look at Kant's account with suspicion, carefully attending to where he seems to be making descriptive claims but is in fact making normative

claims that function to exclude and marginalize those who he thought were too different to play a role in promoting humanity's ends.

The other reason why I think Varden fails to recognize the racist norms at the heart of Kant's account of womanhood is that she assumes that everything in the *Anthropology* is empirical and descriptive. In making this assumption she might gloss over the empirical claims too quickly, or because she expects to see only descriptive claims, she does not see the normative standards that are built into these purportedly descriptive claims. As we have seen, Varden's argument that Kant is not guilty of deep sexism because women can work their way up to active citizens does not work. Kant's theory is still deeply sexist in so far as it bars non-white women from accessing the kinds of treatment and status that is accessible to white women who express the right feminine qualities. This illustrates how important it is to read Kant through an intersectional framework that includes race, and how important it is to read the empirical works closely, always looking for where an innocuous claim or account that appears merely descriptive in fact rests on norms that creates systemic exclusions at the intersections of multiple identities.

Another way in which Varden defends Kant from the charge of deep sexism is by arguing that Kant thought men and women played different *but equally important and empowered* roles in society and in moral life. She argues that Kant thinks "both male and female traditional gender ideals are strong figures" (Varden 2015, p. 668). According to Varden, Kant has a better, more accurate and progressive, view of women than those who accuse him of deep sexism think because he says that the correct ideal is not that of women as submissive but of women as empowered and strong figures. She thinks that women are strong figures in Kant in large part because he says that men and women mutually dominate each other, and that women control men by controlling and manipulating their sexual desire.

Again, the lack of attention to race brings up problems for Varden's defense of Kant's account. As we saw above, Kant thinks that non-white non-European women are incapable of expressing the

feminine characteristics so even if his account of heterosexual relationships is not fundamental patriarchal, these supposedly egalitarian arrangement is not available to all women. In this sense, the account is problematically sexist even if it is not sexist against white European women. It is important to highlight this because stereotypes about women of color as deficient mothers and wives who can't keep their men happy and their families together abound in our society, and the resonance between Kant's account and the ideals of the white heterosexual family used against women of color should not be ignored. One can see these connections when considering Black feminist critiques of the Moynihan project through which Black families are pathologized as defective in comparison to the white heterosexual family and thereby marked as a site for surveillance and state intervention (Lethabo-King, 2018). Varden may be right that the norms set up by Kant are not inherently harmful to those to whom they apply, but we also must consider the harmful effects that these norms have for those who are seen as deviating from the norm or incapable of adhering to it.

But there are further problems beyond racist exclusion that Varden's defense fails to address. In suggesting that women have an empowered position in Kant's theory, Varden glosses over the deeply heterosexist and misogynistic ideas that his account expresses.[15] First, women's power depends entirely on the man's sexual attraction towards her and her ability to manipulate him. In so far as women depend on men's sexual desire for their power, they do not seem to be on equal standing. Furthermore, regardless of whether the roles that women are said to play are positive, they can still be harmful. To think of women as having greater social skills and a greater ability to control men can itself be deeply sexist. For example, it can lead to expecting greater social labor from them or, as we

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[15] Huaping Lu-Adler argues that we do not need to attribute to Kant a hierarchical view of race in order to show that his theory is racist. She points to Kant's views on women to illustrate this point: Kant's views on women are sexist even if he was not committed to a hierarchical account of gender. She writes, "Kant's account of gender differences helps to illustrate this point: of the two sexes, neither is superior to the other; it is just that nature, for the sake of humanity, intends them to be different— the woman to be "beautiful" and the man "sublime," in intellectual and aesthetic qualities; this difference in turn determines, among other things, their places in society— the woman bound for the domestic sphere and the man, for the civil or political one (GSE, 2: 228– 43; Anth, 7: 303– 11; V- Anth/ Fried, 25: 697– 722; V- Anth/ Mensch, 25: 1188– 94; V- Anth/ Mron, 25: 1392– 98)" (Lu-Adler, 2023; 81).

saw in the case of Black women, it can place the responsibility for managing men's desires and actions on them.[16] If good women are supposed to control men, then they might be blamed, or blame themselves, for men's behavior. We can see this in Kant's insistence that men should pursue women and women should withhold sex. The responsibility is placed on women to curb their sexual desires to get the desired outcome from men. This also has deep resonance with contemporary religious sexual education which portrays men as incapable of controlling their sexual desires and places women in the position of safeguarding their virginity. We can see how such narratives are similar to Kant's in that they depict women as socially responsible for managing their own actions and the actions of men.

Moreover, Kant's account is troubling in that it defines women entirely in terms of men's sexual desires and emotional, psychological, and moral needs. According to Kant, womanhood is defined by the expression of feminine characteristics which are understood in reference to the effects these qualities have on men's heterosexual desires. It erases non-heterosexual women (and men) or depicts them as not performing their gender correctly. This is particularly troubling if we consider the role that Kant thinks heterosexual relationships play in promoting humanity's moral development. As we saw in the previous section, Kant thinks that women refine men and prepare them for morality by interacting with them in the context of a domestic union. This means that women who are not heterosexual cannot participate in this task and are completely left out of his account, even if they are not morally condemned for it.

In her later paper "Sex. Reconsidered. A Kantian account of Sexuality: Sexual Love, Sexual Identity, and Sexual Orientation," Varden addresses the problems of heterosexism and homophobia in Kant. She suggests that we can improve Kant's theory of sexuality and reconstruct a non-

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[16] Another thing to consider here is that research shows that those who hold what seem to be positive stereotypes of groups of people are very likely to also believe negative stereotypes. This seems to make intuitive sense to me since even ascribing a positive characteristic to all individuals of a particular group depends on thinking that they are culturally, biologically, or otherwise determined to be one way or another. See Czopp, Kay, and Cheryan 2015.

heterosexist version that includes people with diverse sexual orientations. She argues that we can do this by modifying Kant's account of the animalistic predisposition in such a way that allows for the idea that "human sexuality is not invariably experienced as heterosexuality" (Varden, 2018, p. 18). In this later paper Varden is much more careful and intentional about grappling with Kant's heterosexist problems instead of minimizing them or rushing to change them. She helpfully acknowledges the difficult feelings and thoughts that a reader like her, who has faced homophobia and discrimination, might experience when encountering Kant's problematic views. I think this recognition is invaluable and we should always follow her lead in taking into account the emotional and psychological effects that encountering Kant's problematic views might have on reader, especially on our students (p. 3). Furthermore, in this paper, Varden sees herself as putting forth a Kant-inspired account of sexuality which serves to acknowledge that the resulting theory does not represent what Kant, in fact, argued but what he should have argued. Again, I think this is exactly the right approach to take if we want to confront the legacies of heterosexism in which we are complicit as Kant scholars. By calling her account "Kant inspired" Varden uses Kant for her purposes without absolving him or us of his problems and erasing these problems from our intellectual histories. However, when tackling Kant's homophobia, I think she makes a risky move that forecloses the kind of systematic exploration of Kant's problematic views that we need to engage in to truly confront the problems in Kant and how they spill over into our present realities.

Varden draws a distinction between Kant's heterosexism, defined as an inability to perceive diversity, and his homophobia, defined as anger directed at this difference (homosexuality) (p. 24).[17]

She thinks that Kant's heterosexism can be largely explained by appealing to his natural teleology according to which Nature designed men and women to advance the species through reproduction and the refinement of society as well as his social context. However, such appeals, she argues, do not account for his homophobia. Varden suggests that we can only make sense of Kant's homophobia if we connect it to some discomfort he felt with his own sexuality. She goes on to posit that Kant had sexual feelings for his friend Joseph Green and his discomfort with these feelings made him angry at himself, anger that then he expressed through the homophobic views he expressed in his work.

I think there are several risks with this approach. First, in attributing homosexual desires to Kant, Varden is reproducing a neglected problem in Kant's account of gender: compulsory sexuality. Compulsory sexuality refers to (1) the assumption that all people are sexual, experience sexual desire, and (2) the norms and practices that marginalize different forms of non-sexuality and compel people to perform sexual desire in various ways. Not much has been said about the problem of compulsory sexuality in Kant, but his description of sexual desire and sexual intercourse as key components of human nature show that compulsory sexuality informs his account of gender in important ways. I think Varden risks inadvertently reproducing this problem by attributing sexual desires to Kant in order to explain his homophobia. It is not a coincidence that in a society saturated by compulsory sexuality, we would be tempted to explain someone's attitudes by projecting sexual desires onto them, but doing so might reproduce a problem in Kant that is obscured by the norms of our dominant culture.

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[17] Boxhill (2018) tries to account for Kant's racism in similar psychologizing ways. He says that Kant did not benefit from slavery so his racism cannot be explained by attributing to him some interest in the enslavement of African people. I think this move is confused insofar as it limits the benefits that white people accrued from slavery to the monetary benefits of slave owners or those benefiting directly from the slave trade. This obscures the ways in which the institution of slavery made possible the overall wealth enjoyed in Europe which benefited anyone who enjoyed relative economic access like Kant. Part of locating Kant in the dark side of the Enlightenment entails understanding his commitment to European civilization and power beyond any obvious or personal stake which he might have had in the inferioritization and enslavement of African people. Furthermore, by focusing on whether Kant directly benefitted from the slave trade, we ignore his participation in racist ideological formations and the various investments he might have had in perpetuating these ideological formations over and above financial interests.

Second, when we think of Kant's heterosexism and homophobia in the ways Varden does, we detach his attitudes towards people who are different from him from his theorizing, conceptualizing the former as a personal problem (internalized antagonisms) and the latter as an epistemological problem (not seeing difference or heterosexism). I think this is problematic because it creates the illusion that Kant was only using his rational (intellectual/cognitive) abilities to describe the world in his theory, and that his problematic attitudes, sentiments, and interests in no way shaped his views, aside from isolated moments where he expressed homophobic anger. I think this is a mistake because it plays into the idea that we can evaluate Kant's theory without keeping in mind the embodied perspective from which he theorized and that his prejudices can be easily separated from his philosophical commitments.

Third, when we pathologize Kant's homophobia as an isolated issue of projected self-hate, we remove his homophobic views from the worldview that Kant expresses in his theory and the interconnected systems of antagonisms that inform it. Varden's analysis of Kant's homophobia makes it harder for us to see both the connection between heteronormativity and homophobia, and the connection between these two and other problems like his racism, sexism, and Eurocentrism. For example, if we take Varden's approach we might say that Kant's theory is heterosexist because he simply failed to perceive different sexualities, and that he makes homophobic remarks because he struggled with his sexuality. Explaining away these problems might prevent us from seeing that the theory's heterosexism is also connected in important ways to Kant's racist attitudes and beliefs and his investment in European dominance.

Alternatively, if we refuse to detach the heterosexism in Kant's theory from his antagonistic attitudes (and feelings) while resisting the temptation to hyper personalize these attitudes as mere personal pathologies, we are in a better position to think about the systemic connections between the various problems that we find in Kant. For example, by bringing racism into the equation we can think

about how the heteronormative gender roles Kant lays out are not only heterosexist, but also betray Kant's Eurocentrism. As we will see in Chapter 3, decolonial feminist María Lugones has argued that colonial power was established and enforced in part through the imposition of European gender and sexuality norms (what she calls the modern/colonial gender system) onto colonized populations (Lugones, 2016). When we look at Kant's heterosexist account of gender and sexuality through this lens, we can better see the connections between the heterosexist and the Eurocentric impulses in his theory. What might at first seem like a benign, though limited, description of the gender norms Kant saw in his society at the time, begins to look more problematic. We can begin to draw possible connections between Kant's heterosexism and his racist constructions of non-white people. We see that by presenting normative European expression of gender and sexuality as the proper vehicles for moral development, Kant establishes European people as advancing towards a moral future while non-white non-Europeans are disappeared from such a future because of their supposed gender and sexual deviance or defects. I think this approach is generative because it helps us see that heterosexism and homophobia do in fact inform Kant's descriptions of non-white people. Furthermore, it helps us understand these problematic descriptions as systematically linked to Kant's worldview and theory rather than random moments of emotionality or confusion that slipped into his otherwise benign intellectual projects. Lastly, linking heteronormativity to Kant's descriptions of white women and non-white people also helps us see the norms that lie beneath what often appear as mere descriptive claims in Kant's anthropological discussions.

Varden does immensely important work at the intersectionality of gender and sexuality, however, she and Mikkola, along with many who defend Kant from the charges of deep sexism and racism, risk perpetuating the erasure of non-white women in Kant's theory by leaving race out of their analyses. In their analyses, they ignore that womanhood is implicitly raced as white, and because of this they fail to investigate the implications that Kant's sexist views have on non-white women, and

the very ways in which Kant erases and excludes them. I hope my engagement with their work shows that we cannot critically engage Kant's views on gender and sexuality without intersectional frameworks and methodologies that center and problematize gender, sexuality and race and the various ways in which they intersect.

Failing to recognize the racism and ethnocentrism in Kant's treatment of women is a grave mistake because it leads us to assume that Kant's sexist views have the same implications for all women, and it prevents us from understanding Eurocentric gender constructions as colonial and racist. Furthermore, Kant's location in Europe at a time of colonial expansion suggests that we also need decolonial tools to help us unpack the various ways in which Kant uses gender as a tool to justify and construct fundamental differences between white Europeans and non-white non-European people. It is important to recognize the ways in which colonial ideas of white superiority construct gender not only for the sake of understanding Kant, but also for the sake of understanding our history, the concept of gender that we have inherited, and the colonial and racist logics inscribed in it. Once we recognize the colonial logics of Kant's thinking about women, we see that not only does he express sexism against white European women, but he also expressed racist-sexism, ethnocentrism, and colonial prejudices against non-white non-European women. Furthermore, we see that these are not mere prejudices but that they structure Kant's theory creating systemic erasures and exclusions.

We might think that Kant's views on women turn out to not be so bad for white heterosexual, cisgender, able bodied women but the implications of his views on gender are fundamentally different for non-white women.[18] If we ignore the fact that Kant's concept of womanhood is raced and racist,

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[18] Some might think that to expect Kant to include queer people in his analysis is anachronistic since he lived in a different time. First, I would point out that sexual orientations like homosexuality were known to Kant—we know this because he condemned them as immoral (MM 6: 277). Second, it's important to note that I am not making indictments about Kant's character but rather thinking about the fitness of Kant's theory in helping us understand issues of morality and the antagonisms, systemic erasures and exclusions, and general problems we might reproduce or ignore when we do Kant scholarship. Regardless of whether we excuse Kant of any personal moral failing, we can still recognize that queer antagonism is a flaw in a moral theory and that we would be wrong to adopt such a theory before making sure to modify it and rid it of all its antagonisms first, if that is at all possible.

we completely ignore Kant's racist-sexism and are fundamentally ill equipped to give a proper analysis of Kant's sexism in general. Much of the scholarship regarding Kant's sexism makes these mistakes, though various Kant scholars are making important interventions and changing the landscape of critical Kant studies. I think the most honest and courageous analyses of Kant will confront the fact that his comments about women only applied to white European women with the potential of being heterosexual European wives. They must also grapple with the fact gender functions as a tool of colonial power in Kant in so far as Kant employs it to construct and argue for the colonial difference.

2.3 Hill and Boxhill Against the Deep Racism Charge

In addition to defending Kant from the charges of deep sexism, some scholars have also tried to defend Kant from charges of deep racism. In their essay "Kant and Race" Thomas E. Hill Jr and Bernard Boxhill (2001) defend Kant from arguments by Emmanuel Eze and Charles Mills that purport to show that Kant's moral philosophy is deeply racist. Though Hill and Boxhill admit that we should examine Kant's wider philosophical theories in light of his racist views, they ultimately argue that "Kant's basic critical philosophy and moral theory…is not infected with racism" (p. 449). Hill and Boxhill rightly point out that Immanuel Eze, the first scholar who took Kant's racism as a seriously problematic issue to grapple with, was wrong to think that Kant grounded his claims about non-white people and his racial hierarchy on his transcendental philosophy. As we have seen, Kant distinguished between *a priori* moral principles and the empirical work he was engaged in when studying different races and cultures. As scholars like Varden have shown, Kant thought of his work on race and his hierarchical racial theory as empirically grounded, not grounded on a priori or transcendental principles.

However, Hill and Boxhill let Kant off the hook too easily when they suggest that his racism does not infect his core moral and political theory. Hill and Boxhill take up Eze's claim that Kant thought non-whites/non-Europeans were less able to achieve self-perfection. They suggest that this

claim does not betray any deep racism in Kant because even if Kant thought that non-whites were not *in fact* perfecting themselves, and that they were significantly farther away from self-perfection than whites, this does not mean that he thought non-whites were incapable of perfecting themselves. Since Kant didn't think non-whites were *incapable* of perfecting themselves, Hill and Boxhill's argument goes, Kant is not implicated in deep racism, and his core theory is not fundamentally affected by his racist ideas (Hill & Boxhill, 2001, pp. 457-459).

In Hill and Boxhill's analysis, the bar for what counts as deeply racist seems to be set extremely high, and profoundly racist ideas that shaped Kant's conception of humanity are too quickly downplayed as "not that bad," "not that racist." For example, Hill and Boxhill suggest that Kant likely thought that non-white people were not as developed or virtuous as whites simply because they lived in different circumstances than white people. According to them, Kant thought non-white people's inferiority was contingent on their suboptimal circumstances. They take this to show that Kant attributed their inferiority not to their race per se but to their current situation. In turn, this idea is supposed to show that Kant was not deeply racist. However, the evidence suggest that Kant thought non-white people's inferiority ran deeper than their unfortunate circumstance and was rather essentially linked to their immutable race.

First, there is evidence in Kant's corpus which suggests that he thought non-whites were inferior to whites in virtue of their biology, and specifically their immutable and inheritable skin color (their race) (*Anth-Mensch,* 25:1187; *Anth-Mron,* 25:1233; OBS 2: 253). Kant puts forth a monogenisist account, positing that all races develop from the same philum, but depending on the climate they are in, they develop different germs (Keime) (*VRM* 2:434–35; *GTP* 8:168–69). Furthermore, he thinks that once non-white races are generated the races and individuals belonging to them cannot change or improve. In other words, once a non-white race develops, neither the race nor the individuals can improve, i.e., become white (*VRM* 2:44*; BBM* 8:93–94; *Anth* 7:233). So, contrary to Hill and Boxhill's

arguments, Kant didn't think non-white people's inferiority was contingent on a potentially changeable culture, geographical location, climate or other contingent and changeable circumstances. Rather, he thought non-white people were biologically inferior and determined to stay that way through generations (as he predicted some of them were bound to die off sooner than later) (*VRM* 2:442; *GTP* 8:173–74; *VRM* 2:437–38; *Anth-Mensch* 2:253-255). Kant's denial that non-white people can achieve self-perfection seems to be grounded on biological racism. But even if Kant attributed non-white people's inferiority to their circumstances, such claims would also be deeply racist, and more would have to be said to dispel the worry of deep racism.

Second, Kant's conception of humanity, culture, and what makes for a morally good human being are central to the moral theory he creates. If Kant saw a particular race of people as exemplary human (white Europeans), we should anticipate that his conception of what it is to be human to be problematically biased against those who he saw as inferior, even if their inferiority was thought to be cultural.[19] This bias against non-whites is clearly displayed in Kant's condemnations of the Tahitians who he describes as lazy and lacking a clear purpose because they do not engage in the sort of war and strife that Kant thought propelled civilizations forward (*Ideas* 8:65) .

Third, in Hill and Boxhill's analysis, we again see an emphasis on the difference between the empirical and ideal, and the assumption that the latter is more central to Kant's philosophy. Thus, the fact that Kant's racist claims are made in his empirical works is supposed to show that they are not central to his overall philosophy and can be excised and put aside. But here again there is little argument for the idea that the empirical status of Kant's racist claims means that they don't deeply

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[19] Jordan Pascoe helpfully puts Kant's theory in dialogue Nigerian philosopher Nkiru Nzegwu who shows, drawing from pre-colonial Igbo family structures, that fundamental social structures which Kant takes for granted and which he thinks are ideal for morality are not those central to other cultures. Furthermore, Pascoe points us to the work of another Nigerian philosopher, Onyeronke Oyewumi, who shows that pre-colonial Yoruba family structures do not depend on or necessitate the political category of "woman." I take these to be examples of the ways in which taking the European white male as the ideal moral agent and the heterosexual white European family structure and morally ideal deeply affect the picture that Kant puts forth of morality (Pascoe, 2019).

influence Kant's broader theory. Like others in the Inclusive Universalism Camp, Hill and Boxhill seem to take for granted that the sharp division Kant drew between empirical knowledge and a priori principles entails that the *a priori* components of his theory are insulated from the empirical components. Furthermore, beyond emphasizing this distinction, they too quickly assume what this distinction means: that the empirical can be set aside, that the *a priori* principles alone can tell us the status of non-white people in Kant's theory, and that the empirical claims are mere descriptions with little normative weight. But all this seems to beg the question. If the goal is to understand whether Kant's empirical racist claims infect the rest of his theory, we cannot simply point out that a certain claim was empirical to show that it did not influence the rest of the theory.

Fourth, one of Hill and Boxhill's assumptions seems to be that Kant's claims about non-white or non-male people are only problematically racist if they entail that these people have subhuman status and that they have this status by nature or by necessity. But they don't present good reasons to support the idea that anything short of saying that non-whites are subhuman, that they have no moral status, and that they are determined to be this way because of their very nature is not problematically racist. Reasons must be provided for thinking that this is the proper marker for deep racism and that any claim that is weaker than deterministic ones does not count as deeply or problematically racist.

Another way in which Hill and Boxhill try to save Kant from the charges of deep racism is by asking whether anything in his theory necessarily led him to draw the racist conclusions about non-white people. They argue that none of Kant's moral principles necessarily (logically) yield the idea that non-whites are unable to achieve self-perfection and therefore Kant's theory is not deeply racist. I think looking at the central principles in Kant's moral theory and asking whether racist claims follow from them is an important task. To be sure, if we find that some central moral principles directly imply racist ideas and claims, we ought to throw out those principles and seriously question the integrity and adequacy of Kant's theory.

However, showing that racist claims don't follow directly from Kant's core principles does not entail that the theory is not deeply racist in other ways. There are many ways in which theories can be deeply racist and the fact that a theory's central principles do not logically imply racist claims does not completely absolve the theory of deep racism. For example, the ideal principles might not necessarily lead to racist conclusions, but the racist beliefs might inflect or be coded into the ideal/neutral/formal language of the ideal principles.[20] Hill and Boxhill seem to think that principles can only be said to be racist if they strictly imply racist claims. But it seems plausible that principles, from which racist claims do not logically follow, might still frame our thinking in ways that lead us to misunderstand oppression and injustice as grounded on racial domination. We might find that a theory is racist because it erases, excludes or revalorizes people based on their race, or because it relies on racist stereotypes that have informed our minds and shaped our world, contributing to systemic racism. I am not arguing for a particular view of what makes a theory racist. I just want to suggest that Hill and Boxhill seem to be working with a view that is much too narrow and not sufficiently argued for. I think we stand a better chance of reckoning with Kant's racism, sexism, and other problems if we work with a broader view of what makes a theory, e.g., racist, or carefully specify which kinds of racism we are ruling out without foreclosing the possibility that these problems might show up in other deeply problematic ways.

The thought that Kant's sexist and racist remarks can be simply taken out of his larger moral and political theory has been challenged by recent scholars. In the next section I discuss various accounts that suggest Kant's racism runs deeper than some have previously thought, and that his racist and sexist claims are not so easily dismissed or put aside. Some of these critics argue that Kant's whole system is compromised by his racist views: they think Kant is a Consistent Inegalitarian. Others think

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[20] In this discussion, Hill and Boxhill (2001) take themselves to be showing that Eze is wrong to say that the racist remarks follow from these a priori principles but they seem to take this as evidence to show that Kant's racism isn't deep and the fact that these principles don't yield the racist remarks in no way shows that Kant's racism isn't deep.

his racist views need to be taken seriously because they show up in insidious and less obvious ways throughout his theory. But they nonetheless maintain that Kant's ideal moral theory and his a priori principles are unaffected by his racism. The latter group maintains that Kant is an Inconsistent Egalitarian.

3 The Critics: Kant as Consistent Inegalitarian

3.1 Mills on Kant's *Untermensch*

One of the most powerful and deliberately provocative criticisms of Kant's theory as fundamentally racist comes from the late Charles Mills.[21] Mills argues that it would be a grave mistake to ignore Kant's views on race and assume that we can simply separate them from his moral philosophy at large. We must make sense of the tensions between Kant's apparent egalitarian views and his problematic views on race if we want to avoid reading egalitarian ideas into a fundamentally inegalitarian and racist moral framework; unwittingly adopting its racist views. Mills attempts to make sense of these tensions by arguing that Kant's apparently egalitarian claims are just that: egalitarian only in appearance.

According to Mills, scholars have mistakenly assumed that Kant is really referring to *all* people when he says that persons have equal moral status and must be respected as moral agents endowed with dignity (Mills, 2005, p. 173). However, this assumption is incorrect (p. 170). Once we take seriously Kant's racist claims, Mills argues, we see that Kant excludes non-whites from the category of persons. Mills takes Kant at his word when he says that non-white people do not have the capacity to govern themselves and that they should be under European rule (see Kleingeld, 2019, p. 7); that "Americans and Negroes cannot govern themselves. Thus, [they] serve only as slaves" (cited in Kleingeld, 2019, p. 7); that Native Americans are the lowest of the races because they are weak and

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[21] Mills' contributions to making the field of philosophy less anti-Black, compelling us all to stare our white ignorance and racism in the face, cannot be overstated. All of us who are members of minoritized groups and work in academic philosophy are deeply indebted to him and should uplift and honor his life and work.

incapable of being educated, and that Indians cannot use abstract concepts (*Anth-Mensch*, 25:1187). Whereas other scholars, whose work we'll discuss below, argue that Kant's racist claims are at odds and inconsistent with the egalitarian principles and values he expresses in the formulations of the categorical imperative, Mills argues that Kant's racist views are in fact completely compatible with the rest of his moral theory. The apparent tension only arises because we have wrongly interpreted Kant's expressions of the categorical as applying to all human beings when, in fact, they only apply to white European men (Mills, 2005, p. 171).

Mills suggests that if we refrain from projecting our own egalitarian commitments onto Kant, we will come up with an interpretation of his fundamental principles that is completely compatible with racism (p. 175). In the background of Kant's theory, Mills argues, there is a racist framework in which white people have the status of full personhood while nonwhites have the status of less than persons (p. 171). Kant's claim that all persons have equal moral status and deserve respect is compatible with his racist views because within his moral framework Black people do not count as full persons. If we want to understand what Kant was truly up to, we must see that he operates under a framework in which human beings are divided into two categories: *Mensch* and *Untermensch* (human and subhuman). White European men are *Mensch* and all other races are *Untermensch*. Thus, when Kant says that all human beings are equal and deserve respect, he means that all white European men are equal and deserving of respect; non-whites being excluded as subhuman and unworthy of equal respect and treatment (pp. 181-183).

At first glance it might be easy to dismiss Mills' analysis. Kant scholars might see him as using Kant for his own anti-racist aims without engaging in a careful analysis of the words Kant put down on paper. After all, Kant does not use the word *Untermensch* and when he *suggests* that all human beings are equal, he does not explicitly exclude any group based on their race. Furthermore, in several places, Kant explicitly claims that all the races come from one stem and that together they form the species

of human beings. Though I think there is evidence that Kant did not think non-white people were subhuman (in some sense), I think the reasoning behind Mills' interpretation is powerful and can help us see the covert white supremacy that is in the background of Kant's moral theory. Even if we decide that Kant does not think of non-white people as *Untermenschen*, I think we do well to take seriously Mills' suggestion that even Kant's universalist formulations of the categorical imperative, which we read as egalitarian, are deeply raced and deeply racist.

Mills' account is largely based on a brilliant insight from the Afro-modern political tradition that is extremely important for us Kant scholars to take seriously: the characteristics that are taken to be exemplary of the human being are raced in so far as they are primarily exemplified by white European men and less so by the other non-white races (see Wynter, 2003). According to Mills, this results in an extremely weak egalitarianism that is only egalitarian in appearance. For Kant, whites and non-whites might be considered human beings but what it means to be a human is defined by characteristics that Kant thought white European males exemplified more than members of other races. Furthermore, even if it turns out that though all persons (white and non-white) deserve respect, what counts as respectful treatment depends on the degree to which a person approximates the ideal of humanity (with its representative characteristics).

An example might help us understand my proposed interpretation. Kant notoriously argues that reason and rationality[22] set human beings apart from other animals and make us worthy of respect. So, membership in the category human being is only granted to those who have rationality, and one of the reasons human beings should be respected is because we can reason. But within the group of people who can reason, Kant clearly thinks some can do it better than others. If my ability to reason is what makes me worthy of respect, it seems as though the degree to which I can reason would

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[22] There are many difficult questions surrounding Kant's conception of practical reason, but for our purposes it's enough to say that rationality, in the relevant sense, essentially involves having the ability to set one's own ends.

determine what counts as respectful treatment for me. Now, if what counts as reasoning is determined by what white European males do best, we should expect that non-whites will be seen as deserving of differential and worse treatment because they are less excellent and exemplary members of the category human being.

Mills' extreme claim that Kant thinks of non-whites as *Untermenschen* is based on the insight, found not only in the Afro-modern tradition but also specifically in the Black feminist tradition, that the model of personhood and humanity we find in Kant's and other European writers' theories is a white Eurocentric model in which whiteness and its associated traits are implicitly depicted as quintessentially human; other races being human only by proximity and assimilation to whiteness. Mills argues that the apparently neutral term "human being" is in fact racially coded to mean white European men. Not only is it coded because the term (as used by Kant) was meant to refer to white men, but also because the term acquires its meaning within a Eurocentric tradition which generates and operates under what can be called a white-European-male model of humanity and personhood. Furthermore, Mills also describes Kant's model as color blind, meaning that it uses deceptively race neutral terms.[23] It thereby disappears race (yet maintains whiteness as non-race from the theory of humanity and ignores the immense, systemic racial injustices that should be at least recognized in any moral theory. Though we might want to reject Mills' *Mensch*/*Untermensch* model as representative of Kant's own, I think we should take his analysis of Kant's implicitly racist and Eurocentric framework very seriously.

Recently, Bennett McNulty (2023) has defended Mills' *Untermenschen* interpretation of Kant, arguing that Kant's remarks on non-white people's cultures lend support to the claim that he excluded

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[23] Julian B. Carter's *The Heart of Whiteness: Normality Sexuality and Race in America 1880-1940* explores the ways in which the term "normal" was racially and otherwise coded so that normal was defined as white, cisgender, heterosexual, monogamous couples. I want to argue that something similar is going on with the terms "human being" and "humanity" as used by Kant.

non-white people from the category of humanity (at least in the earlier period before writing *The Metaphysics of Morals*) and relegated them to the subhuman (*Untermenschen*) category. McNulty argues that Kant has a technical understanding of culture as "a particular phase in the development of the human species" According to McNulty, Kant thinks there are four stages of human development: "culture, civilization, and moralization" (p. 4), and he defines culture as "the production of the aptitude of a rational being for any ends in general (thus those of his freedom) …" (5:431). Kant thinks of culture as an aptitude that enables human beings to achieve ends in general. Kant's technical definition of culture suggests that culture is necessary for engaging in the kind of practical reasoning that Kant thinks gives human beings their personhood and moral status. This definition of culture is relevant to Kant's views on non-white people because Kant's racist remarks include depictions of non-white people's culture as impoverished, deficient, or nonexistent.

For example, Kant says that Africans have a culture of slaves and have only developed the predisposition to pursue certain kinds of ends (McNulty, 2023, p. 4). McNulty argues that the most plausible interpretation of Kant's claims is that the ends of slaves are those set for them by their masters and that these are the only ends that Africans, limited by the slave culture, can pursue (p. 8). Kant also says that Native Americans have no culture and if culture is the aptitude for setting ends, then Kant must have meant that Native Americans cannot set ends. Since Kant reserves the status of personhood to those who possess practical reason, which is the ability to set and pursue ends, his claim that certain groups of non-white people don't have culture or have a culture of slaves commits him to excluding these people from the group of individuals with humanity, personhood, and equal moral standing. The evidence brought forth by McNulty strongly suggests that for most of his life, Kant did think of non-white people as belonging to a different and inferior moral category than white people. I think McNulty's version of Mills' argument avoids the conflations between moral and biological humanity on which Mills' original argument depends. However, I think Mills' arguments

open our minds to different ways in which Kant's moral theory could be dangerously racist even if we, perhaps naively and through white ignorance, grant that he thought all people, regardless of race, were human beings with equal moral status. For this reason, I think we should take the arguments very seriously and appreciate their various insights even if we reject their missteps.

4. The Critics: Kant as Inconsistent Egalitarian

4.1 Kleingeld & Kant's Second Thoughts on Race

Responding to Mills, Pauline Kleingeld has suggested a different approach to making sense of the tensions between Kant's egalitarian views and his racist views. She argues that Kant's moral philosophy is fundamentally egalitarian, universalist, and antiracist despite what his problematic views on race might suggest. Before we look at Kleingeld's criticism of Mills and her overall interpretation of Kant's theory, let's first look at how she thinks of the debate around Kant's racism and the questions she thinks we ought to be asking. Kleingeld says, "The motivation behind this debate is not so much to determine whether it is possible to "save" our dear Kant from inconsistency but rather to determine whether it is possible to use Kant's principles to criticize his biases" (Kleingeld, 11). Kleingeld is not interested in denying that Kant made problematically racist claims, she is interested in seeing whether some aspects of his theory (in this case, the formulations of the categorical imperative) are themselves egalitarian and can therefore be used to show that and how Kant's racist and sexist claims are morally deplorable and inconsistent with his laudable egalitarian insights.[24]

According to Kleingeld (2019), there is a real tension between Kant's principle that all human beings are equal and deserving of respect, on the one hand, and his sexist and racist remarks on the other hand (p. 14). As we saw, Mills thinks we should reframe Kant's humanity principle to bring out its true inegalitarian nature and thereby understand why Kant thought it compatible with his racist

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[24] Whether Kant's principles show that his racist claims and attitudes are immoral is, to my mind, a separate question from the question whether his theory gives us a good account of how and why they are wrong and immoral.

views. Kleingeld, contra Mills, insists that there is a real tension between Kant's egalitarian principles and his racist/sexist views, and that we must grapple with this tension instead of trying to do away with it. We should not resolve this tension by ignoring that Kant held both deeply egalitarian and deeply inegalitarian beliefs that were strictly at odds with each other.

Kleingeld argues that Kant really did think that all humans (regardless of race) belonged in the moral category "human being," and he expressed this deeply egalitarian view through the categorical imperative's formula of humanity. Kant's mistake, argues Kleingeld, was not that he formulated an inegalitarian principle according to which only some human beings are worthy of respect. Rather, his mistake was that he did not apply this principle correctly to his thinking and writings on race. Kant's problem, according to Kleingeld, is not that his theoretical framework is racist but that he misapplies his egalitarian and anti-racist framework (pp. 15-16). He allows his prejudices to inform what he thinks about non-white people instead of being guided by his truly anti-racist principles. If Kant had applied the categorical imperative's formula of humanity in an unbiased way, he would have relinquished his pre-critical racist beliefs and would have never expressed deplorably racist ideas such as the idea that Black people were natural servants.

Furthermore, Kleingeld (2007) suggests that we can see Kant grappling with the tensions between his prejudices and his egalitarian moral theory when we track the changes that his thoughts on slavery and colonialization underwent throughout his writing career. She argues that Kant changed and amended his theory very late in his life so that in the essay "On Perpetual Peace," he puts forth very different views on colonization and slavery than those he expressed in earlier works. Whereas before Kant had talked about Black people as natural servants and spoken ambivalently about slavery, in this later work, Kant condemns slavery as cruel and immoral. Furthermore, Kant also condemns colonization, argues that Europeans are not morally allowed to steal Native people's lands, and says that land can only be rightfully taken by means of treaties. The most important development that

Kleingeld points to is Kant's introduction of a new cosmopolitan right. Kleingeld points out that later in his life, Kant amends his theory by adding a cosmopolitan right that gives *ALL* human beings (regardless of ancestry, race, geographical location, etc.) equal moral standing and equal rights (pp. 586-591).

She takes these developments to show that the later Kant dropped his racist views such as the idea that whites stood at the top of a racial hierarchy and were the rightful masters of other non-white races. Furthermore, and more importantly for our purposes, Kleingeld thinks that Kant was able to make these corrections because he came to understand that his formula of humanity and other egalitarian principles were completely at odds with his previous racist views. According to Kleingeld, Kant's egalitarian principles are vindicated as truly egalitarian because he himself was able to use them to criticize and correct his earlier racist views. She suggests that our interpretations of Kant should preserve the tension between his egalitarian principles and his racist views so we can follow his example and use the egalitarian principles to criticize and improve the racists parts of his theory. Instead of making his theory coherent by interpreting his principles in inegalitarian ways, like Mills does, she thinks we should preserve the tension and recognize the categorical imperative's formula of humanity as robustly egalitarian and fundamentally at odds with Kant's racist and sexist claims (p. 589).

I think Kleingeld is too quick to interpret the aforementioned developments in Kant's theory as signs that Kant dropped his racist views. I don't think that Kant's introduction of a new cosmopolitan right and his changed attitudes toward slavery and colonialism show that his core philosophy is robustly egalitarian, and that he disavowed his racist commitments later in his life. The ideas that all human beings have certain rights to their property and their land, and that some modes of slavery are particularly cruel are not incompatible with the idea that white people are superior to non-white people and that some non-white people cannot set their own ends so they must be given ends by others who act as their masters. One can object to colonial theft of land while at the same

time maintaining a Eurocentric framework that prioritizes white European ways of being (or ways of being that are associated with white Europeans) and upholds them as more civilized, more human, and better suited for ruling or dominating.

Kant might have realized that his moral principles entailed that Black people could not be bought and sold like mere things and that Native people had a right to not be displaced, but that does not mean that he abandoned the idea that Europeans were culturally superior and were fit to dominate (in ways that fall short of slavery) people of other races (abilities, sexualities, genders, cultures, etc.) without violating the rules of proper respect for their inferiors' limited human abilities. Think of it this way: Kant might have realized that certain ways of treating non-white people were incompatible with respect for their humanity, but this doesn't mean that he condemned other ways of treating them which we would identify as racist and morally wrong. Nor does it mean that his formula of humanity granted *all* human beings the kind of equal status and rights that a substantial and truly egalitarian principle would grant them.

Furthermore, her arguments don't show that Kant changed his mind about white people being superior to non-white people, nor do they show that Kant condemned slavery and colonization as morally bankrupt institutions and practices. What Kant says about the cruelty of slavery in the Sugar Islands does not amount to a condemnation of slavery as an institution, much less a condemnation of slavery based on the recognition that Black people have equal moral status and rights. In fact, Huaping Lu-Adler has persuasively argued that Kant's reasons for condemns slavery in the Sugar Islands is not that he recognized slavery as a violation of enslaved people's rights as persons with full moral status. Rather, she argues that Kant condemns slavery in the Sugar Islands, not because he thinks the practice violates the rights or humanity of enslaved people, but because he thought the practice would exacerbate conflicts between England and France and this would have devastating effects for Europeans and their political stability.

Kleingeld also argues that when Kant says that Native Americans lack culture, he means agriculture (McNulty, 2023, p. 4). However, as we have seen McNulty argue, there is textual evidence that Kant had a very technical definition of culture in mind with important implications for his views on Indigenous Americans' moral status. Furthermore, McNulty shows that Kleingeld's interpretation of Kant as an inconsistent egalitarian is based on the conflation between humanity as a biological concept and humanity as a moral concept. Kleingeld, along with Allais, point out that Kant explicitly says that members of all races belong to the same human species. They take this to show that Kant includes all humans (regardless of race) in the moral category of humanity that grants them equal moral status. However, McNulty argues that Kant included all human beings in the same *biological* category (after all, one of his main aims in articulating a theory of race was to argue for monogenesis-the theory that all races come from the same germ or *Keime*). But this does not mean or show that he included all human beings in the same moral category (pp. 16-17).

Kant's exclusion of some biological human beings from the moral category of human being is exemplified by his claim that human beings who he saw as having mental deficiencies did not have the status of moral human being/personhood (cf. *Anth*, 7:211-12). Another example of people included in the biological category human being but excluded from the moral category are children. McNulty shows that Kant thinks children need to be disciplined so that their animal nature can be turned into human nature (Päd, 9:441). The tendency for savagery needs to be trained out of children so that they can achieve rationality and be included in the moral category of humanity. This example is especially telling because Kant's discussion of children as savages who lack discipline mirrors his discussion of Indigenous Americans as savages who lack self-control and discipline. However, McNulty argues, Kant's views on Africans and Indigenous Americans is much more damning than his views on children because whereas the latter can grow out of their subhuman moral state, the former cannot.

By assuming from the beginning that Kant's ideal theory is robustly egalitarian, Kleingeld projects egalitarian reasons and anti-racists motives onto Kant's critiques of slavery in the Sugar Islands and land grabs from Indigenous people. To those of us who are committed to anti-racism and universal human rights, it is obvious that slavery and colonial land theft are morally wrong (at least in part) because they violate the rights of enslaved people and Indigenous people respectively. Because we are committed to the moral egalitarian views that we hope Kant was committed to as well, we are very likely to project these views and values onto his claims. That is why, as Kant scholars, we must be extra careful to approach Kant without assuming that we already know what his core moral commitments are. As the case of Kleingeld shows, assuming that Kant's ideal theory expresses his true beliefs in the robust moral universalism that we have come to associate with his theory can distort our analyses.

This is why I think it is necessary to approach Kant, as Dilek Huseiyzadegan suggests, without assuming that we will find the liberatory tools in his theory. As is the case with Mikkola, Varden, Hill and Boxhill, the assumption that Kant's ideal theory expresses a robust moral universalism and that it has primacy over the empirical writings results in interpretations of his theory that tell us what we want to hear: the "real" Kant is committed to moral universalism after all. In order to avoid a biased reading of Kant, my analysis in Chapter 3 focuses almost entirely on his empirical works. I ask what these works can tell us about Kant's views before putting them into conversation with his ideal theory. By doing this I try to guard against the common mistake of assuming that Kant was fundamentally committed to moral universalism and reading his empirical works in ways that cohere with this preconceived notion. I believe that the only way we can truly reckon with Kant's racism and sexism is by remaining open to the possibility that his problematic remarks tell us just as much, or more, about his moral theory's core commitments as do his more abstract or ideal principles.

4.2 Allais on Kant's Racism and Sexism

Lucy Allais (2016) has also taken Kant's racism seriously, arguing that we should all be troubled that such an influential moral philosopher held such repugnant views about non-white people. Though she thinks we should take his racist statements seriously and investigate how and where racism shows up in the rest of Kant's theory, she also disagrees with Mills' analysis of Kant's racism. She argues that Kant's racist views cannot be reconciled with his broader moral philosophy because his broader moral philosophy is *truly* egalitarian and fundamentally at odds with racism. She argues that excluding certain groups of people from the category of persons is fundamentally un-Kantian, so Mills' interpretation makes nonsense of Kant's theory. According to Allais, Kant cannot be made consistent on the topic of race so instead of aiming to find consistency, we should use Kant as an example of how racism shows up in people and how resistant it can be to reason (p. 8, pp. 18-19 & Allais, 2019, p. 1).

Allais correctly urges us to take Kant's racism seriously, not only because he wrote about ethics and topics such as the value of human beings (their status and rights), but also because Kant's theory of race influenced racist theories of race and eugenicist theories that were developed after his death (Allais, 2).[25] According to Allais, the textual evidence is insufficient to show that Kant condoned slavery, even if he did not condemn it for most of his life. She says that it is important to make this clear and keep it in mind when analyzing the relationship between Kant's racism and his moral theory. It is important to keep this in mind because there's a big difference between claiming that races are different, even claiming that some races are inferior, and claiming that it is ok to enslave people because of their race (p. 5). Furthermore, Allais also suggests that even if Kant thought some races

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[25] The influence that Kant's theory of race had on the racist scientific theories of race that arose in the early 20th century is a topic that has been widely ignored by Kant scholars. As Mills points out, we must investigate this seemingly willful ignoring of the deeply racist and eugenic history in which Kant is deeply involved. Though biological racism and eugenic theories did not develop in their most complete form until after Kant's time, his work was a springboard for many of these deeply harmful theories and ideologies that were used to excuse genocide and other forms of deplorable harm. We will revisit this topic later when considering the possibility of using Kant's theory for anti-racist work within a deeply white and often white supremacist academic field.

were lazy or weak, that does not mean he thought members of these races were not deserving of respect. After all, she reasons, Kant did not think that white people who were lazy or weak deserved less respect because of their failings.

It's true that thinking that some races are inferior is compatible with thinking that they should not be enslaved. However, it is also important to note that a moral theory that argues for or assumes the inferiority of certain races is in no way vindicated by maintaining that those inferior individuals should not be enslaved. As political theorist Jasmin Hani has highlighted, by depicting non-white people as deficient, Kant *enables* colonial practices. Even if he didn't think that it was morally permissible to enslave Africans and take Native people's land, by arguing that Africans were unable to rule themselves and that Native Americans lacked the life force to propagate their race, Kant diminishes their dignity and moral status. These racist views enable colonial practices by obscuring the nature of the harms they produce. If Africans are incapable of setting their own ends, as Kant claims, a practice whereby white people set ends for them through enslavement does not seem evidently problematic in a moral sense, and it might in fact seem like an appropriate way to deal with these people's supposed deficiencies. [26] Furthermore, the fact that Kant did not condemn slavery as a practice can help us understand what Kant thought the role of moral theorizing was, what he took his role as a moral philosopher to be, which moral questions and issues he thought were important to act on, among other things. So, though I agree that saying that white people are superior to African people is not the same as saying that white people have a right to enslave African people, I think Kant's silence or ambivalence on the topic of slavery should be taken into consideration when engaging with his thoughts on race.

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[26] I am grateful to Jasmin Hani for introducing the idea of Kant as an enabler of colonial practices during discussions at the book symposium for Huaping Lu-Adler's new book *Kant, Race and Racism: Views from Everywhere*, organized by Ruhr University Bochum in June 2023.

Furthermore, I think Allais is right that just because Kant thinks Black people are lazy, it does not mean that he thinks they have a lower moral status. However, Kant's thinking that white people who are lazy deserve respect as persons with full moral status is compatible with him thinking that African people are morally inferior in part because of their laziness. Kant might think that some or many white people are lazy, but his attribution of laziness to white individuals differs greatly from his attribution of laziness to Black individuals. Kant thinks that Black people's laziness is attributable to their race whereas some white individuals are lazy for reasons that have nothing to do with their race (it might be attributed to individual failures and/or to the innate evil in human beings). As we saw above, Kant thinks that all biological human beings come from the same stem (*Stamm*) and different races develop from the same stem because different environments trigger the development of different germs (*Keime*). Furthermore, he thinks that once a non-white race has developed, it cannot be changed. Kant attributes Black people's supposed laziness to their overdeveloped animality and underdeveloped humanity, and this characteristic is directly tied to their race which is unchangeable. Whereas white people could change their habits and become less lazy, Black people, according to Kant, are biologically determined to be lazy. So, even if Kant says that both white and Black people are lazy, the former's laziness is not tied to their race and is therefore changeable while the latter's laziness is causally tied to their race and is therefore unchangeable. This shows that laziness in Black people is of a very different nature than laziness in white people, according to Kant. Because Black people's supposed laziness is tied to the race's characteristic underdeveloped of humanity, it is linked, in Kant's mind, to their moral character and moral standing. The connection between laziness, overdeveloped animality and race (which is not subject to change) would suggest that Black people's laziness has very different implications for their moral status than white people's laziness (see Baumeister, 2022, Ch 5).

Allais finds further evidence against Mills' *Untermensch* account in the *Metaphysics of Morals* where Kant speaks against colonialism. Especially relevant for Allais' interpretation of Kant as an

inconsistent egalitarian is Kant's claim that even if a "superior" society encounters "savages," the former is not allowed to take the latter's land. She thinks these claims tell against the idea that Kant thought non-white people had some sort of diminished personhood and that this made it morally permissible to enslave them and take their land (Allais, 2016, p. 19). Furthermore, Allais suggests that even if Kant did think non-white people had diminished personhoods, his views on (white)[27] women and children should lead us to think that this condition would make them deserving of protection and not domination. She highlights that Kant thought passive citizens, among whom Kant included (white) women and children, who were less autonomous and responsible than full persons were to be protected and cared for, not bought and sold like pieces of property or enslaved. So, Allais suggests, even if Kant thinks non-white people have diminished personhoods, like (white) women, their condition marks them as deserving of protection, not ill treatment (p. 20).

I think Allais is right that we cannot infer from Kant's racist views (alone!) that he condoned the enslavement of Black people and the theft of Indigenous people's land. However, I do not think that Kant's view that (white) women should be protected because of their deficient personhood implies that he thought something similar about non-white people. In fact, I do not think that we can, or should, draw analogies between what Kant says about the proper treatment of (white) women and children, and what he might have thought about the proper treatment of non-white people. Thinking about Kant's views on (white) women and children as comparable and potentially illustrative of Kant's views on non-white people obscures important differences between Kant's views of (white) women and his views of non-white people. Furthermore, making such comparisons threatens to uncritically

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[27] Here, I write "(white)" in parenthesis because Allais does not recognize that Kant's discussion of women and children refer only to white women and children. Kant blocks such recognition because he does not explicitly mention race (whiteness) when discussing women though he is using an implicitly white conception of womanhood. As we will see, recognizing the implicit whiteness of women and children in his discussion reveals problems in Allais' analysis which depends on drawing analogies between Kant's treatment of (white) women and his treatment of non-white people.

reproduce a framework in which womanhood is juxtaposed to non-whiteness such that womanhood is constructed as white. As we will see, this reproduces erasures and exclusions of non-white women.

Kant's text invites the comparison between (white) women and non-white people because the disparaging remarks he makes about (white) women reference only their gender and (most of) the disparaging remarks he makes about non-white people reference only their race. Kant's sexist and racist views invoke the idea of two groups (women and non-white people) that are defined by a single category (gender and race respectively). The way Kant describes (white) women and non-white people invites comparisons between the two groups through questions about the similarities and differences between their comparative status, whether Kant's disparaging views have comparable consequences for the groups and their respective members, etc.

But consider once again the groups we are invited to compare: non-white people and women. In Kant's set-up, non-whiteness is mutually exclusive with womanhood, but this denies the existence of non-white women. Where does this framing and the analogy it invites leave non-white women? In this set-up, non-white women are in fact erased: as the title of the foundational Black feminist anthology that speaks to the erasure of Black women specifically says: *All the Women Are White, All Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave* (Hull, Bell-Scott, & Smith (Eds.), 2015). Contrary to Kant's racist framing, these categories (women and non-white people) do not in fact pick out two separate groups of people because women of color exist at the intersection of these two (and more) categories. When we fail to recognize that Kant is illegitimately using the category women as mutually exclusive with the category non-white people, we go along with Kant's treatment of women as white by default, his treatment of non-white people as men or mysteriously lacking gender, and the resulting erasure of non-white women.

This comparison should strike us as pernicious, and the fact that Kant's writings invite the comparison should make us suspicious. I think something deeper than mere semantics is going on in

Kant's texts and in our analogical analyses. The fact that Kant talks about women as a homogeneously raced group and non-white people as a homogeneously gendered (or genderless) group shows that he thinks of womanhood as implicitly white and that the category "woman" doesn't apply to non-white people. If this is right, then we need to complicate the ways in which we think about Kant's sexism and racism. We need to understand that his sexist account of normative gender refers only to white women, and that non-white people will be in part constructed through their exclusion from normative white gender. We should then expect that non-white people's and women's inferiority will be cashed out in very different terms and their treatment in Kant's theory will not be analogous.

When we try to make easy comparisons between Kant's sexist views and Kant's racist views, we uncritically reproduce Kant's framework in which women are thought of as raceless (white) and non-white people are thought of as genderless. We do this by treating race and gender as categories that can be pulled apart and analyzed in isolation of each other, categories that designate two discrete groups of people. Instead of going along with this framework, we should linger on the contradictions it gives rise to, articulating the different ways in which Kant conceives of womanhood and non-whiteness as mutually exclusive. We should make it clear that women are constructed as white in his theory and that their assumed whiteness depends on the exclusion and erasure of non-white women. Furthermore, we should be attentive to the racial norms that implicitly shape Kant's account of womanhood and grant women a racially privileged position that is not be extended to non-white people. If we gloss over Kant's illegitimate and harmful way of thinking about women and non-white people, we risk misdiagnosing the problems of sexism and racism in Kant's theory and thereby reproducing them.

I think Allais unwittingly falls into the trap of reproducing Kant's problems when she tries to draw conclusions about Kant's racist views by comparing them to Kant's sexist views. As we saw above, Allais argues that Kant doesn't seem to think of non-white people as having a deficient

personhood because whereas he explicitly claims that (white) women are deficient in this way, he does not say the same thing about non-white people. This suggests that non-white people have a higher status than women and if he does think that non-white people are inferior, he must think that they are deserving of protection and care, just like women. Because Allais is thinking about Kant's views of women as analogous to Kant's views of non-white people, she misses the fact that Kant conceives of (white) women's and non-white people's inferiority as different in kind. Kant theorizes white women's inferiority in terms of their weakness relative to and their dependency on white men, whereas he theorizes non-white people's inferiority as placing them outside the realm of proper gender and civilization, or so I will argue in Chapter 3. This explains why Kant makes remarks about white women having deficient personhood and needing protection and care from men, but he does not make similar claims about non-white people. Whereas white women play an important role (to which they are well suited because of their weaknesses) in society by complimenting white men, non-white people's defects do not serve this purpose, according to Kant (*Anth* 7:304). White women need to be protected and cared for in part because they serve Nature's purposes of maintaining the species and refining society. In fact, the gender relations through which they receive care and protection are the mechanisms through which Nature's ends are promoted. This is not the case for non-white people.

Interpretations, like Allais's, that depend on analogizing Kant's racist and sexist views obscure the fact that white women are in a better position than non-white people in Kant's account because they can access normative gender by expressing the feminine traits. These traits make them deficient in personhood and dependent on men, but they also make them instrumentally important for promoting humanity's moral ends. Allais does not consider that the sort of deficient personhood that makes white women deserving of white men's protection is not available to non-white people (men and women). If proper womanhood, the kind of womanhood that makes someone deficient (in ways that are useful for humanity's moral development) yet deserving of protection, is only available to

white women, then it makes sense that Kant would not describe women's and non-white people's inferiority in the same terms. But far from showing that Kant assigns a higher status to non-white people, or that he thinks they should be cared for and protected, this would suggest that non-white people are inferior in ways that, unlike white women, do not make them worthy of the kind of protection and care that white women deserve according to Kant.

4.3 Fleischacker on Kant's Core Theory

Sam Fleischacker also argues that Kant's racism doesn't show up in or infect the fundamental principles and frameworks of his moral theory. He points out that as early as the *Groundwork,* Kant argues that morality is not about perfectionism. That means that our moral status is not determined by how well we develop our talents or how good we are at executing our plans and exercising our wills. He quotes Kant saying, "So moral goodness consists in the perfection of the will, not the capacities...We might say that perfection is indirectly necessary to morality…" (LE 58-9; Ak 27:265-6). Fleishhacker reasons that when Kant departed from moral perfectionism, that is, when he stopped thinking that our moral worth or status depended on perfecting our nature, he also dropped his claim that humanity reaches its highest perfection *only* in the white race. So, according to Fleischacker, even if Kant thought that the white race was superior, after the *Groundwork*, he did not think that white people had higher moral status than non-white people (Fleischacker, 2023, p. 14).

Furthermore, Fleischacker adds that, for Kant, our humanity (the source of our moral worth) depends on our ability to set ends, not on our skills and their development, and that our perfection does not depend on natural gifts but on our deeds, which we perform according to our good will (pp. 20-22). According to Fleischacker, Kant thinks humans have moral worth and status because they have the capacity to set ends (the will), and that all human beings, regardless of their other defects and deficiencies, have such a capacity. These remarks from the *Groundwork* show, argues Fleischacker, that Kant changed his mind at this point and dropped the claim that non-white people were less morally

worthy than white people. The conclusion seems to be that Kant's theory is truly egalitarian, and not fundamentally or deeply racist—Kant grants equal moral worth and status to all human beings regardless of their race.

Fleischacker is right that Kant dropped his earlier perfectionist views about morality. However, this does not show that he thought non-white people and white people enjoyed equal moral standing. This inference can only be made if, according to Kant, non-white people's deficiencies prevent them from developing and perfecting their talents but do not prevent them from developing the rational capacities that grant people moral status. To understand the difference between developing and perfecting one's talents and developing rational agency, it is helpful to distinguish two senses of development found in Kant's theory of human development. The first sense of development refers to the development and perfection of talents through the exercise of rational agency. The second sense of development refers to the development of rational agency itself.

While a person's moral status does not depend on the degree to which they develop in the first sense (perfect their talents), it does depend on their ability to develop in the second sense (achieve rational agency). David Baumeister (2022) has compellingly argued that, according to Kant, Africans' and Natives people's capacity to develop in the second sense is compromised. They cannot develop their humanity to the extent necessary to develop rational agency. According to Baumeister, Kant's treatment of non-white people's deficiencies suggest that they are not just unable to perfect their talents, but that they are in fact unable to develop rational agency. For example, consider Kant's claim that Africans cannot set their own ends. This claim entails that Africans are not just worse than white people at perfecting their talents, but that they do not possess the very rationality on which moral status is grounded. This is connected to the earlier point about white people's laziness and Black people's supposed laziness. Whereas, according to Kant, lazy white people have rational agency but have failed to perfect the talent of industriousness, Black people are lazy because they lack the ability

to set ends. Whereas a lazy white person and an industrious white person have equal moral status because they both have rational agency, the lazy Black person lacks rational agency (the capacity to set ends) and their lack of rational agency bars them from enjoying equal moral status.

Fleischacker also argues that despite his espousing ideal or abstract egalitarian views, Kant failed to condemn racial domination in the ways he should have, and that is a big failing. He helpfully argues that it is possible to believe that all human beings are equal and at the same time justify the subordination and oppression of specific groups (Fleischacker, 2023, p. 18).[28] He attributes these mistakes to Kant's lack of familiarity with non-white people and his failure to examine his biases. Kant might not be as culpable for his racism as we might think since the information that was accessible to him regarding other races was racist and biased, and since the opinions of his time were extremely racist (p. 19). This last point is dubious because Kant was in conversation with people, specifically Georg Forester, who had first-hand experience with people of other races and who explicitly challenged his racist views in personal correspondence. Kant ignored Forester's challenges and doubled down on his racist views in response. When we acknowledge that Kant's racist views were challenged by his contemporaries and that he ignored these challenges, we can no longer dismiss Kant's racist views as innocent mistakes (Forster, 2013).

Despite recognizing that Kant's categorical imperative, especially his formulation of humanity, are completely compatible with a justification or allowance of oppression,[29] Fleischacker argues that Kant's moral philosophy is not racist at its core. He insists that Kant's moral philosophy "has no room for inequality in worth or dignity among human beings: it rules that out *a priori*" (p. 20). The core elements of Kant's moral theory, including the categorical imperative's formulation of humanity, are

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[28] He provides the helpful example of different religious groups who have held that all human beings are equal but have also held other beliefs which allowed them to see such equality as compatible with great inequalities, injustices, and oppression (Fleischacker, 18).

[29] Though the examples Fleischacker uses to illustrate how egalitarianism and oppression have been seen as compatible refer to cases of oppression of the poor, I think the argument applies to racial oppression and domination as well.

not contaminated by his racism and since these in part make up the core of Kant's moral theory, we can conclude that his moral theory is not fundamentally or deeply racist. Fleishhacker's argument is based on a distinction between Kant's core theory and its marginal components. He argues, contra Mills, that there is a principled, non-question-begging way to determine what counts as Kant's core moral theory and what is marginal. He suggests that we can legitimately draw a distinction between the core and the margins of Kant's theory by identifying what 1) Kant himself saw as central to his theory, 2) what themes belong to his theory's most distinguishing contributions to philosophy, and 3) which elements were the most influential in the theory's reception (pp. 25-26).

I think Fleischacker's proposed method for identifying what counts as Kant's core moral theory is problematic and, as Mills suggests all such methods are bound to be, question begging. First, if the criterion according to which we determine the importance or centrality of Kant's views is the importance that Kant gave to these views, we assume that Kant was correct about the importance and centrality of his own views. This assumption is unwarranted. Even if Kant thought that ideal theory was significantly more important than non-ideal theory, this does not show that Kant was right about the former's importance or that the non-ideal theory does not have serious consequences for his ideal theory that Kant himself failed to notice. But even if we think that we can take Kant's opinion about the relative importance of ideal and non-ideal theory as evidence that the former is not infected by the latter, there is reason to doubt that Kant actually thought that his non-ideal theory was less important or marginal. Consider the fact that Kant gave more lectures on geography and anthropology than on his more theoretical or ideal works. This might suggest that Kant thought his non-ideal or empirical accounts, ones which include racist claims, were very important and central to his moral philosophy. Moreover, as I mentioned before, Kant scholars have argued that the anthropological works are crucial for understanding Kant's complete moral theory, so much so that many criticisms of Kant's philosophy can be dispelled by a richer understanding of his less ideal and more empirically oriented

works (which, again, contain the antagonistic remarks that Fleischacker argues are not central to Kant's theory).

Furthermore, both the second and third criteria for determining what counts as Kant's core moral theory beg the question in so far as they appeal to the reception of Kant's work by philosophers. But as many who are critical of Kant's racism have pointed out, what scholars have centered as important and marginalized as unimportant in Kant's philosophy seems to reflect the biases of a field dominated by white men. These scholars have demonstrated biases and poor judgment in willfully ignoring the works where Kant writes about things like race and gender. As Mills has argued, this relative neglect is likely due to the fact that academic philosophy is dominated by white men whose choices and judgments about Kant's theory are shaped by white ignorance (Mills 1998). White male academics' privilege and dominant positionalities enable them to ignore Kant's racism and sexism, carrying on "business as usual" and maintaining a status quo that benefits them and saves them from grappling with their complicity in racial domination. In other words, Kant scholars have deemed Kant's empirical work as relatively unimportant because racism and sexism, as well as other non-ideal concerns, are not important *to them*. When your race and gender (white male) are not sources of oppression but privilege for you, texts where these topics are discussed and where racism and sexism are espoused are bound to seem unimportant to you.

When we keep this history of white ignorance and ignoring in mind, we see that what counts as Kant's "most distinctive contributions to philosophy" (Fleischacker's second criterion) is in large part shaped by the biases and interests of the dominant group (white middle to upper-middle-class men). What has been considered a distinctive contribution to philosophy is in part determined by a very select and privileged group for whom topics such as race and gender are not important. This criterion tells us more about what has *seemed* important and distinctive *to* white male scholars and less about the relative importance or significance (*simpliciter*) of any part of Kant's theory over the others.

Fleischacker does not give us good reasons to think that the privileged status Kant's ideal theory has enjoyed in academic philosophy as the "most distinctive contribution to philosophy" reflects more than biases (even if these biases have gained normative status in the field). The second criterion begs the question insofar as it suggests that we can infer that Kant's views on race and gender are in fact relatively insignificant just because academic philosophers have marginalized them as such.

Lastly, by focusing on what philosophers have deemed "significant contributions," Fleischacker ignores the ways in which Kant's racist views have been significant for academic philosophy even when they have not been recognized as such, and because they have not been recognized as such. Take for example the ways in which Kant's orientalist views shaped the Western philosophical canon (Parker, 2018). Most Kant scholars would not label Kant's orientalist views as significant contributions, but they are significant insofar as they shape our very notions of what counts as philosophy. And, in fact, these views continue to shape how we teach the history of philosophy precisely because we have not reckoned with their significance, dismissing them as insignificant racist ideas that can be ignored.

The third criterion for distinguishing Kant's core theory from the marginal parts (which elements were the most influential in the theory's reception) runs into similar problems. The elements that were the most influential were most influential in part because majoritarian white male academics chose to take up those themes and decided that those themes were the most important. We thus see that both the second and third criteria identify what a mostly white male group of scholars decided was important and what they decided was marginal. If the distinction between Kant's core theory and the marginal bits depends on the judgments of white male academics and what they take to be important, the distinction appears to be not only arbitrary but also problematically based on biases that white male philosophers are bound to have about the importance of race, gender, racism, and sexism. So, it turns out that these two criteria are question begging in an unconventional way: what

counts as the core of Kant's theory according to these criteria is determined by what a small homogenous group has assumed to be philosophically important. Furthermore, we should recognize that parts of Kant have been marked as marginal or peripheral in part because those with dominant positionalities have an interest in ignoring the connections between Kant's racism and sexism and the white supremacist systems that they are implicated in. Once we recognize that willful ignorance contributes to the marginalization of Kant's non-ideal works, and that such marginalization perpetuates ignorance, we might come to very different conclusions than Fleischacker's. We might regard the marginal status of Kant's views on race and gender with suspicion, questioning the legitimacy of such marginalization, asking what their status tells us about us and our field. This would require us to center these views and the texts in which Kant expresses them.

5. Conclusion

To recap, I have laid out some key perspectives and arguments regarding Kant's sexism and racism. As we have seen, the arguments that Kant's sexism and racism can be dismissed and simply excised from his larger moral theory leave much to be desired. These arguments might show that Kant's sexism and racism are limited or nuanced in particular ways, but they do not show that his antagonisms are not deeply problematic and that they don't affect or deeply shape other central parts of his moral theory. I have suggested that these analyses fall short on various grounds. First, they misinterpret Kant's moral theory as a whole in so far as they fail to capture the ways in which Kant's ideal theory depends on the anthropological and teleological accounts. In misconstruing the proper relationship between Kant's ideal and empirical theories, some scholars illegitimately abstract away from the empirical to draw conclusions that are unwarranted. Second, some of the analyses do not read Kant's anthropological works through an intersectional analysis (Mikkola), or the intersectional analysis used fails to take account of racism and coloniality. Because they don't track race in their analysis of Kant's views on gender and sexuality, their defenses of Kant's theory as not deeply sexist

fall short. They fall short because they fail to capture and respond to Kant's racist sexism or his sexism against women of color.

Third, because these analyses assume a sharp distinction and separability between the ideal and empirical parts of Kant's theory, they undermine the power of Kant's empirical claims. They assume that the empirical works are merely descriptive and thereby ignore important normative claims and normative concepts (like raced womanhood) that Kant puts forth in these works. Fourth, by thinking of Kant's antagonisms as problems or pathologies of the individual man, they fail to see the connections between Kant's problematic views and the systems of injustice and unjust ideologies that mark our world today. In failing to see these connections they diminish the impact that Kant's problematic views had and instead of grappling with them, these scholars are too quick to gloss over them or correct them to construct a better Kant. I also hope to have shown that scholars in both Kant's Inclusive Universalism Camp and Critics have not engaged with Kant's sexism and racism from a richly intersectional lens, failing to notice and problematize the ways in which Kant's concept of women is fundamentally racialized.

Mills, Allais, Kleingeld, McNulty, and Fleishhacker, on the other hand, take up the question of race, but they also use single-axis frameworks of analysis which generate misunderstandings, erasures, epistemic harms, and missed opportunities for insights. By using a single-axis framework of analysis Mills and McNulty ignore Kant's views on women, and they miss important data points which seem to support their analyses. By focusing on Kant's views on race and ignoring the ways in which race and gender are co-constituted in Kant, they miss important aspects of Kant's racism and how it is tied to the colonial and enlightenment assumptions about the white race's superiority. But if their accounts establish that Kant was deeply racist, why should we ask for a more intersectional analysis that take gender and sexuality into consideration? After all, their analysis capture non-white women's, unlike the feminist critiques that only track gender and thereby erase and misrepresent Kant's sexist

view about non-white women. I think an intersectional analysis that takes gender, sexuality and race into account is still needed to capture the ways in which non-white women are ungendered in Kant. Furthermore, since heterosexual gender and sexuality play such an important role in Kant teleological anthropological account of moral development, I think it is important to show that non-white women are constructed as inferior based on their inability to express feminine characteristics in the right way.

Allais and Kleingeld do a much better job at keeping both Kant's racism and sexism in mind throughout their analyses. In their respective work, they take up both Kant's treatment of women as well as Kant's treatment of non-white races. However, they still operate on a single axis mode of analysis, at times using gender and at other times using race as the relevant analytic, and sometimes making comparisons and analogies between the two. One might think that an analysis that considers both race and gender is, by definition, intersectional; however, that is not the case. Kleingeld and Allais engage in parallel analyses of Kant's views on gender, on the one hand, and race, on the other hand, but they fail to analyze gender and race at their intersections. Allais also suggests that we take Kant's views on women as a guide to understanding his views on non-white people. Here we can see that the analyses are carried out in terms of a single concept (race or gender) and then analogies are made between the two cases. Such a framework is not intersectional because it can only recognize and diagnose racism or sexism, but it cannot shed light on or accommodate the possibility of sexist-racism. This framework erases the identities of non-white women who are harmed by Kant's sexism and racism, and it prevents us from seeing the different ways in which Kant's conception of gender and race co-constitute each other.

Because the literature has not approached Kant through an intersectional framework, the fact that Kant operates with an essentially raced conception of gender and womanhood (specifically) has been ignored. Kant scholars have not properly recognized and grappled with the fact that Kant thinks womanhood is only expressed in civilized societies, by which he means white European societies. We

have ignored very important connections between Kant's sexism and racism, and we have ignored the depth of Kant's sexism towards non-white, non-heterosexual women. This omission, again, leads us to accept his theory as "not deeply sexist" because we are only looking at the theory's sexism as it relates to white, heterosexual women and ignoring that things are probably much worse for women whom Kant regarded as inferior on several counts.

I have tried to show the gaps in analysis and understanding that result from the single axis approaches that are commonly used to think about Kant's treatment of non-white people (his racism) and his treatment of women (his sexism). Now, my goal is to show that these gaps can be filled by looking at Kant's treatment of women through an intersectional lens. I show that when we look at his treatment of women through an intersectional lens, we recognize that Kant's concept of women is in fact colonial. Once we open our minds to the reality that gender and race intersect and are co-constituted, it becomes clear that Kant uses gender, and specifically womanhood, to establish racialized differences that portray white people as superior and civilized and non-white people as inferior, savages, too primitive and animalistic to have proper gender identities. I thus argue that only through intersectional frameworks of analysis can we capture what María Lugones called the coloniality of gender (the ways in which gender is used to enforce colonial domination) at work in Kant's philosophy. Furthermore, once the coloniality of gender is identified in Kant, the so-called woman and race questions are not as easily dismissed because they are shown to be connected with larger Eurocentric and colonial logics and ideologies that are in the background of Kant's philosophical projects.[30]

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[30] I have discussed views that help me show gaps and misunderstandings that I hope to address in my reconstruction of Kant's account of womanhood (Chapter 3). However, many Kant scholars have taken more radically critical approaches to Kant in recent years, and I see my project as building on their trailblazing scholarship. Some of the scholars I build on in Chapter 3 include Lu-Adler (2023), Larrimore (2008), Marwah (2022), Valdez (2022), Mensch (2017), Pascoe (2023), Sandford (2018).

CHAPTER 3: WHICH WOMEN? AN INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF KANT

1. Introduction

In recent years, academic philosophers have revolutionized Kant studies by insisting that we responsibly contend with Kant's racism and sexism. On the one hand, Charles W Mills, Robert Bernasconi, Huaping Lu-Adler, and others have forcefully criticized Kant's racist views while arguing that his racism cannot be dismissed as tangential to his moral and political theories.[31] On the other hand, Helga Varden, Pauline Kleingeld, and many others have put forth powerful critiques of Kant's sexist views.[32] However, these otherwise powerful critiques have focused exclusively on gender or on race while neglecting their intersections. Because most critical Kant scholars analyze Kant through a single axis (race *or* gender), the critical literature on Kant has not recognized the racism that grounds Kant's views on gender. I fill in this gap by showing that race *and* gender are co-constructed in Kant's account of womanhood, generating morally significant patterns of racist sexist exclusions.[33] In this chapter, I put forth an intersectional feminist critique of Kant's account of womanhood to show the racist sexism that standard single-axis approaches to dealing with Kant's racism and sexism miss. [34]

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[31] See Lu-Adler (2022a, 2022b, 2022c), Mills (2005, 2014, 2019), Bernasconi (2005, 2011), Larrimore (2008), Valdez (2022), among others.

[32] For some examples of work that takes up Kant's views on women but ignores the racist-sexist exclusion of non-white women see Marwah (2013), Varden (2017), Mikkola (2011), Okin (1982), Rumsey (1989). See Dilek Huseyinzadegan and Jordan Pascoe (forthcoming) for an excellent discussion of the ways in which Kant scholarship has neglected intersectional approaches to race and gender.

[33] Throughout the paper, I try to highlight the racialization of womanhood and the exclusion of non-white women by writing "(white)" before "women" and before "womanhood" whenever appropriate. However, when describing Kant's account of womanhood from his perspective, I omit the qualifier "(white)" to emphasize that Kant took himself to be describing *all* women insofar as he thought that only those who fit his account (white women) counted as proper women.

My argument proceeds as follows. In Section 2, I reconstruct Kant's account of womanhood to show that he conceived of it as a product and mark of civilization. [35] In Section 3, I argue that Kant thought only white people could achieve civilization, making his conception of civilization and thereby womanhood racialized and racist.[36] In Section 4, I show that, according to Kant, proper (white) women play a necessary role in humanity's moral development such that by rendering non-white women incapable of womanhood he thereby renders them incapable of playing a role in moral development. Finally, in Section 5, I suggest that we cannot cleanse Kant's moral theory from the racist sexism embedded in his account of womanhood by simply severing the *Groundwork*'s *a priori* account of humanity from the developmental account of humanity that we get in the *Anthropology* and other empirical works.[37]

2. Womanhood as an Achievement of Civilization

Kant's account of womanhood is most clearly spelled out in his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. He assumes that there are two genders or sexes, man and woman, to whom Nature gave complimentary roles so that they could preserve the species through "sexual partnership" (*Anth* 7:303). Kant says, "…love of the other sex is to maintain the species. Through the general mixing of the sexes, the life of our species…is to be maintained" (*Anth* 7:276). He emphasizes the importance of reproductive heterosexual sex, but adds that mere "physical union" (*Anth* 7:303) or random sexual encounters are insufficient to achieve Nature's purposes. To support men and women's capacity (as rational animals) to preserve the species, Nature also gave them social inclinations so

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[35] Holly Wilson argues that, according to Kant, womanhood is only achievable in civilized societies, but she does not acknowledge the racist exclusions embedded in this account of womanhood. Jordan Pascoe has also argued that womanhood is a product of civilization. She examines Kant's views of gender in the context of his political philosophy, whereas I focus on his moral philosophy. See Wilson (1998) and Pascoe (2023).

[36] I see Kant's arguments as contributing to the normative conception of gender as a feature of whiteness. Tiffany Lethabo King has brilliantly explained the phenomenon of normative gender as a feature of whiteness (Lethabo King 2016, p. 1028). Jordan Pascoe has made important interventions in Kant scholarship by bringing King's insights to bare on Kant's racist-sexist account of gender (Pascoe 2022, p. 39).

that "their sexual partnership would persist in a domestic union" that is "harmonious and indissoluble" (*Anth* 7:303). Furthermore, women were specifically designed to promote Nature's purpose through the expression of feminine characteristics. Thus, Nature's end in creating femininity reveal its higher designs for the human race which are "1) The preservation of the species, 2) the improvement of society and its refinement by women" (*Anth* 7:305-306). I find it helpful to think of women as playing two broad functions in Kant's account: 1) arousing men's desire, getting them to submit in marriage, and maintaining the domestic union, and 2) improving and refining society.

In part two of the *Anthropology,* under the section on "The Character of the Sexes" Kant writes,

> "…one can already assume that the provision of nature put more art into the organization of the female part than of the male; for it furnished the man with greater power than the woman in order to bring both into the most intimate physical union, which, insofar as they are nevertheless also rational beings, it orders to the end most important to it, the preservation of the species" (*Anth* 7:303).

Nature made women fearful of anything that could harm their embryos and, because of this fear, women are drawn to form partnerships with men for the sake of physical protection (*Anth* 7:303). Since men are physically stronger, Nature made up for this disparity in strength by giving women the feminine characteristics through which they can artfully control men's desire for her. Kant thinks women secure protection from men through what he calls "the indirect art of domination" (*Anth* 7:273).

Kant cites women's power to influence men through sex as a prime example of this art. He describes it as, the power "of the female sex by means of love which she inspires in the male sex, in order to use him for her purposes," by appealing to his desire for sex (*Anth* 7:273). Women use their charm rather than their physical strength to rule men by directing their charm towards men's sexual desire and their desire to submit (*Anth* 7:273). By charm, Kant means women's ability to make

themselves pleasing to men and make themselves the object of their desire (*Anth* 7:307). Kant says

that women have an inclination to "extend her charms over all men whose fortunate circumstances

makes them marriageable" and though this behavior (called coquetry) is in ill repute, it serves a

purpose. Using their charm to entice and control other men's desire ensures women's well-being by

guaranteeing that if they become widows, they "would not be lacking in suitors" (*Anth* 7:305). In

other words, even married women want to charm other men to ensure that someone (another man)

will want to marry them and provide for them if their husbands die. Kant says that in societies where

gallantry is fashionable and this kind of behavior is accepted, "the feminine character reveals itself,"

(*Anth* 7:305) suggesting that charming men for the sake of protection is characteristic of women,

even if societal norms restrict the expression of this feminine trait. And what does Kant mean by

women's charm? In this same section of the text, Kant says that women dress up to outdo each

other in charm, and that they make themselves the objects of everybody's taste (*Anth* 7:307). These

remarks suggest that women's charm is their ability to make themselves pleasing to men so that men

will desire them and court them.

   However, as we have seen, Kant suggests that sexual partnership cannot persist outside of a

domestic union, and a woman is guaranteed "masculine protection" (*Anth* 7:306) only through a

stable partnership with a man. Women's well-being is not secured unless men submit themselves to

them (and they submit themselves to men) in a domestic union. So, to secure protection, women

must also control men's desire by withholding sex until after marriage. Kant says,

> "She acquires confidence early in her ability to please. … The woman *refuses*, the man *woos*; her surrender is a favor. - Nature wants that the woman be sought after, therefore she herself does not need to be so particular in her choice (in matters of taste) as the man…pleases the woman if only his physique shows that he has the strength and ability to protect her… She must appear to be cold in love, whereas the man must appear to be full of affect" (*Anth* 7:306).

 Confident in their ability to please, women get men to court them while withholding the sexual

gratification that men desire (*Anth* 7:306). They appear cold and pretend to be disinterested so the

man will pursue them and submit themself to them in marriage. Kant says, "In a civil society the woman does not give herself up to the man's desire without marriage, and indeed *monogamous* marriage" (*Anth* 7:304). According to Kant, women use their charms to entice men's desire and once they have aroused men's desire, they play hard to get and deny men's advances. In this way, women secure the domestic union that guarantees them physical protection and freedom (*Anth* 7:309). Kant says that women use these strategies to control men's desire to submit, and in the context of this conversation, submission between the sexes happens within marriage.

Furthermore, in Kant's discussion of the indirect art of domination, he says that women use their charm to control men by appealing to their desire for sex which engenders, or is one and the same as, their desire to submit. This peculiar desire to submit occurs because men desire sex but women do not allow them to satisfy this desire unless men submit to them in marriage. Through their charm, women get men to marry them and protect them by using men's desire to submit to marriage for the sake of sex. Kant suggests that if men refuse to get married, women would suffer because they would be reduced to a mere means for men's sexual gratification, thus highlighting that women must make submission through marriage a condition for allowing men to gratify their sexual desires through intercourse. According to Kant, women use their feminine traits to entice men to submit to them through marriage so that they will not be used as mere means for sexual gratification.

The first function of the feminine traits is to control men's desire and get them to enter a domestic union. But the feminine characteristics continue to play an important role in making the domestic union harmonious and long-lasting. We thus turn to the feminine characteristics' second function. Kant thinks that the husband and the wife will both want to dominate in their relationship so the union can only endure in harmony if each person dominates in a different sphere. He writes, "In the progress of culture, each partner must be superior in a different way" (*Anth* 7:303). While

the man continues to dominate in physical strength, the woman dominates by disarming him and insisting that he treat her gently.

Kant identifies women's loquacity, their expression of sadness through tears, and their engagement in domestic strife as feminine traits through which women disarm men and rule in the domestic sphere. Kant says that the man loves "domestic peace" and submits to women's rule "simply in order to not find himself hindered in his own concerns" (*Anth* 7:304). Women, unlike men, do not "shy away from *domestic warfare*" and when men reproach them or don't give them what they want, they disarm men through their eloquence, loquacity, and through their tears. Through the expression of these feminine characteristics, women dominate men by demanding gentle treatment, ruling over household affairs, and getting men to feel sympathy for them, protect them, and indulge their desires. As we have seen, the feminine characteristics allow women to dominate men by arousing their desire, getting them to submit in marriage, and maintaining a stable domestic union by ruling in the domestic sphere and demanding gentle treatment and indulgence. We will come back to the last use of the feminine characteristics as it is closely related to the refinement of society that is needed for moral development. It is important to note that Kant thinks the expression of these feminine characteristics is necessary for women to be protected and treated well, for the domestic union to endure and for Nature's ends to be promoted.

To be a woman, for Kant, is to express the characteristics described above. So, who counts as a woman, according to Kant? Throughout his discussion of the character of the sexes, Kant speaks of femininity as a product of civilization. Speaking of the feminine characteristics, he says,

> "In the crudest state of nature one can no more recognize these peculiarities than those of crab apples or wild pears, which reveal their diversity only through grafting or inoculation; for culture does not introduce these feminine qualities, it only allows them to develop and become recognizable under favorable conditions" (*Anth* 7:303).

Here, Kant says that the feminine characteristics that enable women to dominate men and achieve what he pretends to be equality in a stable domestic union are only developed in civilized societies.

He presents ways of being or practices that are specific to a particular (European) culture and society such as monogamy, heterosexuality, a particular kind of marriage, the relegation of women to the domestic sphere, etc. as natural and normative. He associates these social arrangements with a presumed (quasi) universal femininity that must be expressed for men and women to interact in ways that conform to Nature's plans for humanity. According to Kant, civilization does not create the feminine characteristics, but only enables these natural feminine qualities to be expressed. He suggests that womanhood is the expression of a natural set of characteristics, the potential for which all women possess but only civilized or proper women can express. This amounts to an ungendering of uncivilized women which is made explicit in the *Friedlander* lectures where Kant is recorded as saying, "if one takes unrefined nations, then the woman is not at all to be distinguished from the man; she does not have the charms which she has in the developed state, she must work by strength in just the same way as the man" (*Anth-Frie*, 25:699). He claims that when the conditions of civilization have not been established, women do not express their gender and this failure to express their gender (their ungendered status) leads to their subjugation and considerably limits their role and status in society.

Kant maintains that only women in civilized societies can express the feminine characteristics, and the ungendered status of "uncivilized women" explains their powerlessness and the unjust treatment they supposedly receive in the following ways. First, uncivilized women are unable to charm men into submitting to them in marriage, or at least the kind of marriage where both parties are supposedly equal. Kant says that without marriage women would be reduced to mere means for men's sexual satisfaction, and we might infer that this is exactly the fate of uncivilized women for Kant.[38] Second, on Kant's account, uncivilized women are incapable of

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[38] Though they might not be morally responsible for their uncivilized state, their primitiveness is identified by Kant as the cause of their subjugated condition.

forming and maintaining a harmonious and stable domestic union. Third, unlike civilized women, uncivilized women do not rule over the domestic sphere and are therefore treated like a "domestic animal" trailing behind the man with all his household goods (*Anth* 7:304). Fourth, uncivilized women do not have the kind of control over men that allows them to refine and improve society. Since Kant thinks that the feminine characteristics play a crucial role in the improvement and refinement of society, and he thinks that uncivilized people are incapable of expressing these characteristics, it follows that they are also incapable of progressing and improving in the relevant sense.

3. Civilization as Whiteness

We have established that only civilized people can express the feminine characteristics, so only civilized women are proper women. But who is Kant referring to when he talks about civilized people? We find some clues in the section of the *Anthropology* entitled "The Character of the Peoples" where Kant describes the character of different European nations.[39] In the beginning of the section Kant says a people, or a number of human beings in a given region "…that recognizes itself as united into a civil whole through common ancestry, is called a *nation* (*gens*)…" (*Anth* 7:311). Kant thinks of a nation as a group of people who belong to a civil union and who have a common descent. Right away we see that Kant identifies nationhood with civilization, the concept we want to know more about in order to understand who is included in the category "woman."

Before describing the character of several European nations, Kant takes up the question of what determines a nation's character. He rules out the possibilities that the character of a nation is

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[39] See Nicholas Hudson (1996) for an excellent discussion of the relationship between the concepts of nation and race. Hudson argues that the Enlightenment writers divorced the two concepts. I think we should be cautious when thinking about how divorced these two concepts are for Kant. As I will suggest in this section, the two concepts *seem* to come apart in Kant as they pertain to white people and nations. In many ways, this coming apart is only apparent because it is in fact whiteness as a racial category that allows white European nations to establish a national character that is not determined by their race. However, this "transcendence" of race is due to the people's whiteness and in that sense, nationhood is still tied to race if not necessarily determined by it in the case of white people.

determined by the kind of government it has, it's climate or geographical features (*Anth,* 7:313). Rather, according to Kant, the innate, natural character of the nations "lies in the blood mixture of a human being" (*Anth* 7:319). For Kant, differences in the people's blood determine differences between nations' natural characters. This emphasis on blood is important because elsewhere Kant suggests that blood determines race. In his essay "On the Different Races of Man," Kant explains racial differences in terms of differences in blood. For example, Kant says,

> "The Kalmuckian race appears to be the purest among the Khoschuts, to be somewhat mixed with Tartaric blood among the Torguts, and more so among the Dzungarians…Thus the mixing of Tartaric and Hunnish blood has produced half-races in the Karakulpacks, the Nagajens and in others" (VRM, 2:432).

That Kant thinks race is determined by blood is evidenced by the claim that when two people of different blood reproduce, the mixture of blood results in mixed race, or half-blood offspring. Since Kant holds that the characters of the nations are determined by blood, and he thinks that blood determines race, we can infer that Kant thinks the characters of nations are determined by the race of those who make them up. In other words, for Kant, to say that the character of a nation is determined by the composition of the blood is just to say that the character of a nation is determined by the people's race.

As we will see below, Kant says that the national character of nations whose people have pure European blood is determined by culture. However, this isn't at odds with the idea that blood determines the character of a nation. As Mark Larrimore has persuasively argued, Kant seems to think of whiteness as the transcendence of race.[40] Though whiteness is a race, white people's race allows them to transcend the barriers to development that non-white people's races impose on them. White people can develop culture because their white race does not restrict them, or determine them biologically, in the ways that non-white people's races restrict and biologically

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[40] See Larrimore (2008).

determine them. According to Kant, the characters of nations made up of pure race white people are determined by their blood in the sense that their white blood allows them to transcend their biology and determine themselves through culture.

We have thus uncovered that race as blood determines a nation's character for Kant. Now let's explore the relationship between a nation's character and its degree of civilization. In his discussion of the character of nations, Kant calls England and France "the most civilized nations on earth…" and he says that "because of their inborn character," they "are probably the only peoples to which one can assign a definite and…unchangeable character" (*Anth* 7:311-312). According to Kant, the French and English are the most civilized nations[41] and therefore are the only nations who can be assumed to have a particular and stable character. For Kant, the degree of civilization that a nation has seems to be directly tied to the stability and particularity of the nation's character.

After describing the most civilized nations, there is a shift in the discussion where Kant goes on to discuss nations whose characters are less well defined.[42] Kant sharply distinguishes between England and France who have stable and distinct characters, and are entirely defined by their culture, on the one hand, and the other nations whose "national peculiarity" comes from their nature and the mixture of different tribes, on the other hand. In the latter group, Kant places the Spanish who he says, "arose from the mixture of European blood with Arabian (Moorish) blood" (*Anth* 7:316). Kant emphasizes the Spanish people's mixed blood as the feature which distinguishes them from the previously discussed civilized nations, attributing their worst characteristics to their non-white blood/heritage. Among the negative characteristics that Kant names is that the Spaniard "does not travel in order to get to know other peoples…" (*Anth* 7:316). In a footnote to this remark, Kant explains that "The limitation of spirit of all people who are not prompted…to get to know the

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[41] He suggests that though Germany also has this status, he cannot explicitly include it because to do so would be self-praise (*Anth* 7:311).
[42] See Ines Valdez's (2022).

outside world with their own eyes, is something characteristic of them, whereby the Frenchmen English, and Germans favorably differ from other peoples" (*Anth* 7:316). Here, Kant says that the three European nations who are the most civilized and whose blood is purely white do not share this negative attribute. This remark suggests that this negative characteristic of having a "limitation og spirit" (and presumably other negative characteristics) which place mixed blood nations lower on the hierarchy of civilization is attributable to their non-white blood. If Kant had not made it so clear that the difference between the more civilized nations and those that are less civilized is that they have mixed blood, we might not be entitled to draw the conclusion that the lower degree of civilization of these nations is due to their non-white blood.

However, if we consider Kant's sharp division between civilized, pure blood nations versus nations with impure, mixed-race blood along with his remarks regarding the latter groups as inferior to the former, we are led to conclude that Kant thinks pure white blood allows for a degree of civilization in a people that is foreclosed for those whose blood is mixed (and presumably those who completely lack European blood). Since Kant explicitly identifies European blood with the white race, European blood means the same thing as white race in Kant (*Of the Different Races*, 2:432). Kant places the Spanish at the bottom of his hierarchy by appealing to white and non-white blood, associating the former with a potential for civilization and the latter with obstacles to the development of a stable character and a civilized state. Here, Kant's racist ranking of nations from most to least civilized is glaringly apparent as he appeals to blood/race as that which determines a nation's degree of civilization. As we can see, in describing the character of nations, Kant sets up a hierarchy among the nations he discusses, placing purely white Europeans at the top as the most civilized.

In Kant's discussion of the characters of the nations, we see that character is tied to the degree of civilization that is exhibited by a nation, the most civilized nations displaying particular and

stable characters. Furthermore, the character of a nation is determined by the blood of its people which determines the people's race. It turns out that the concept of a civilized nation and people is racialized through the raced concept of blood. Civility is characterized as distinctive of white European nations and people, while non-white blood is depicted as diminishing civility and tainting people's and nations' characters and ability to determine themselves through culture (remember that Kant says the most civilized nations' characters are determined by culture and the least civilized are also determined by their mixed heritage). Furthermore, the racism in Kant's account of civilized nations is manifest in his complete omission of non-European countries from the discussion. When this omission is considered alongside the various references to white blood (white race) as a distinctive attribute of civilized people, we can infer that Kant thinks non-European non-white nations lack the character and degree of civility that makes a people and a nation worthy of consideration when theorizing about civilization.

Now we can appreciate that when Kant says that the feminine characteristics are only expressed in civilized societies, he is at the same time saying that these characteristics are only expressed by white people in white (or white enough) European nations. In drawing these connections, we come to understand that the concept of gender, and womanhood more specifically, is racialized in Kant—gender expression is a mark of civility which is synonymous with whiteness. Kant's normative account of womanhood as a product of civilization along with his racialized account of civilization entail that when he talks about women and their status, he is referring to white European women exclusively. We cannot properly grapple with the racist implications of Kant's sexist views and the racist sexist implications of his moral theory unless we recognize that white women and non-white women have radically different statuses in Kant's theory. For example, some argue that Kant's theory is not irredeemably sexist because he thinks women play a crucial role in moral development. However, these attempts to absolve Kant of deep sexism ignore the fact that

only white women count as proper women for Kant, and only they play a role in moral development. As we will see below, Kant thinks women play a valuable role in preparing society for morality *because* of their ability to express the feminine characteristics. It follows that those uncivilized women who are ungendered and cannot express the feminine characteristics cannot play this morally valuable role as do their white counterparts.

4. Womanhood & Moral Development

The significance of Kant's racist sexist account of womanhood becomes clear when we understand the role Kant attributes to proper (white) women in his account of humanity's moral purposes. In the *Friedlander* lectures Kant says that the study of the sexes is "the greatest instance where the study of the human being interests [us], and where the most purposiveness is also discovered in the predisposition of nature" (*Anth-Frie*, 25:697). As we have seen before in the *Anthropology*, Kant thinks that Nature has two aims for human beings that are achieved by the two sexes coming together: the preservation of the species and the improvement and refinement of society by (white) women. We have seen how (white) women use the feminine characteristics to charm men into marrying them and once married, to maintain a harmonious union by disarming men and getting men to treat them gently. But we have yet to take up the most important and morally relevant part of Kant's account. Kant thinks that (white) women's control of men within domestic relations not only maintains the domestic union, but it also serves to refine men and society as a whole. Kant explains that through their weakness and other feminine features, (white) women control men into acting in more refined ways. He says that a society of only men would degenerate "into conflict, [a] know-it-all attitude, and quarreling, but that is not the case in a society with women" (*Anth-Frie*, 25:706). In short, Nature's second aim for proper (white) women is the refinement of society. Furthermore, he says that the first aim of reproduction and preservation of the species has to do with animality, while the second aim of refining society has to do with

humanity. Kant explicitly says that, unlike the second aim, the first aim is one that humans share with non-human animals, locating the first aim in the realm of animality and the second in the realm of morality (*Anth-Frie*, 25: 707).

As Jordan Pascoe (2022) has argued, according to Kant, non-white women can only serve one of Nature's purposes Pascoe (pp. 38-39). They can reproduce but cannot develop the moral or pre-moral attributes in others through the refinement of society. Kant claims that (white) women use their feminine characteristics to influence men into acting in civilized ways that make them receptive to morality. As we saw before, according to Kant, non-white women cannot express the feminine characteristics that would make them proper women. Their inability to express these characteristics is morally relevant because it prevents them from participating in the refinement of society which, according to Kant, is a necessary step to developing moral humanity and eventually a moral condition. Therefore, we see that non-white women are excluded from any kind of participation in moral development because their ungendered status precludes them from playing even an instrumental role in helping men develop their moral attributes and characters. Non-white women (and non-white people in general) can only promote the ends that Nature has set out for them with regards to their animality. They cannot promote the ends Nature sets out for them with regards to their moral humanity. Kant sees non-white people as capable of achieving the kind of life that develops their animality and promotes their ends as animals but incapable of the kind of life that promotes their ends as moral beings endowed with humanity.[43]

When we appreciate that womanhood and heterosexual sexual/domestic relations act as gatekeepers baring non-white people from developing humanity's moral ends, we can better understand the extent to which non-white people are excluded from Kant's moral community. Importantly, we come to appreciate that Kant bars non-white people from moral development in

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[43] See Inder S. Marwah's (2012) for an excellent discussion of how humanity is developed according to Kant's theory.

assigning proper (white) women the role of preparing society for morality while also claiming that non-white women are incapable of expressing proper womanhood.

5. Is Kant's Moral Theory Race & Gender Neutral?

I have shown that Kant's anthropological account of womanhood is racist sexist, but some might argue that I have not thereby shown that his *moral theory* is racist sexist in the same or similar ways. After all, one might think that Kant's racist sexist anthropological account of womanhood does not (and cannot!) determine the status that non-white women have in his pure or *a priori* moral theory. In other words, some might object that my arguments only show that we should throw out Kant's racist sexist empirical claims, but we can do this while at the same time rescuing his pure/*a priori* moral theory which (cleansed from the racist sexism of the teleology and anthropology) attributes full moral status to all human beings (including non-white women). In fact, this is a common strategy for dealing with Kant's racism and sexism: simply get rid of the empirical or impure parts of his moral philosophy which contain the racist and sexist claims and keep the pure parts which are gender and race neutral. Why worry so much about Kant's racist sexist account of womanhood if we can simply throw out this problematic bit of empirical or impure theory while preserving the pure moral theory where Kant's true (robust) moral universalism shines through uncontaminated by his prejudices?

I think this objection and the common strategy of trying to cleanse Kant's pure moral theory from the problematic empirical parts of his philosophy both rest on a misguided idea. The misguided idea is that the *a priori* moral framework Kant puts forth in the *Groundwork* is a complete moral theory, and as such, can stand alone and be separated from his anthropology and other empirical parts of his philosophy. According to this misguided interpretation, in the *Groundwork*, Kant puts forth a pure moral theory which grants equal moral standing to all individuals. Since, the reasoning goes, the *Groundwork's a priori* claims amount to a complete moral theory, we can save

Kant's pure moral theory by simply severing it from the problematic empirical stuff. Though it is true that Kant's racist sexist claims are empirical and can (in limited ways) be pulled apart from his *a priori* claims about morality, it is not true that his *a priori* claims comprise a moral theory on their own. The idea that Kant has a self-standing pure moral theory that can be separated from his empirical works seems to stem from a tendency to confuse the *a priori* component of Kant's moral theory for the whole moral theory (which, in fact, has an *a priori* moral framework and an empirical scheme of application). This tendency to confuse a part for the whole is usually buttressed by an erroneous reading of the *Groundwork's* Formula of Humanity as expressing a robust moral universalism according to which all individual human beings have equal moral standing. However, the Formula of Humanity only tells us about the moral status of humanity as rational nature, it does not by itself tell us anything about the moral status of individuals. In order to identify which individuals have developed or are capable of developing humanity and attaining it's moral status, we need the empirical scheme of application that Kant lays out in the *Anthropology*.

To dispel the misunderstanding that supports the objection, I suggest that we think of the *a priori* claims Kant makes in the *Groundwork* and in other critical works as a pure moral framework that can only tell us individuals' moral status when complimented by a scheme of application which Kant provides in his empirical works. In the *Groundwork's* Formula of Humanity, Kant defines humanity (*Menscheit*) as rational nature. He says that this moral property has incommensurable moral worth and ought to be treated always as an end in itself and never as a mere mean. Here, Kant is not talking about individual human beings and their moral status or worth, but rather about the abstract property of humanity and its moral worth and status. The *a priori* claims Kant makes about humanity in the *Groundwork* do not amount to a complete moral theory because they do not, by themselves, tell us anything about individual people's moral status. Since the Formula of Humanity does not tell us about the moral status of individual human beings, I suggest that we should think of it as a pure

moral framework which we must supplement with other components of Kant's moral theory to find out which individuals in fact have developed or have the ability to develop humanity and thereby achieve equal moral status. Since the *a priori* framework depends on an empirical scheme of application to tell us which individuals have equal moral status, it does not by itself constitute a complete moral theory. A moral theory is supposed to tell us what to do, and must thus reveal the moral status of particular individuals. If the Formula of Humanity does not tell us which individuals (or groups of individuals) have in fact developed humanity as rational nature and thereby achieved a moral status, it cannot tell us how we should behave. If it cannot tell us how to treat ourselves and others, then it is not a complete moral theory. I think the idea of a pure moral framework that necessarily relies on an empirical scheme of application better captures what Kant puts forth in the *Groundwork*'s Formula of Humanity. By thinking of the Formula of Humanity as a moral framework, we can appreciate that on its own, it does not tell us anything about the moral status of individuals and therefore does not, as many mistakenly believe, express a robust (gender and race neutral) moral universalism that establishes all human individuals' equal moral standing.

   This way of thinking about Kant's moral theory as composed of an *a priori* moral framework which identifies humanity as an abstract moral property, and an empirical application scheme that tells us which individuals have or can develop such a property aligns with the *Anthropology's* developmental account of humanity. In the *Anthropology's* developmental account of humanity, we find just the kind of application scheme that we need to figure out which individuals, and groups of individuals, have developed or can develop the property of humanity which the pure moral framework identifies. In the *Anthropology,* Kant describes how different groups of people develop their animality and humanity to different degrees. In fact, he argues that savages have overdeveloped their animality to such a degree that their animality obstructs their humanity from developing. Kant's discussion of different groups of people as having developed humanity to differing degrees supports

the view that his moral theory is composed of an *a priori* moral framework which identifies humanity

as a moral property, and an application scheme that tells us which individuals and groups of

individuals have in fact (or are able to) developed this property and achieve equal moral status.

Furthermore, I have argued that the application scheme which we find in the *Anthropology* tells us

that only those who are civilized can develop humanity, the property that grants them moral status.

So, it turns out that Kant's pure moral framework cannot stand on its own as a moral theory without

the racist sexist application scheme which tells us that humanity (and thereby moral status) cannot

be developed by non-white women. That is, Kant's moral theory proper necessarily depends on a

scheme of application according to which non-white people cannot develop humanity in the right

ways, making his moral theory racist sexist.

I might thus concede that Kant's pure moral framework does not itself exclude non-white

people from the moral community: the Categorical Imperative's Formula of Humanity as it is

presented in the *Groundwork* does not logically implicate Kant in racist sexism or racist sexist

exclusions and erasures. However, I would argue that his pure moral framework does not tell us

anything about who is in fact included in the category of moral humanity. Nor does this pure

framework tell us what respect for humanity entails for how we should treat specific individuals

who, according to Kant himself, have different moral capacities and are biologically determined to

develop the seeds and predispositions to animality and reason to vastly varying degrees (Baumeister,

2022). Though my account does not (nor is it intended to) show that Kant's pure moral framework

is racist-sexist, it does show that his moral theory, when considered as made up of two necessary

components, depends on a racist-sexist application of his ideal moral concept of humanity. My

arguments therefore show that the purity of the moral framework and its innocence with regards to

(and disregard of) race and gender is insufficient to rescue Kant's *moral theory* from racist sexism.

As Henry Allison, and Huaping Lu-Adler following him, have suggested, Kant's pure moral framework speaks to the moral status of humanity understood as rational nature (Allison 2011, pp. 209-218; Lu-Adler, 2023). Humanity, in this context, does not refer to individual human beings and much less to all individuals who are biologically human. Therefore, to make Kant's pure moral framework applicable to individual human beings and to derive non-ideal ethical principles from it, we have to identify how this abstract rational nature manifests itself and is developed in real human beings. David Baumeister persuasively argues that according to Kant, human beings develop their humanity by restricting the development of the seed of animality within them and properly developing the seed of reason. Furthermore, the seeds of reason and animality are inequitably developed throughout the human race. Not only does Kant think that certain individuals have developed the seeds of humanity to a greater extent than others, but he also thinks that race determines who is able to develop the different seeds. As Baumeister and others argue, Kant thinks that Native Americans and Black people, whom Kant calls savages, have overdeveloped the seeds of animality and underdeveloped the seed of reason. Because the development of the seed of reason requires that one's animality be restricted and suppressed, Native Americans and Black people cannot develop the seed of reason and cannot achieve the kind of rational nature the absolute worth of which is established by Kant's pure moral framework (Baumeister 2022, pp. 112). Baumeister's arguments are supported by my analysis which tells us that Kant thought non-white women incapable of expressing the feminine characteristics that enable white women to refine men and prepare society for moral development.

It's true that we could try to improve upon Kant's own moral theory by coming up with a different scheme for applying the pure concept of humanity to individuals. But trying to show that we can reform Kant's moral theory by changing the empirical application scheme is different from assuming that the whole theory is saved if we simply throw out the empirical racist sexist stuff. Once

we see that Kant's pure moral framework and the empirical scheme of application depend on each other to make a complete moral theory, we see that the project of making Kant's moral theory non-racist sexist requires us to ask questions such as, how do we avoid reproducing the same or similar systematic exclusions and erasures when applying a pure/ *a priori* moral concept like humanity, understood as rational nature, to individuals? It also requires us to confront the ethical risks inherent in Kant's methodology of moral theorizing, a methodology that identifies a moral property through *a priori* reasoning and depends on an empirical application scheme to tell us which individuals in fact have this property. Confronting these ethical risks demands that we grapple with the tendencies and legacies of smuggling dominant identities such as whiteness into concepts that are supposedly race neutral and inclusive (especially when knowledge production happens in places of power that are dominated by white people). I think an important component of confronting the legacy of racist-sexist exclusions and erasures that we inherit from Kant is to responsibly and earnestly ask whether Kant's *a priori* approach to moral theorizing is particularly liable to generating systemic exclusions and erasures that perpetuate epistemic injustice and cover up racism, sexism, coloniality, and other oppressive systems and ideologies with the rhetoric of universality.

6. Conclusion

Trying to cleanse Kant's theory of racism, sexism, and other antagonisms is a morally risky endeavor. As we have seen, racism grounds aspects of Kant's theory that, at a surface level, might appear race neutral. When we endeavor to rescue Kant from his racism and sexism, we risk reproducing his own racist sexist assumptions by deploying concepts that are raced (like the concept "women") as if they were race neutral. Thus, the trend in the literature to talk about Kant's views of women without acknowledging that these are views about white European women obscures the fact that the sexist implications of his theory outstrip what he says about those he considers women. The implications his theory has for non-white women are racist sexist and they remain hidden when we

focus narrowly on what he explicitly says about (white) women. There is great disagreement and controversy surrounding the relationship between the non-ideal components of Kant's theory, like his teleology, and the ideal account of morality that he puts forth in the *Groundwork* and the *Second Critique*. It is beyond the scope of this paper to spell out the right way to think about this complex relationship. However, I hope to have shown that Kant puts forth a raced and racist view of gender which excludes non-white women (and their kin) from participating in moral development. This shows that non-white people's status in Kant's moral system cannot be understood by analogy to (white) women's status (as many have suggested), and that non-white people's exclusion from the moral community is tied to their ungendered status in ways that have been misunderstood, ignored, or underemphasized in the literature. I have also argued that though Kant's ideal theory might not itself be racist sexist, it is in fact racist sexist in its application. Furthermore, Kant's moral theory consists of both ideal and non-ideal components and the racist sexist empirical components cannot be done away with. Without the empirical components, Kant's theory would fail to meet his own criterion for what a moral theory is supposed to do. Lastly, I hope my analysis has shown the perils of trying to cleanse Kant's theory of racism or sexism without taking seriously the ways in which gender, race, and sexuality are co-constructed and the ways that they shape seemingly neutral concepts and frameworks that ground Kant's theory— concepts and frameworks we inherit and inadvertently reproduce when we simply reject and ignore the non-ideal components of his moral theory.

CHAPTER 4: TEACHING KANT THROUGH 'WORLD'-TRAVEL

I can take on the cloak of the detached universal, but it is an uncomfortable garment. It is not me, and I do not do my best work wearing it. I seek self-liberation when I write from my particular stance.

—Mary Matsuda

There is no other recourse but to destabilize and displace the subject of modernity from its conceptual throne and to sponsor alternative ways of relating and knowing that no longer shut out from "home" the realities of Latino, Asian, African, and other culturally marginalized peoples.
—Ofelia Schutte

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I argue that when we teach Kant's theory in the standard ways, we ask (pressure) our minoritized and marginalized students to disembody and mis-embody, and in doing so we harm our students. My analysis of the epistemic harms generated by our standard teaching practices is based on Tiffany Lethabo-King's and Patricia Hill Collins's accounts of the pressures that structured their educational experiences and training as academics. I suggest that we can fruitfully understand Hill Collins's and Lethabo King's experiences as exemplary of the disembodiment that members of minoritized groups experience as we undergo academic training and (mis)education in the classroom. Here, I draw on Grant Silva's account of philosophy's "tendency to disembody its practitioners" to show that minoritized and marginalized practitioners of philosophy are likely to have similar experiences of disembodiment or the pressure to disembody as we undergo training in mainstream academic philosophy. I spell out some of the ways in which we enact the tendency to disembody when we teach Kant in the standard ways, explain how such disembodiment harms students (especially those belonging to marginalized and oppressed groups), and suggest that as teachers we ought to support our students in resisting the pressure to disembody. Finally, I present a decolonial feminist pedagogical practice inspired by María Lugones' account of 'world'-travel as a tool that can help us counteract and ameliorate the harmful tendency to disembody practitioners. I

argue that we should introduce our students to the practice of conscious 'world'-travel to help them engage with Kant's moral theory while avoiding or reducing the harm of disembodiment that characterize our current mainstream teaching practices.

2.   Lethabo-King and Hill Collins: Self-negation & Abandoning

In her essay "Humans Involved: Lurking in the Lines of Post-Humanist Flight," philosopher Tiffany Lethabo-King describes the process that students and scholars have to engage in when doing academic work on critical theory or philosophy. In detailing this process, she describes how practitioners are pressured to inhabit, sympathize with, and perform the dominant worldviews of white scholars whose work is centered as canonical in academic spaces. She says,

> "First, in order to demonstrate your scholarly due diligence, capacity for rigor, and abstraction, you must learn and rehearse the origins of and become fluent in the language, idioms, and grammar of Deleuze and Guattari or whichever white scholar is in fashion. Second, you must figuratively inhabit and empathize with the white scholar's very personal and particular existential and ethical questions (even if you cannot relate to her particular kind of situatedness or experience)....In other words, you must internalize and perform this worldview as if it applies to you…"(Lethabo-King, 2017, p. 173)

In this passage, Lethabo-King describes the process through which practitioners are pressured to abandon their perspectives and ways of knowing so as to adopt the mainstream worldview of "whichever white scholar is in fashion" (p. 173). According to Lethabo-King, to enter the conversation, the practitioner must learn a way of speaking and thinking (characterized by rigor and abstraction) that might not be their own, their communities, or their traditions. This entails becoming fluent in the grammars and vocabularies of the relevant theorists in order to speak and think in their terms. But it is not enough to talk the talk, the practitioner is also asked to see the world through the eyes of the white scholar's perspective. They are required to empathize with the white scholar's perspective along with the concerns and questions that motivate and shape their inquiry. Lethabo-King emphasizes that the white scholar's perspective (like any specific person's perspective) is very particular. The scholar has a particular identity, history, geopolitical location,

subjectivity, etc. that informs their perspective, interest, concerns, the questions they ask, and how they answer these questions.

Because the mainstream scholar's worldview likely differs from the practitioner's own, the latter might not relate at all to the scholar's "situatedness or experience," their "existential and ethical questions," or the worldview that that they theorize from and with (p. 173). This discrepancy and the resulting alienation is especially likely to emerge if the practitioner is not white, male, heterosexual, cisgender, or does not embody the identities or occupy positionalities that most mainstream theorists who are centered in academic spaces do. But regardless of how dissonant or foreign the theorist's worldview might be with their own, the practitioner must adopt it to play the academic game. In order to perform well, they must ignore the myriad ways in which their own world-view conflicts with the popular scholar's own—they must leave their worldview to "internalize and perform" the mainstream, often white male, worldview. The practitioner is asked to leave their own embodied worldview behind (disembody) and adapt the worldview that is dominant in those spaces (mis-embody).

Through this process, a white male worldview/perspective/narrative is pushed on students and practitioners as they are required (in order to participate in academic discourses) to inhabit, accept, and act in accordance with (perform) these very particular mainstream worldviews that are not their own. Furthermore, we see that complying with these pressures requires that practitioners like Lethabo-King whose racialized and gendered experiences as African American women differ from those of the predominantly white male scholars, must see the world from a perspective that is alienating to them. Importantly, Lethabo-King highlights that to occupy this mainstream (whitestream & malestream) perspective also entails adopting the white male scholar's "very particular existential and ethical questions" (p. 173). This means that the kinds of inquiries, discourses, and intellectual projects that practitioners can engage in are limited to those that depart

from, assume, and explore concerns and interests that do not speak to their own and their communities' ethical and existential concerns, priorities, and realities.

Some might wonder what is so harmful about the exercise that Lethabo-King describes. After all, aren't practitioners simply being asked to gain a new perspective that is different from their own? Isn't challenging oneself to see things from someone's else's perspective not harmful but beneficial, enriching? One might think that this exercise adds to one's understanding of the world without taking anything away. Once the practitioner has explored the dominant worldview, they might evaluate it, contrast it to their own worldview, critique it and even reject it. How can exploring a different perspective in this way be harmful?

First, though Lethabo-King highlights the particularity of the scholar's worldview and the alienation that inhabiting it might cause for the practitioner, this is not usually acknowledged in academic spaces. Usually, these scholarly exercises are framed as highly intellectual engagements with arguments and ideas that are conceived as independent of the theorist's and the practitioner's positionality, subjectivity, and worldview. When practitioners are asked to engage with dominant theories, they are not told that they are being asked to adopt a very particular worldview with its own specific existential and ethical concerns, assumptions, and so on. Especially when the theorist is revered as central or canonical in a particular field, the specificity of their worldview and the fact that it might be alienating to minoritized practitioners is completely ignored. In other words, practitioners are not supported in or encouraged to think of what they are doing as adopting (and distancing themselves from) a particular worldview. They are in fact discouraged from reflecting on their own worldview and from resisting the dominant worldview when it is incompatible with their own or unacceptable to them.

Second, Lethabo-King points out that empathizing with and articulating the theorists' worldview takes up the majority of, if not the entire, time during academic classes, conferences,

discourses, etc. There is little to no time spent questioning the fundamental concerns and assumptions that are derived from the theorist's worldview. Furthermore, Lethabo-King suggests that even when critique is allowed, the practitioner is asked to revise the dominant theory: refusals of the underlying worldview are not acceptable. I would also point out that practitioners are asked to inhabit and perform white scholars' worldviews in spaces where other worldviews (especially those of non-men or people of color) are not taken up or explored at all. So, it is not a question of exploring one of a multitude of worldviews and perspectives. Third, and most importantly for my purposes, the impression that marginalized and minoritized practitioners incur no losses when engaging in this exercise is illusory. In fact, adopting the dominant worldview often demands that practitioners with non-dominant subjectivities sacrifice their own perspectives and worldviews (even if just for some time), and this involves incurring significant epistemic harms.

To shed more light on what marginalized and minoritized practitioners stand to lose when engaging with mainstream theories in the ways dictated by academic and educational practices, I now turn to Patricia Hill Collins's account of the epistemic pressures she felt throughout her schooling. Whereas Lethabo-King describes what practitioners are expected to do with respect to mainstream theories and worldviews, Hill Collins describes the other side of the coin: what practitioners are pressured to abandon: their own worldviews, experiences, communities, etc. in order to engage with the mainstream worldviews in the way required by educational/academic norms.

 In her speech "Why Black Feminist Thought?" sociologist and activist Patricia Hill Collins (2013) describes the pressures she experienced to abandon her community's standpoint and adopt the dominant worldview throughout her elementary and high school education. The dominant worldview presented history and reality as constructed through the perspective of "elite, white, male heterosexual" (p. 48). He was positioned as the protagonist of history, while others like her, an

African American working-class woman, were depicted as mere props that were used to further the protagonists' interests. She writes,

> "By the time I graduated from high school, I had endured a sustained effort to foster self-doubt about my authentic, original voice. I was supposed to doubt what I saw, especially my own lived experiences as a young Black woman. I was encouraged to distrust both my own experiences and my own interpretations of the world. Moreover, I was supposed to replace the collective standpoint shared by my mother, my aunts, and the women in my African American, working-class neighborhood with the hero's view of the world that was taught in school. Taking on the hero's standpoint, not only of the world but also of myself, would make me a successful prop" (Hill Collins, 2013, p. 52).

Throughout her schooling, there was a standard mainstream narrative of reality (history, society, politics) that was constructed from the white European male perspective to the exclusion of African American perspectives. She remembers race being mentioned only once in her public education: when they studied slavery in her American history class. The history textbook managed to discuss slavery without paying attention to or accurately portraying the lives of African American people. The only time that Black people were mentioned they were reduced to a racist lie: "the slaves were happy because they sang all the time" (p. 53).

The book made no sense to her; she could not recognize the Black people who were supposedly portrayed in her textbooks. She knew Black people who loved to sing when they were happy, but she did not know and could not imagine any Black person who "would ever be so happy about being enslaved that he or she would sing about it in a state of contentment" (p. 53). She knew that these texts were not written from African American perspectives and that they did not represent the perspectives of those enslaved. Instead, her textbooks were full of elite, white, male heroes, and demeaning caricatures of the "others" portrayed from the white male perspective.

There are three harms involved in adopting mainstream worldviews that Hill Collins's account sheds light on. In adopting mainstream worldviews, minoritized people must: 1. Accept their erasure and the loss of self-understanding and collective knowledge that comes with it. 2. Doubt their experiences and those of their community members insofar as they contradict the

dominant world-view's accounts and portrayals. 3. Abandon the standpoints they share with their community members and, again, forfeit the opportunities for understanding, knowledge creation, political consciousness and action (among others things) that standpoints (exploring them and building them) afford marginalized people.

Succumbing to these pressures would have had severe consequences for Hill Collins's understanding of herself, her community, history, as well as the concerns, interests, and understandings that would motivate and shape her work as a scholar and activist. If Hill Collins had accepted the whitestream/malestream version of history that was pushed on her, she might not have understood the extent to which the United States was built on racist violence that continues to this day. She might not have understood that the stereotypes of African American women that she saw in her textbooks and which people forced on her were tools of oppression.

Hill Collins experienced what Miranda Fricker calls hermeneutic injustice as her education deprived her of the epistemic tools to make sense of her world, her history, her experiences, etc. The dearth of epistemic resources and epistemic harm would have been greater if she had succumbed to the pressures to which she was subjected. It is also important to understand that she wasn't offered the whitestream, malestream worldview as one of many possible worldviews that she was free to adopt and explore. Rather, this worldview was presented as the correct and universal one–the only version of reality that was available. Furthermore, adopting this view was not optional. It was not optional because her survival and success in school depended on accepting the "facts" and acting in accordance with what these "facts" said about who she was and her role in society. Not succumbing to these pressures would bring about very negative consequences for her. If she didn't buy (or pretend to buy) mainstream narratives, she might have been pushed out of school for not performing well or punished for being angry, irreverent, dangerous, etc. (being the Jezebel by refusing to play the role of the Mammy).

When pressured to adopt a mainstream perspective that is not their own, minoritized and marginalized practitioners endure the harmful pressure to accept their erasure, doubt their own experiences, abandon their communities' standpoints, disown, or leave undeveloped and unexplored their own existential and ethical questions, and abandon their own and their communities' interests and concerns. Furthermore, in adopting a worldview that is not their own, practitioners are vulnerable to accepting and internalizing harmful narratives and ideologies about themselves. The experiences that Hill Collins and Lethabo-King narrate expose a myriad of harms that minoritized, marginalized, non-white, non-male, lower-class students, and practitioners face in academic spaces.

In the next section, I suggest that we can helpfully think about at least some of what is going on in these accounts as exemplifying processes of disembodiment. I present what Grant Silva (2018) calls "academic philosophy's tendency to disembody its practitioners" (p. 2) as a helpful framework through which to think about the experiences described by Hill Collins and Lethabo King. Thinking about their accounts in conversation with Silva's diagnosis of the operations and harms of disembodiment in academic philosophy will help us understand how they are perpetuated in the mainstream philosophy classroom and how we can reduce and ameliorate these harms by adopting decolonial teaching practices.

3. Disembodied Practitioners

In his paper "On the Difficulties of Writing Philosophy from a Racialized Subjectivity" philosopher Grant Silva (2018) unpacks the "loss of voice" that many philosophers experience when doing philosophy, especially those trying to write from an embodied (racialized and gendered) subjectivity. He argues that this loss of voice is a result of philosophy's tendency to disembody its practitioners. Because of this pervasive disembodying tendency, for many, the act of writing and otherwise doing philosophy results in "alienation, estrangement" and a loss of self which is replaced with another sense of self that "may not really be you" (p. 2). According to Silva, philosophy

pressures its practitioners to disembody, insisting that who they are (in their raced, gendered, differently abled, etc. embodiment) does not matter philosophically. He argues that in mainstream academic philosophy, minoritized and marginalized practitioners are implicitly and explicitly told that their racialized and gendered (among other) embodiments should not be taken as philosophically relevant, legitimate points of departure for philosophical inquiry, or used as lenses through which to understand and analyze the world in their philosophical endeavors. Silva identifies the whiteness of philosophy as one of the main culprits responsible for the tendency to disembody so prevalent in the field. He follows the late Charles Mills' invaluable work on the whiteness of philosophy to argue that philosophy's whiteness results in the harmful systemic disembodiment of minoritized and marginalized practitioners in the field.

It is no secret that the vast majority of academic philosophers are white men, making it one of the least diverse fields in academia (Mills, 1998). Charles Mills referred to the overrepresentation of white people (predominantly cis-hetero men) in academic philosophy as philosophy's demographic whiteness (p. 3). Furthermore, he argues that philosophy's demographic whiteness, "basically helps to sustain a conceptual whiteness" (Mills, 2020, 37:30-39:22). In "Philosophy Raced, Philosophy Erased," Mills argues that the pervasive whiteness of philosophy presents very serious problems and obstacles for non-white people who enter the field. Besides explicit and implicit discrimination, microaggressions, tokenization and other forms of racist harms, non-white philosophers are harmed by the very self-conception of philosophy that is shaped by whiteness– philosophy's conceptual whiteness. According to Mills, philosophy's self-conception is shaped by what its majority white male practitioners have deemed universally relevant, true, and philosophically important. This means that certain issues related to race and racism, gender injustice, as well as other topics related to issues faced by minoritized people are seen as "nonphilosophy" (Silva, 2018, p. 3).

As Mills points out, according to dominant and mainstream conceptions of philosophy, philosophers are supposed to ask questions that transcend the particularities of space and time. In order to do this, we are expected to abstract from contingent material conditions such as our corporality, our gender, race, ethnicity, thus abstracting away from issues that are faced by or evident to a particular or local group of people. Mills is careful to acknowledge that there has been some discussions on these topics, e.g. race, in professionalized philosophy. However, even when there is some (though minimal) engagement with them, these topics and questions are considered peripheral or tangential. Labeled applied philosophy, "'special topics,'" these philosophical engagements are implicitly and explicitly demoted to the status of "not really philosophy" (p. 4). The marginalization and denigration of these topics, questions, and philosophical engagements partly stems from the fact that those who have been traditionally thought of as philosophers do not have the range of experiences and perspectives that people of color have. Many of the philosophers who have shaped and continue to shape Western and westernized philosophical canons and self-conceptions have not experienced the systemic harms of colonial, racial, and/or gender-based oppression. Moreover, their dominant identities have afforded them privileges and benefits under these oppressive systems. However, because their race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. are seen as the norm, they have not been forced to confront the various ways in which race, gender, sexuality, etc. matter and shape their lives and the lives of others.

Not only does philosophy's conceptual whiteness crowd out the topics of race, gender, ethnicity, etc. as philosophically irrelevant, it also determines the basic assumptions, norms and frameworks that ground philosophical inquiries. Following Mills, Silva argues that the particular subjectivities and perspectives of the predominantly white male practitioners of mainstream philosophy have achieved normative status in the field. The assumptions, interests and concerns that characterize privileged white subjectivities, perspectives, or standpoints have been established as

universal and necessary starting points for any inquiry that is accepted as properly philosophical. These dominant perspectives and worldviews are established as the norm. In other words, they are presented as capturing an objective and universal view of reality. Because of their normative status, white worldviews erase, exclude, and crowd out the perspectives of those with less privileged identities and more marginalized worldviews.

To understand the ways in which those with normative identities ignore how their identities shape their experiences, consider the following example. On the one hand, a Black girl who does not see her people and her experiences represented in school materials and classroom discussions might understand or sense that racism and sexism negatively affect her learning experiences. She knows/senses that race and gender matter, and that the dearth of intellectual engagement and critique that they merit make her education deficient and harmful. On the other hand, a white boy is more likely to see himself and his community represented in classroom materials and discussions. Because his identity and experiences are represented in the material, and the worldviews that are expressed match his understanding of the world, it will be more difficult for him to understand the materials and education he is receiving as deficient. He is less able than the Black student to recognize that something has gone wrong because the overrepresentation of his and his community's experiences, perspectives, histories etc. appears as an unproblematic depiction of reality–a universal representation of how things really are. Though race and gender (or to be more precise, systems of race and gender oppression) shape both these students' realities and experiences, the student with a dominant/normative identity is less likely to recognize this. Because he does not experience the erasure, marginalization, and other harms that the student with the non-dominant identity does, he ignores the epistemic injustice of it all. Because the white lens through which the materials represent reality is (or is resonant with) the lens through which he experiences the world (the class materials depict the world as it is for him), he is unaware of the overrepresentation of

white men and their perspectives and the underrepresentation of non-white people and their perspectives. Furthermore, because his worldview is presented as *the* worldview, he is encouraged to think of his very particular perspective as universal and objective, and to ignore the erasures and exclusions along gender and race lines that construct it.

Mills argues that philosophers have historically fallen prey to the kinds of blind spots that the white student in my example exhibits. According to Mills, philosophers have assumed that their social status and position are representative of the human condition, ignoring that their conditions are shaped by race and gender privilege that many other people do not have. He illustrates this by looking at the "basic assumptions" that mainstream philosophers have made about political subjectivity. Many mainstream philosophers depart from an "experiential starting point" of enjoying moral and legal equality that is recognized as well as protection of their interests by the state (Silva, 2018, p. 4). However, as Mills and Silva argue, those practitioners that do not enjoy dominant political subjectivities do not have the same or similar experiential points of departure. Their legal and moral equality is not recognized, and their interests are not protected by the state but rather frustrated and ignored for the sake of promoting the white population's interests. Because the political subjectivity that shapes mainstream philosophers' experiences is assumed to be universal, their group enjoys the status of racialized, and gendered, normativity. What in reality are white and male subjectivities and perspectives have achieved normative status. This normative status renders their whiteness and maleness transparent as they are assumed to be universal (human simpliciter). The worldviews shaped by transparent, dominant subjectivities are assumed to express a universal human perspective, and their supposed universality marks them as the correct starting points for investigations that yield universal and objective, and therefore "properly philosophical," knowledge and insights.

Philosophers are not only allowed but encouraged to ground their philosophical theorizing on a set of claims about human beings that only apply and appear indisputably true to those with dominant positionalities and subjectivities. Furthermore, the concerns, lines of inquiry, and projects that are understood as philosophically important are those that arise from the dominant subjectivities that are shared by most mainstream practitioners. As Silva explains, in an academic context where most professional philosophers rely on their own "racial white" self as a frame of reference for their philosophical discussions, their views' racial particularity is likely to be "obscured and the experience of "unraced" whites becomes the norm" (p. 4). Because the particular perspectives of the majority of practitioners is assumed to be neutral (a view from nowhere), the assumptions, concerns, etc. that come with these perspectives are established as the norm for philosophical thinking and theorizing. The starting assumptions and concerns that shape mainstream theorizing in philosophy in turn inform the standard philosophical method or set of methods that practitioners must follow in order to engage in philosophical dialogues and discourses, and to be understood as doing philosophy. Practitioners must "speak, write, and think in ways that historically make sense within a methodological context articulated predominantly by dead white men" (p. 4).

Following Mills, Silva argues that philosophy's "methodological constraints, meta-philosophical commitments, and normative ideals about the end goal of philosophical thought" are determined by what can be assumed, what seems commonsensical and true, and what seems to matter from these specifically white male perspectives (p. 3). Philosophy's conceptual whiteness results in a tendency to disembody its practitioners. Since dominant worldviews are regarded as neutral and commonsense points of departure for proper philosophical investigations, practitioners with marginalized subjectivities and positionalities are forced to abstract away from their particular embodied (raced, gendered, ethnicized) perspectives in order to engage in mainstream philosophical discourse on the terms set out by mainstream worldviews.

He says that philosophy is often conceived of as "the universal science of thought" through which practitioners try to answer big questions related to ethics, epistemology, metaphysics, etc. (p. 3). In order to ask these big questions, practitioners have to learn and practice particular ways of "speaking, thinking, and writing" that allow them to engage in the discourses of the great thinkers of the Western canon. Or as Silva puts it, practitioners must "achieve sufficient discursive breadth" so as to be "on the same page" as canonical Western thinkers. According to this perspective, philosophical thought requires us to transcend or overcome human difference by moving beyond the particularities of "our individual or collective historical and cultural contexts" to ask questions that pertain to all of humanity, speaking "across the ages" (Silva, 3).

The problem with this conception of philosophy, argues Silva, is that it requires practitioners to downplay or abandon aspects of themselves that are meaningful to them and their communities but are not shared by the majority white male thinkers whose subjectivities have set the terms of mainstream philosophical discourses and debates. In order to achieve common ground with mainstream philosophers and mainstream philosophical discourses, minoritized and marginalized practitioners must adopt mainstream subjectivities that are not their own. Practitioners are asked to think and speak with the concepts, language, terms that have been articulated by most practitioners, practitioners who occupy and articulate the terms of philosophical discourses from dominant (white, male, cisgender, heterosexual, middle to upper middle class, non-disabled, documented) perspectives. For practitioners who are minoritized or marginalized and who occupy non-dominant positions and subjectivities, achieving a common (assumed universal) ground entails ignoring or abandoning the racial or ethnic identities (among others) that might give rise to perspectives, assumptions, interests, concerns that deviate from the mainstream norms.

According to Silva, for marginalized practitioners, the pressure to disembody can only be countered through active resistance and a conscious effort to "keep sight of who they are while

philosophizing—which means being true to one's interests, writing on topics that they find fascinating (regardless of their disciplinary uptake), and relying upon ways of knowing informed by the particularities of human identity…" (p. 2). We must resist philosophy's tendency to disembody its practitioners if philosophy is to attract diverse practitioners who want to use philosophy to combat dehumanization, coloniality, racism, sexism, and other systems of oppression.

4. Transition: Lugones

Silva says that he begins his Latin American philosophy courses by asking students why who they are matters to philosophy. He begins by bringing attention to the philosophical importance of students' embodied selves as an effort to counter philosophy's tendency to disembody. Furthermore, Silva says that this question is central to Latin American philosophy because he sees this tradition as part of a movement to embody philosophy and to insist that *who* we are is philosophically relevant. This conception of Latin American philosophy and its characteristic task of bringing embodiment back to philosophy is deeply resonant with me as a Latina feminist. In fact, it was in the writings of Latina decolonial feminist María Lugones that I brought myself back to my embodiment and my authentic voice.

Through Lugones' philosophy, I was able to articulate why *who* I am mattered in my philosophical engagements with Kant's moral theory and why my previous engagement felt alienating; like a betrayal of myself and my people; a process of violent assimilation, a disowning parts of myself and my experience that became necessary for navigating the world when I immigrated to the United States. Through Lugones' philosophy I was able to identify the ways in which I had been operating in survival mode of assimilation in Kant scholarship. I had been applying the survival skills of assimilating into mainstream (whitestream and malestream) culture to engage in ways that were legible, deemed as philosophical, and helped me avoid exclusion and penalties (whether academic or social). These skills served me well in graduate school, but they were

causing me immense harm and keeping me from doing philosophy that meant something to me, philosophy for which who I am matters, beyond survival and professional advancement.

I am interested in using Silva's analysis of disembodiment for the sake of reducing harms and finding ways to help students navigate these harmful waters. If philosophy survives as a field where minoritized students and those who philosophize from marginalized perspectives can do important philosophical work without being significantly harmed, I think that would be a great and very welcomed outcome.[44] However, I am weary of tackling issues concerning whiteness, marginalization, and alienation in professionalized philosophy with the goal of saving the discipline or any goal other than reducing, addressing and ameliorating harms inflicted on the flesh and blood individuals to whom we are accountable—our students and fellow practitioners. I will suggest that we can employ María Lugones' decolonial feminist practice of 'world'-travel in the classroom to help our students actively resist disembodiment when we ask them to engage with Kant's moral theory. But first, let me spell out some of the specific ways in which we pressure students to disembody when we teach Kant's moral theory in the standard ways.

5. Disembodiment in Teaching Kant

When we teach Kant's moral theory by focusing solely on the so-called ideal components of his philosophy, we pressure students to disembody. These parts of his moral philosophy mostly found in the *Groundwork* and *The Critique of Practical Reason* present an abstract moral theory that appears to be race and gender neutral. First, this is problematic because we are asking students to think about morality and ethics by bracketing race, gender, sexuality, and other categories. But for some of our students, these identities shape their realities in ethically relevant ways such that a moral

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[44] Here, I follow Kristie Dotson's exploration of what it means to be a diverse practitioner in academic philosophy (Dotson, 2011 & 2012).

theory that abstracts away from these concepts and lived experiences makes absolutely no sense–it is completely foreign to them.

Second, we tell our students that Kant's moral theory is in fact gender and race neutral while leaving out or downplaying his writings on race and gender—writings that put into question the broader theory's supposed race and gender neutrality. In doing so, we ask our students to see themselves as unproblematically included in Kant's theory when, as I have argued, some of them might have in fact been excluded or erased from his theory based on their race, gender, and/or sexuality. For these students, seeing themselves as unproblematically included in Kant's moral theory can entail engaging in self-denial, abandoning their embodied standpoints along with their interests and concerns and those of their communities, and alienating themselves from their embodied identities.

As we focus on the more abstract aspects of Kant's theory, we also fail to provide important context for engaging with his philosophy: that Kant lived in a small town in Europe during a time of colonial expansion when non-white people were being dehumanized, massacred, exploited, and enslaved. We often teach Kant without providing the context of his life and the point of view from which he constructed his theory. We thus fail to acknowledge that he saw the world from a very particular position of privilege and relative power. By omitting this context, we don't give students the opportunity to consider how Kant's theorizing may have been shaped by his very particular experiences and worldview. Furthermore, we deprive students of information that might help them understand why Kant's views or methods might differ substantially from the views and methods that they and their communities might hold and use. By teaching Kant in a decontextualized way, we rob our students of the opportunity to consider whether Kant's approach to moral theorizing is an approach that works for them and their communities.

When we fail to provide the context and position from which Kant theorized, we deprive our students of important information that might help them understand the differences between their own worldviews, experiences, and perspectives and Kant's own. We ask our students to empathize with and inhabit a position that might only be achievable for them if they ignore their own positionalities and embodied experiences. Notice that the problem is not that we are asking them to engage in an exercise of perspective taking. The problem is that we are not honest about what exactly we are asking them to do. We do not tell our students that engaging with Kant might require them to try on a particular worldview (not a view from nowhere), and we keep important details about what this worldview included and what might have shaped it. When we fail to talk about the particularities of Kant's position and how they might shape his theory, we fail to acknowledge that Kant's theory presents a view from somewhere and that that somewhere might be very different from the somewhere from where our students see the world. We also harm our students when we fail to recognize that Kant's view might not be a view that they can share without alienation, self-negation, etc.

Furthermore, when we exclude or marginalize Kant's views on race and gender in the classroom, we ask our students to ignore as philosophically irrelevant the history of racism and sexism that we have inherited from influential thinkers like Kant, and ask them to ignore the racist and sexist ideologies that their philosophies reified and that shape our realities to this day. For example, by ignoring Kant's views on non-white women, we implicitly and explicitly tell our students that the ungendering and the inferioritized gendering of non-white women is philosophically irrelevant. This would be particularly harmful to non-white women whose experiences are marked by racist sexist systems of oppression and who might benefit greatly from exploring influential texts through which these racist, sexist, and colonial ideas were expressed and disseminated. By marginalizing Kant's views on race and gender we prevent our students from

drawing connections between Western knowledge production and their social and political realities. In doing this, we rob them of the opportunity to understand, as Huaping Lu-Adler puts it, the different stories of how we got here—a racialized world. We rob them of the opportunity to understand, for example, why their ancient philosophy classes do not cover Asian philosophy, to grapple with the effects this has on their education and self-conceptions as philosophically capable, and to challenge the legitimacy of this practice.

Finally, when we ignore or minimize Kant's racist and sexist views, we rob our students of the opportunity to decide for themselves whether the dehumanizing constructions of non-white people that we see in Kant are central to his theory. We rob them of the opportunity to explore the connections between Kant's antagonisms and the loftier Enlightenment ideas like universalism and humanism and grapple with the tough philosophical questions that surround these promising and yet axiologically ambivalent concepts. We might even encourage our students to follow our paths as Kant scholars and disseminators of Kant's philosophy without giving them the tools to think about what exactly they are doing when they ingest and disseminate his philosophy, and to think about how to do it without reproducing the harmful antagonisms that he espoused. Now that we have a better sense of the specific ways in which students are pressured to disembody when engaging with Kant's moral theory, I will present María Lugones' account of compulsory and playful 'world'-travel as a framework through which to teach Kant in ways that resist these harmful pressures.

6. 'World'-Traveling

Philosopher and decolonial feminist María Lugones, following Gloria Anzaldua and other Latina feminists before her, fought to bring embodiment back into philosophy and knowledge production. Following the women of color practice of producing "theories in the flesh" (Moraga, 1979), Lugones grounds her theorizing in her embodied experience as a Latina lesbian, immigrant living in the United States. Like many other queer women of color, Lugones' embodied experience

of being in different 'worlds' shapes much of her thinking. In her essay "Playfulness, 'World'-Travel, and Loving Perception," Lugones (1987) spells out her account of 'world'-traveling, a practice that is very familiar to people with multiple non-dominant identities and positionalities. She explains that people who have multiple identities and selves, like queer Latina immigrants, inhabit different 'worlds' and as they move through life, they must travel across these worlds, changing their epistemic frameworks, ways of being, acting, perceiving, and their very senses of self (p. 9). In the case of Lugones, some of the worlds she inhabited were the Anglo-dominated academic world, the heteronormative Latin immigrant world, and the queer women of color world.

According to Lugones, for her and others who do not have dominant positionalities or identities, there is a constant need to travel from non-dominant worlds where they feel at varying degrees of ease to dominant worlds where they are not at home. In their non-dominant worlds, people feel at home in the constructions of life, the practices and norms, and they are constructed in ways that resonate with their sense of self and the world–they are not alienated from these worldviews (p. 3). However, in dominant 'worlds,' minoritized people have to navigate norms and ways of being that feel alienating and foreign to them. They also are constructed in ways that do not reflect their own sense of self or identity. In these dominant 'worlds,' they are often constructed through dehumanizing or inferioritizing stereotypes. Lugones calls the survival practice of traveling from non-dominant 'worlds' to dominant 'worlds' compulsory 'world'-travel. 'world'-travel is often compulsory for people with non-dominant identities because they must travel to dominant 'worlds' in order to survive (p. 3).

As an example of this survival work, consider the undocumented immigrant who must go into the upper middle-class Anglo 'world' to earn a living as a nanny. She will often have to wear a uniform that marks her as "the help," speak English, adopt the right etiquette of blending into the background when around other children's parents at the country club, etc. Her ways of behaving,

thinking, perceiving, and the very frameworks through which she engages with her environment must change if she wants to keep her job–it is a matter of survival.

Furthermore, she must adopt characteristics that she might not recognize as her own like demureness, deference, passivity, etc. in order to get by in this 'world.' Whereas in her non-dominant 'worlds' she might perceive and interpret a group of parents chatting about their children as an invitation to socialize and bond, in this Anglo upper middle class 'world' she must interpret this scene as a cue to sit on the other side of the bleachers. Whereas in her 'world' she would not comply with aggressive orders given by strangers, in this 'world' she might find herself compelled to be obedient in the face of disrespectful demands.

She does all of this because she must play by the rules of this foreign 'world' to make a living and avoid harmful consequences. She must adhere to the norms that construct her as "the help" and avoid infractions such as talking "too much," infractions that might lead others to perceive her as a "willful Latina," "ungrateful immigrant," "insolent worker," etc. It is clear from the example that this kind of 'world'-travel is required for marginalized people who must enter dominant worlds in order to survive. We can also see that engaging in this kind of 'world'-travel can be harmful for the traveler as they must abandon their own ways of being and their own ways of understanding the world. Further harm is involved because they must often understand themselves and the world through the eyes of those who construct them as inferior, derivative, reduced to the instrumental, etc., while expending great efforts to avoid missteps and punishment.

Lugones began to reflect on her own travels across 'worlds' when she asked people in her academic and non-academic communities whether she was a playful person. To her surprise and disconcertment, she received opposite answers from each group. While her non-academic community members said that she was very playful, her academic colleagues said that she was not

playful at all. In hearing these contradictory responses, she experienced a sense of disorientation which many queer women of color experience as they travel between 'worlds.'

Her experience of being constructed differently in different worlds illustrates that there are multiple ways of construing reality and the people in it, and that different socio-political worlds exist. Lugones' experience suggests that there is no singular, univocal worldview or construction of reality that we operate under as we navigate the sociopolitical world. Rather, in different social spaces and communities, the 'world' and the people in it are constructed differently. Furthermore, people must travel across these different constructions of reality or "worlds," especially those who are multiply marginalized. Lugones' theory of 'world'-travel is her attempt to grapple with the reality of being different selves in different worlds. It captures the experience of those who are "outsiders to the mainstream of, for example, White/Anglo organizations of life in the US…" and highlights the ways in which outsiders must of necessity become flexible in shifting from the constructions of life in mainstream 'worlds,' according to which she is constructed as an outsider, "to other constructions of life where she is more or less 'at home'" (p. 3).

Lugones tells us that by 'world' she does not mean the totality of things that exist. She is not invoking the sense of possible worlds invoked in contemporary metaphysics debates *a la* David Lewis. Lugones thinks of 'worlds' as actual, not possible. They are places that are inhabited by "flesh and blood people" (p. 9). The philosopher Mariana Ortega gives a helpful gloss of what a 'world' is according to Lugones. She writes,

> "In Lugones's sense, 'world' can be understood as a place inhabited by "flesh and blood people"; an actual society, given its dominant or nondominant culture's description and construction of life in terms of the relationships of production, gender, race, sexuality, class, politics, and so forth; a construction of a small portion of society; an incomplete, visionary, non-utopian construction of life; a traditional construction of life (Lugones 2003, 87); or at the very least "a community of meaning" (144) in which meanings are a result of what Lugones calls an "ongoing transculturation, interworld influencing and interworld relations of control and resistance to control" rather than determined by ossified cultural codes (Lugones 2003, 26)." (Ortega, 2016, p. 65).

As Ortega explains, for Lugones a 'world' is an actual world that is shaped and determined by a society's culture, and the different constructions of life that are determined by ideologies, power relations, and other social and political formations. These various 'worlds' are constituted by communities of meaning in which ways of being and understanding are negotiated between its various members.

Another important aspect of Lugones' notion of 'world' is that she does not think of a 'world' as monistic. There are a plurality of worlds and no one world is absolute or complete. 'Worlds' are interconnected: the cultures, norms, and other formations that shape them are continuously contested between worlds. For example, the lesbian Latinas who straddle the world of Anglo academia and the world of Latina immigrants can and do contest and resist the meanings, practices and other norms established in the Anglo dominated 'world' to which they travel as teachers and scholars. As Ortega shrewdly highlights, the possibility for outsiders to travel between 'worlds' is a key piece of Lugones' theory as it allows for outsiders to resist "against ossified codes, norms, and constructions that appeal to homogeneity and univocity. It is key to the development of resistant praxis" (Ortega, p. 92).

7. Compulsory 'World'-Travel

There are various harms involved in being forced to travel to dominant worlds. In these worlds, marginalized people will likely lack the resources for understanding themselves and reality. They also risk forgetting themselves: having the playfulness and other attributes constructed out of them and being reduced to stereotypes or whatever one must be when in survival mode. In dominant worlds we might be forced to be agonistic, fight against assimilation, extraction, exploitation, stereotyping, etc. There is also danger in being playful in dominant worlds–there is an openness that is dangerous (Lugones, 1987, p. 3, pp. 14-15).

Although compulsory 'world'-travel is often harmful and unfree, Lugones invites us to imagine and engage in 'world'-travel that is playful and willful, arguing that through playful 'world'-travel marginalized people can travel to each other's for the purposes of coalition building and mutual liberation. As is characteristic of Lugones' insightful thinking, she sees liberatory possibilities within oppressive systems and practices, and 'world'-travel is no exception. She urges us to recognize that the skills we have acquired as travelers can be used as tools for resisting oppression by traveling to each other's 'worlds' in a willful (intentional) and playful manner (pp. 14-15).

8. Playful 'World'-Travel

After discussing the idea of compulsory 'world'-travel, Lugones proposes a new kind of travel, playful 'world'-travel, as a promising resistant praxis. Lugones tells us that the sense of play she invokes is not characterized by agonism and competition, as in Western theories of play like Hans-Georg Gadamer's and Johan Huizinga's. Rather, for her, playfulness is a quintessentially loving attitude of tenderness, curiosity, of wanting to see another's world on their own terms, learn and be transformed by newly shared 'worlds.' She conceives of the playfulness in playful 'world'-travel as loving attention. In theorizing playful 'world'-travel as requiring the traveler's loving attention, Lugones draws from Marilyn Frye's work on arrogant and loving attention (Lugones, 1987, pp. 15-16). A brief discussion of Frye's loving attention will help us better understand how Lugones recommends we engage in 'world'-travel.

In her essay, "In and Out of Harm's Way: Arrogance and Love" Frye discusses some of the mechanisms used for the exploitation and oppression of women. She identifies "arrogant perception" as one of the tools through which men (and some women) in positions of power exploit women by disintegrating them and grafting their being onto themselves (Frye 1983, p. 66). According to Frye, arrogant perceivers understand and construct women in ways that render them completely derivative of the perceiver's own desires, interests, and goals. In the arrogant perceiver's

eye, women are reduced to mere appendages that can be grafted onto the arrogant perceiver's being and used as means to their own purposes. The arrogant perceiver grafts a woman's being onto himself when he understands, constructs, and treats her as a mere instrument for promoting (or obstacle that is obstructing) his own goals and desires. To the arrogant perceiver, the person perceived is devoid of any independently or autonomously defined purpose and value, but wholly determined (both in her being and value) by what she can do for him. The arrogant perceiver, using their dominant position of power in society, thus reduces women to instruments that can be understood and evaluated in terms of how useful they are to them.

Frye argues that in order to fight women's exploitation, we must learn to perceive women differently, lovingly. Loving perception requires the perceiver to see others (women) as independent beings who are not defined by or derivative of the perceiver's needs and desires. Frye tells us that the loving perceiver must "know what are [their] interests, desires and loathings, [their] projects, hungers, fears and wishes, and that [they] know what is and what is not determined by these" (Frye 1983, 75). The loving perceiver is not required to be selfless, as many conceptions of love might suggest. Rather, they are required to be critically aware of their needs and desires so as to prevent them from determining their perceptions and understandings of others.

The loving perceiver must recognize the person perceived as independent from them, understanding that the person perceived is not defined by what the perceiver wants or desires from them. Through loving perception, the perceiver refuses to see others as threats or tools depending on whether they can promote her desires or satisfy her needs. The loving perceiver understands that to truly see the other person, they must look beyond "their own will and interests and fears and imagination" (Frye, 75). Furthermore, the loving perceiver understands that to truly see another, they must "look, and listen and check and question" (Frye, 75). In other words, because the loving perceiver is aware that the other is not defined by the perceiver's desires, needs, stereotypes, and

ways of understanding, they will question how these threaten to distort their perception of the other, they will listen to the other and endeavor to perceive them on their own terms, how they really are. They perceive the other as a whole, independent human being. They know that in order to truly see the other, they must question their tendencies to reduce them to a mere appendage, and this entails abandoning their preconceived and self-centered conceptions of the world.

Lugones adopts Frye's conception of loving perception in her account on loving 'world'-travel. When engaging in playful 'world'-travel, practitioners commit to perceiving those whose 'worlds' they travel to in a loving way. Perceiving others lovingly in this context means traveling to their 'world' without using, extracting, or exploiting the other and their 'world.' This is an important point because Lugones is well aware that many have traveled to oppressed and colonized people's worlds carrying out imperialist missions. The imperialist traveler does not perceive the inhabitants of foreign worlds lovingly, he feels no tenderness towards them. Rather, the imperialist traveler wants to exploit, use, and abuse the worlds to which he travels–he wants to dominate the world's inhabitants, steal their resources, all the while seeing and constructing them as derivative to his own purposes, according to his own worldview.

Playful 'world'-travel is a collaborative activity in which both practitioners discover new aspects of their own and each other's 'worlds' in ways that transform them and their world-views. They are not guided by rules or an intention to conquer/win through mastering rules and strategies. They are guided by a loving attitude that, like Frye theorized, leads them to question and abandon their preconceived notions, assumptions, and ways of knowing. The loving 'world'-travelers are open to questioning and giving up constructions of themselves and others that would prevent them from truly seeing the other. Their loving attitude commits them to trying to see the other as independent, not derivative or determined by their own interests and desires.

Before I turn to how we might apply 'world'-travel in the classroom, a caveat is in order. In her account of 'world'-travel, Lugones argued for ontological pluralism. She insisted that these worlds were ontologically real and metaphysically distinct, though interconnected. Though this is an important aspect of her account, we don't have to take on ontological pluralism for the purposes of teaching Kant. We can think of 'world' as existentially or phenomenologically different or as akin to worldviews. For the purposes of teaching Kant, it is enough to recognize that the various 'worlds' contain different (though overlapping and interconnected) epistemological and existential frameworks and possibilities. So, we must only commit to epistemic and phenomenological plurality, recognize that marginalized practitioners travel across these epistemic and phenomenologically diverse "worlds," and that inhabiting and traveling across these various 'worlds' presents both costs and opportunities to practitioners.

I borrow important insights from Lugones' account of 'world'-travel to develop a decolonial feminist method for teaching Kant's moral theory. First, I draw on the idea that we inhabit and travel across "constructions and organizations of life" which Lugones calls 'worlds' (Lugones, 11). It is especially important to recognize that there are dominant and non-dominant 'worlds' and that people are constructed differently in each. Second, I borrow the idea that those who have multiple marginalized identities are often forced to travel to dominant worlds where they are not at ease (compulsory 'world'-travel). In these dominant worlds, they are often constructed by stereotypes and face epistemic harms because, in these worlds, marginalized people experience alienation from their authentic selves and are likely to lack the tools to understand themselves and the reality in resonant and fruitful ways. Third, people who occupy dominant positionalities are at ease in dominant worlds and are rarely required to 'world'-travel. This means that they are likely unaware that there are multiplicities of "worlds," assuming that their construction of reality and of others tracks the one and only objective reality. People with dominant positionalities are likely to perceive others

arrogantly, through derivatizing stereotypes that deprive others of their independence and integrity. However, they are not likely to abandon their constructions of minoritized people to explore their 'worlds' in ethical ways. Fourth, Lugones encourages us to use the skills of 'world'-travel to travel playfully to other minoritized people's 'worlds' and to retain our sense of self when we travel to dominant 'worlds.'

9. Teaching Kant through 'World'-Travel

What follows are some exploratory ideas on how we can teach Kant through the practice of 'world'-travel. I address anyone who wants to teach Kant in ways that confront Kant's problems without reproducing them and harming our students as we disseminate his moral theory. I want to make clear that the following ideas are not one-size-fits-all recipes. Though academic philosophy has an embarrassing diversity problem, there is increasing diversity among Kant teachers, and I know the ideas I provide might not work for everyone. My suggestions are based on my experiences in the classroom and what works for me will not work for everyone. I acknowledge that what we can do (get away with) as teachers and what works for us depends on what should be, but are not, irrelevant factors such as our race, gender, skin color, how our speech is accented, nationality, neurodivergence, etc. Furthermore, our positions within academic institutions and society determine the wide-ranging levels of precarity that we must contend with and navigate as academics and teachers. The precarity of our position (influenced by whether we have tenure, are adjuncts, face systemic racism, have intergenerational wealth) determines the amount of risk that we can incur through our teaching choices. This is also determined by the amount of institutional support we enjoy and the freedoms that our institutions allow us. With all these complicating factors in mind, I present the following exploratory ideas on teaching Kant from a perspective that conceives of

pedagogy as a personal aspiration and not as a universal demand (Bohrer & de Leon, 2021, 20:20).[45]

10. Presenting Kant's Moral Theory as a Dominant 'World'

In order to understand why we should think of Kant's theory as a dominant 'world,' we must recognize the ways in which it shapes the worldviews and practices of social actors through processes of collective meaning making. Western canonical theories like Kant's are more than sets of observations, claims, arguments, or "a static print collection of books, essays, reviews, correspondences, personal notes, lectures…," etc. (Lu-Adler 2023, p. 100). They constitute specific worldviews composed of particular constructions of the human, human nature, God, morality, race, the "Other," etc. Furthermore, the views, ideas, and ideologies that make up these worldviews have been taken up by social agents, informing our social practices, ways of relating to ourselves and each other, and shaping the ways we organize our lives and societies. The influence Kant's theory has had in shaping 'worlds' is in large part due to the fact that it was formulated and reproduced by powerful social actors who were well placed in the "nexus of power relations," and within communities of influential "meaning makers" (p. 78). From these positions of power, Kant and his followers influenced people's "social consciousness" which shaped social practices (e.g., interpersonal relations, political projects, knowledge production, etc.), systems, beliefs, culture, etc.[46]

Considering Kant's racist views specifically, Huaping Lu-Adler compellingly argues that because Kant held a position of power as an influential scholar, popular lecturer, and meaning maker, his views on race were taken up by other meaning makers, helping to form a "semiotic net"

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[45] https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/pedagogies-for-peace-intersectional-and-decolonial/id1539201288?i=1000544072676

[46] In thinking about Kant's theory as a 'world,' I lean heavily on Huaping Lu-Adler's discussion of racism in Kant as ideology, where ideology is understood as ideological formation (following Sally Haslanger). Lu-Adler offers this approach to Kant's racism as an alternative to the particularist approach which is very limited. I think this approach is extremely promising and should inform our approaches to history of philosophy and especially to powerful figures in the Western philosophical canon. See Chapter 2 of Lu-Adler (2023) for an excellent discussion of this approach and the ways that it fares better than other approaches.

that underpinned a nascent modern racist ideology (p. 100). She draws on Sally Haslanger's account of racism as ideological formation to show how Kant's racist views were taken up by his circle of powerful meaning makers, shaping their minds and worlds. According to Haslanger, racism as ideology is more than a set of inert ideas, it is "a language, a set of concepts [and other framing devices that create meaning], a responsiveness to particular features of things (and not others), a set of social meanings" that we take up through socialization (Haslanger, 2008, p. 9).

When we consider Kant's views through this framing, we can appreciate how his theory presents a worldview that helped to shape social realities or 'worlds.' His philosophy, and his views on race specifically, helped produce and justify various systems of domination and ideologies that have shaped our material realities. This is why I think we should present Kant's moral theory as more than a set of ideas but as the construction of a dominant 'world.' It is a 'world' because it consists of a specific worldview that presents a certain ontology, epistemology, raciology, as well as certain constructions of racialized and gendered people as truth. Furthermore, these views have been taken up by meaning makers in ways that inform our practices and shape our world. It is a dominant 'world' because Kant's worldview has been taken up by agents that hold positions of power and many of his ideas have become hegemonic. His ideas have also shaped dominant spaces where power is granted to knowledge producers and meaning makers. Kant's theory has the status of a dominant 'world' in large part because of the master status that his texts have enjoyed in Western philosophy and knowledge production in general (see the discussion in Chapter 1 of Dilek Huseyinzadegan's claim that Kant's texts are master texts).

As I mentioned before, when we teach Kant's moral theory, we tend to prioritize the ideal theory and ignore his writings on race and gender. Presenting his theory in this way has the effect of decontextualizing Kant and obscuring the particularities of his Eurocentric worldview and his epistemic and social position. Teaching Kant through a decolonial 'world'-travel praxis would begin

by teaching Kant's theory as constructing a 'world' shaped by his very specific positionality informed

by his biographical and geopolitical contexts. As we will see below, contextualizing Kant would

require us to be honest about Kant's problematic constructions of white women and non-white

people of all genders as part of his worldview, highlighting how this worldview was taken up by

other meaning makers in ways that shaped the collective consciousness, practices, and social

realities. Before spelling out what contextualizing Kant would entail and how doing this requires us

to center his racist, sexist, and colonial ideas, let me clarify that this approach does not require that

we push a dogmatic and predetermined stance on the problems in Kant's theory on our students.

Presenting Kant's problematic views as relevant to our engagements with his theory and to our lives

does not require us to take a stance on what we should make of Kant's problematic views or on

questions such as whether his universalism and other aspects of what some call his "core" theory

can be saved, reinvented, etc. It simply requires us to present a fuller picture of his non-ideal views

about the world while problematizing the relationship between his broader worldview and the ideal

components of his theory that we tend to prioritize. The goal of taking this approach should be to

make new ways of engaging Kant possible for our students, not to present one way of engaging with

Kant or interpreting his theory as the correct one.

To help our students see Kant's theory as a dominant worldview, we should start by

providing details about the geopolitical and biographical location from which he theorizes.[47] This

will help students understand the context in which Kant wrote and the position from which he

perceived the world. Because Kant does not do a good job at situating himself and acknowledging

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[47] Mignolo (2005) talks about the decolonial contestation of Western knowledge production which insists on shifting from theo- and ego-politics to the "geo-politics and bio politics of knowledge: knowledge produced from the geo-historical and bio-historical perspective of racialized locations and people" (Mignolo, 48). Here, Mignolo refers to a decolonial approach to knowledge production that take seriously the knower's location and identity. Kant's views betray a lack of reflexivity regarding the geo-politics and bio-politics of knowledge, presenting his worldview as universally valid. Though he did not sufficiently appreciate these aspects of knowledge production, we can expose the illegitimacy of his claims to universality by providing the geopolitical and biographical details about which he lacked reflexivity in his theorizing.

how his specific identity and positionality shape his worldview, we must help our students situate

him. To do this, we should teach students about Kant's life, including details like his family's

socioeconomic status, his religious background, the debates he was engaged in, and other

particularities of the culture that shaped his understanding of the world.[48] Contextualizing Kant will

help us get a better sense of Kant's positionality, uncovering the experiences that he was drawing

from, what his position of relative privilege allowed him to assume and ignore, as well as the

position of power that enabled him to play an important role in Western knowledge production. As

Lu-Adler highlights, Kant was a prominent philosopher and a popular lecturer whose lectures aimed

to provide his white male students with practical knowledge of the world. By contextualizing Kant,

we can help our students attend to the Eurocentric threads in Kant's theory and the far-reaching

influence of his work. In acknowledging his broader worldview and the particularities that shape it,

we should also emphasize that there might be ideas, concerns, interests, existential and ethical

questions, methods, and constructions in Kant's theory that our students cannot, or might refuse to,

accept. In this way, we can ask our students to engage with Kant's worldview without sending the

message that in order to do good philosophical work they must leave their own worldviews behind

and adopt the dominant worldviews of canonical figures.

We should also locate Kant in the broader historical and geopolitical context by placing Kant

in the dark side of the Enlightenment, a strategy I introduced in Chapter 1. We can do this by asking

students to read decolonial critiques of the Enlightenment, drawing connections between this

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[48] For example, understanding Kant's religious background might prove essential to understanding the status of sexism in Kant's theory. I'm grateful to Huaping Lu-Adler for highlighting how Kant's religious views might shape the teleological framing of his anthropological views about womanhood. Another example of the need for contextualizing Kant is his participation in scientific debates of his time. Lu-Adler (2023) shows that we must understand the context of Kant's engagement in debates over monogenesis and polygenesis in order to appreciate that his monogenist account of race was not a "kinder" anti-racist alternative to polygenist theories. A modern reader might think that the monogenist idea that all races develop from the same phylum is anti-racist in spirit. However, more careful attention to the context of the broader debate and Kant's stake in it reveals that his commitment to monogenism in no way expresses anti-racist commitments (Lu-Adler, 115ff).

knowledge production and colonial expansion, the growing slave trade, and the racialization of the world's population. These critiques can be supplemented with historical accounts of the impact that colonial expansion was having on people of the Global South as well as the racist and ethnocentric narratives that were circulated as justifications for colonial violence.

As decolonial and post-colonial theorists have argued, canonical Western theories and philosophies presented, assumed, and "projected certain schisms: mind/body/spirit, natural/supernatural, human/non-human" (Williams & Bermeo, 2020, 6). In presenting their Eurocentric views (and the schisms they presuppose) as certainties, they delegitimized and erased the cosmovisions of other groups, positioning European knowers as the only authoritative epistemic agents and Western knowledge as universally valid. It is therefore important to tease out the ontologies, cosmologies, epistemologies, and other frameworks that provide a background for Kant's theory and the hegemonic status that these enjoy because of Western knowledge's dominance. Furthermore, it is important to help our students understand how Western power was employed to suppress non-European knowledges and to depict non-Westerners as incapable of producing their own knowledges and culture.[49] This would entail, among other things, presenting slavery as "a part of the ethical and intellectual heritage of the West" instead of presenting it as a practice to which Kant had no relation, or in which he had no investment, simply because he did not profit directly from the enslavement of Africans.[50][51]

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[49] Linda Martin Alcoff describes some of the strategies used to suppress, ignore, or co-opt non-Western knowledge in her essay "Philosophy and Philosophical Practice: Eurocentrism as an epistemology of ignorance" (Kidd, Medina & Pohlhaus eds., 2017).

[50] In his essay "Masters, Mistresses, Slaves, and the Antinomies of Modernity," Paul Gilroy points out that modernity is often thought of in terms of the liberatory potential of the it's Enlightenment ideas and theories. But in presenting this picture of modernity and Enlightenment, "the histories of barbarity which appear to be such a prominent feature of the widening gap between modern experience and modern expectation" are ignored (Gilroy, 30). He gives as an example of this incomplete picture of the Enlightenment the way in which "Locke's colonial interests and the effect of the conquest of the Americas on Descartes and Rousseau are simply nonissues" in academic discourse (Gilroy, 30). As Kant scholars, we must be cautious of erasing or mischaracterizing the relationship between Kant, his theory, and these "histories of barbarity."

Another important component of teaching Kant's theory as a 'world' is to highlight the connections between the worldview he theorized and disseminated and our current context. In drawing connections between Kant's theory as a worldview and our current realities, we can help our students understand that Kant's worldview shaped our actual 'world,' specially the academic 'world' in which we teach and learn. A good way to draw connections between his worldview and our 'world' would be to show the influence Kant's views had in determining which texts and philosophers are centered in our work and in our classrooms as well as our Western conceptions of philosophy. As I mentioned before, Kant's Orientalist views were taken up by post-Kantians who constructed the Western philosophical canon by excluding non-Western philosophers who had been studied and taught by previous Western philosophers such as Wolff and Leibniz. In sharing this history, we should also highlight how Kant's conceptualization of philosophy as necessarily systematic shaped the exclusionary construction of the Western philosophical canon and the methods that are considered appropriate in philosophical investigations in many academic institutions today. We should highlight that Kant's conception of philosophy has influenced the ways in which non-Western ontologies are dismissed, methodologies that center oral traditions and non-Western citational practices are rendered illegitimate, and the effects that these normative practices have on members of marginalized communities whose ways of knowing are delegitimized.

In teaching Kant's *Anthropology,* it is also important to bring to the foreground how different people are constructed in his system, whom he addresses as fellow meaning makers, and who he

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[51] In trying to understand why Kant held racist views about African people, Bernard Boxhill (2017) says that we cannot provide the usual explanations for his racist beliefs since Kant did not benefit from slavery (Boxhill, 47). Boxhill seems to assume that Kant did not benefit from slavery because he did not own slaves. I think this way of thinking about who benefited from slavery is problematic and it leads us to ignore the systemic benefits that relatively powerful Europeans enjoyed as a result of the exploitation of enslaved Africans, even if these benefits were indirect.

leaves out. As I mentioned before, Kant's lectures on anthropology were meant to provide his white

male students with the world knowledge (*Weltkenntnis*) to "be effective players on the world stage"

(Lu-Adler, 2023, p. 259). The knowledge Kant imparted includes racist views about non-white

people who are constructed as objects to be known, not as agents and knowers of their own 'worlds'

and experiences. It is important to think collaboratively with students about who is meant to be

included as agential meaning makers in these conversations and who is constructed as mere objects

of anthropological knowledge. For this purpose, we might ask students to think about who is invited

to join in these conversations and how their own status as invited or uninvited might shape their

engagements with Kant's theory.[52]

We should also consider and unpack the effects that Kant's racist views had on how his

students saw people of color and how they saw themselves—how his lectures interpellated his white

male students into positions of mastery and superiority over others.[53] Again, we should help our

students see the world building effects of Kant's theory by tracing connections between the racist

views he espoused and the contemporary racist ideologies that structure our current context. Here,

we might point to the various ways in which Native Americans are currently thought about and

talked about (even in textbooks) as relics of the past.[54] We might consider possible connections

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[52] I'm grateful to Jordan Pascoe for sharing that when she teaches history of philosophy, she always begins by asking her students to consider who is invited to the philosophical conversations that the author is engaging in through their texts. Carla Nappi and Carrie Jenkins' book *Uninvited: Talking Back to Plato* beautifully explores the question of who is invited to join philosophical conversations. They use poetry to give voice to the flute girl and other women who are not permitted to speak in Plato's *Symposium* (Nappi & Jenkins, 2020).

[53] In a recent review of Geo Maher's book, *A World Without Police: How Strong Communities Make Cops Obsolete*, Travis Linneman highlights Maher's discussion of the ways in which people are interpellated to positions of power by police power. In his discussion of the "pig majority," Maher argues that through interpellation, white people are "made into vessels of police power" resulting in non-police officers executing Black people. Linneman writes, "And so, while Ahmaud Arbery wasn't murdered by the boys in blue, he was nevertheless murdered by self-deputized members of the pig majority who say his very presence as a threat to their safe, ordered white neighborhood" (Chua, C., Linnemann, T., Spade, D. *et al.*, 2023; 9). I am interested in thinking about how Kant's lectures on anthropology interpellated his audience members into positions of power enabling them to see themselves as leaders and masters of the world (and of people of color specifically).

[54] See "Manifesting Destiny: Re/presentations of Indigenous Peoples in K–12 U.S. History Standards" (Sarah B. Shear, Ryan T. Knowles, Gregory J. Soden & Antonio J. Castro, 2015).

between this racist imaginary and Kant's depiction of Native Americans as lacking sufficient life force to reproduce substantial future generations. We might also ask students to reflect on our academic institutions and their histories of exclusion. Who have our institutions historically welcomed/invited as legitimate producers of knowledge and agents in the world stage? How can we see the marks of such exclusionary practices on the demographic makeup of our classrooms and campuses?

When we have invited our students to think with us about Kant's theory as a dominant 'world,' we open possibilities for our students to engage with Kant's theory in ways that do not require them to abstract from their embodied realities. Instead of asking students to consider Kant's philosophy from a disembodied view from nowhere, or from a positionality that is not their own, we give them the opportunity to consider the complexities of Kant's 'world' and what it means for them to engage with it. We give them the tools to understand why it might be easier for some of them to take on parts of Kant's philosophy, while for others taking on these aspects of his philosophy is difficult or harmful. It also allows students to think about how Kant's philosophy has shaped our academic spaces. We provide students with the information to recognize that Kant's worldview is not an objective view from nowhere while helping them understand the master/dominant position it has in academic philosophy from which it has shaped our realities. None of this set-up predetermines how students will choose to engage with Kant's theory. They might decide to adopt, reinvent, contest, reappropriate, etc. Kant's theory. But the hope is that they will make better informed choices and will engage with Kant in a way that works for them. Presenting Kant's theory in this way will prevent us from encouraging students to force themselves into the "view from nowhere" in order to regurgitate the standard whitewashed version of Kant's ideas even though these ideas and methods might not resonate with their own ways of being and knowing, or with

their lived realities. In this way, students can engage in conscious or playful 'world'-travel to Kant's and each other's 'worlds' instead of engaging in compulsory 'world'-travel.

11. Exploring Students' 'Worlds' & (In)Experience as Travelers

For students to engage in conscious or playful 'world'-travel they must engage and develop an awareness of the various worlds they inhabit. There are several ways in which we can help students explore their different 'worlds' and worldviews. We can ask them to read from the extensive works by women of color academics who speak about their experiences as outsiders in academia. This is a good point of entry for students to identify the different norms, assumptions, and cultural practices that shape academic spaces and how these might differ from those of other spaces that they inhabit or have inhabited in their lives. In my experience, students have internalized the message that their personal lives are not a serious topic for academic inquiry, and they are often hesitant to bring in their personal experiences into the classroom. Showing them examples of feminist philosophers who explicitly incorporate their identities and life experiences into their philosophy can give them permission to think about their personal experiences as philosophically relevant. This can also help them to explore whether the dominant ways of doing philosophy and the norms of dominant academic spaces can accommodate their personal experiences, interests, values, etc.

Equipped with the examples of philosophers who are in the practice of situating themselves in the world and spelling out how their life experiences and social positions have shaped their worldview, we might then ask students to reflect on their own lived experiences, the positions they have and the roles they play in different 'worlds.' We can ask students to engage in autobiographical reflections and explorations of the different communities they belong to. Here, we should help students think about their social worlds in ways that avoid over-individualization or fragmentation of themselves and others into mere identity markers (e.g. skin color, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, etc).

Since our society, and especially universities, tends to frame difference in terms of identity markers like race, gender, and sexual orientation, we should encourage our students to think beyond the individual characteristics that mark someone as different and to think in terms of systems and relations instead. For example, if we ask students to write short autobiographies, we can help them connect the personal with the social by introducing Saidiya Hartman's conception of the autobiographical example as a window. Hartman says, that the "autobiographical example is not a personal story that folds onto itself; it's not about navel gazing, it's really about trying to look at historical and social process and one's own formation as a window onto social and historical processes, as an example of them" (Saunders 2008, p. 7). Framing the autobiographical exercise in this way will hopefully help students see their identities not as essences or lists of (difference making) properties, but as relational and as shaped by various social and political systems and structures.

Once students have started reflecting on their social identities and worlds, we want to cultivate an awareness of their experiences traveling across different worlds. As Lugones points out, because travelers often travel out of necessity, they might not be aware that they are traveling and what these travels entail. These shifts may not be willful or even conscious, and one may be completely unaware of being different than one is in a different "world;" one may not even recognize that one is in a different 'world.' (Lugones, 1987, p. 11). Huaping Lu-Adler (2023) and Melissa Lo (2023) speak to this phenomenon when they reflect on the various ways in which they unconsciously assimilated into Anglo academic culture.[55] Lu-Adler and Lo explain how they internalized mainstream ideas about the importance of Western philosophy as they distanced

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[55] Lu-Adler (2023) discusses how the "a curriculum of the history of philosophy that only includes Western philosophy" can lead marginalized students to continue internalizing "the presumed inferiority of their marginalized culture" (Lu-Adler, 350). She shares her personal experiences with assimilation and internalization of Eurocentric ideas about what counts as serious philosophical work in footnote 27.

themselves from their non-academic 'worlds' and Chinese cultures (at least in their lives and work as academics). Reading Lu-Adler's and Lo's reflections can help students become aware of the various aspects of themselves that they leave behind when they enter academic 'worlds' and what they might lose in this process. Furthermore, it can help us carve out possibilities for reclaiming the parts of ourselves, and the 'worlds,' that we have learned to leave outside of our classrooms and our academic work.

As students explore their experiences as travelers, we should help them notice that some of us feel more at ease than others in dominant 'worlds.' We should unpack how feeling at ease in a particular 'world' can keep us from seeing the various erasures and exclusions that shape the dominant 'worlds' where only some of us feel at home. We should help our students see that feeling more at home in dominant 'worlds' makes it more difficult to see how other people's worldviews are crowded out of dominant 'worlds' and spaces. As Lugones points out, complete being-at ease "tends to produce people who have no inclination to travel across 'worlds' or no experience of 'world' traveling" (Lugones 2003, 90).

As we develop a greater awareness of 'worlds' and 'world'-travel, we should also help each other understand the risks and harms that can come from unethical or imperial 'world'-travel. Lugones' discussion of loving 'world'-travel can help us understand how we can travel to each other's 'worlds' in ways that are not extractive but loving. Here, we can make use of the very travelogues that Kant himself might have used to inform his racist views. We should unpack how the people who wrote these documents treated those they encountered as objects, constructing them according to their own biases instead of perceiving them lovingly as non-derivative beings with their own self-conceptions, self-understandings, and worldviews. We should explore with our students the unlearning work that we must do in order to see others on their own terms, beyond the harmful constructions of the "Other" that make up dominant 'worlds.' Turning to literature like Jamaica

Kinkaid's "The Ugly Tourist" can also help us understand the kinds of attitudes and relationships that we have to cultivate in order to travel in ways that are loving and playful, not arrogant and extractive.

12. Providing Other Tools

Someone who is relatively at home in academia and other white/heterosexist/colonial dominant 'worlds' will need tools to track the ways in which their felt inclusion can lead them to miss the epistemic violence (e.g., erasures and exclusions) enacted in these 'worlds.' Because these problematic erasures and exclusions are not problems *for* those with dominant positionalities, and because the tools used in these 'worlds' don't track these problems, we will need to engage in consciousness raising. We need tools to explore how our acceptance, resonance with, and investments in Kant's worldview (or other dominant worldviews) might depend on ignoring, refusing, and marginalizing other perspectives and other people. In her account of 'world'-travel, Lugones provides the example of white feminists who feel more at home in academic spaces and how their sense of ease prevents them from seeing women of color and being curious about their 'worlds.' As students reflect on their different 'worlds,' we must bring to light power relations, helping students reflect on the power structures that benefit some and harm others in various ways.

A possible way to help students acknowledge their position in various power relations might be to use as an example our own position of relative power as professors and Kant scholars. We might share with our students that as Kant scholars we benefit from the hyper-canonical status that Kant's philosophy enjoys; how our articles on Kant have a better chance of being published than articles by scholars who write on thinkers like Ottobah Quobna Cugoano. We might share with them how the status quo provides us with privileges and how challenging the status quo will require us to risk and sacrifice our privilege: to step aside so others can be heard. Playful 'world'-travel is risky. We must be willing to give up the ground we stand on and the frameworks that inform our

very senses of self. We must look at the places where our 'worlds' crowd out other people's 'worlds' and construct them in ways that are derivative, dehumanizing, inferiorizing, etc.

Because dominant 'worlds' erase and exclude non-dominant worldviews, helping our students explore other 'worlds' (whether their own or others') will require us to engage in what historian of Indigenous struggles and revolutionary Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz calls collective un-forgetting (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014). Dunbar-Ortiz tells us that the opposite of truth is not a lie, it is forgetting. She points to the ways in which dominant knowledges and histories encourage and enable us to forget the colonial violence that shapes our histories and our realities. She argues that to combat the colonial logics and structures that shape our lives, we need to engage in collective acts of radical truth telling, to un-forget the truth about the histories of violence that shape our unjust material conditions. As we have seen with the example of exclusionary canon formation, there is pervasive forgetting involved in our academic philosophy practices. When we teach the (Western) philosophical canon without telling the story of Orientalism that shaped it, we erase and ignore 'worlds' that are informed by Eastern traditions, cosmologies, ontologies, and epistemologies and their systemic erasure in our classrooms. Our standard teaching practices entail acts of willful ignorance, forgetting the Orientalist history through which the Western canon was formed—the true story of how our classes and curricula took shape. In order to bring erased or marginalized 'worlds' into view and support our students who inhabit them bring their various 'worlds' to bare on our engagements with Kant, we need to engage in collective un-forgetting. We can do this by telling the truth about erasures and exclusions, and by studying philosophies that have been marginalized.

There are other ways in which we can engage in collective un-remembering. For example, we can discuss the marginalized and erased Enlightenment philosophies and movements led by Haitian revolutionaries and the alternative universalisms that they theorized and put into practice. Collective un-forgetting can also be practiced by centering subaltern knowledges, alternative epistemologies

and ontologies that reject the individual as a basic and isolatable unit, and that reject the schisms mentioned earlier between nature/culture, human/non-human animal, etc. We can put non-Western philosophies in dialogue with Kant's philosophy to draw out the assumptions that are in the background of his theory. In doing this we should be aware that, as Linda Martín Alcoff following Walter Mignolo suggests, Kant's Western philosophy might "not play well with others" (Alcoff, 401). In other words, we should be vigilant about the ways in which claims to universal validity in Kant's theory might make it unamenable to pluralistic or multicultural approaches and ways of thinking.

13. Teaching Kant through 'World'-Travel: A Syllabus

In the remainder of this chapter, I describe what a course that uses 'world'-travel to teach Kant's moral theory might look like. I explain the context in which I imagine this course being taught, highlight some of the challenges that teaching such a course might present, and explain how my proposed plan aims to address these challenges. I discuss the importance of setting up a container and a learning community that can hold the kinds of conversations and experiences that I anticipate, and/or hope will emerge in this course. I also explain some of the pedagogical choices I have made and key features of my approach. I then provide a syllabus that will serve as a possible roadmap for the course, one that can and should be tailored to each specific instantiation of the course.

One of the main goals of this course is to help students engage with Kant's philosophy, Kant scholarship, and philosophy in general, in ways that resist hegemonic practices, willful ignorance, Eurocentric thinking, and conceptual whiteness. For this purpose, we will adopt the pedagogical strategy bell hooks lays out in *Teaching to Transgress*. Describing the kind of teaching she advocates for, hooks writes, "Urging all of us to open our minds and hearts so that we can know beyond the boundaries of what is acceptable, so that we can think and rethink, so that we can create new visions, I celebrate teaching that enables transgressions—a movement against and beyond

boundaries" (hooks, 12). I believe this is the kind of teaching that is called for if we want to teach canonical figures like Kant in ways that push against Eurocentric norms, conceptual whiteness, and other exclusionary systems that shape academic philosophy today. In order to help students transgress ossified norms in academic philosophy, we will read scholarship that sheds light on the various boundaries that shape Kant scholarship and academic philosophy. In addition to unpacking these issues by reading critical scholarship, I hope to encourage students to transgress boundaries by exploring the 'worlds' they inhabit and bringing them to life in the classroom. I believe that exploring our 'worlds' in their multiplicity, diversity, complexity, and richness will push against the boundaries of a discipline that privileges very specific and Eurocentric ways of thinking and being. In order to make room for students to explore their 'worlds' in ways that transgress disciplinary boundaries, the course and syllabus must be presented and thought of as a living document that will change according to students' interests, the demographics of the classroom, the context in which the course is taught, and the questions, concerns, and topics that arise in discussion.

Students can only articulate and explore their 'worlds' if the readings, activities, discussion questions, etc. speak to the ideas, themes, questions, concerns, etc. that are relevant to their unfolding 'worlds' and meaningful to their lives. It is therefore essential that the syllabus and course design be presented and understood as living documents that everyone in the learning community can collaboratively mold as the course progresses. If we are not open to changing our course as it unfolds, we might disrupt students' explorations and foreclose opportunities to do philosophy in ways that deviate from the mainstream academic norms. Furthermore, by inviting our students to contribute to the course design and syllabus, we can encourage them to reflect on what matters to them and how what matters to them is shaped by their different identities, life experiences, and positionalities. As diverse interests, concerns, questions, etc. arise, we can invite students to reflect on why some questions or themes are more interesting to some of them than they are to others. In

exploring their diverse interests and concerns, students can already begin to develop the practice of 'world'-travelling by noticing that their interests are varied. We can also encourage them to explore and articulate why particular topics or questions interest them, and thereby help each other understand and share in their perspectives and concerns.

In my nine plus years of teaching, I have noticed that students are not accustomed to seeing themselves as full-fledged co-creators of their learning experiences. Because students have learned to take more passive roles as learners, we should start our courses by engaging in conversations about learning, what it means to them, and what it means to be an engaged learner. Moreover, we can only co-create with our students if the classroom function "like a cooperative" (hooks, 144). This requires the instructor to relinquish their role as the sole leader, creating opportunities for students to take responsibility for the learning experiences they will co-create. By spending the first week of class discussing bell hooks' "Engaged Pedagogy" and creating community agreements we can establish a cooperative learning community where all members grow to see themselves as stakeholders in the course, developing a sense of accountability for how we spend our time together. Through our discussions of hooks, we can establish a shared vision of ourselves as a community of learners and foster a sense of agency and co-responsibility for the learning experiences we will create during the semester.

Creating community agreements is a great way to help students develop a sense of accountability for the learning community and a sense of agency in the classroom. As Argos Gonzales explains, community agreements are different than rules because they are created by the students (and, I would add, the instructor). In creating community agreements, students are encouraged to reflect on what they each need to feel safe and supported in the classroom and share those needs with the

community.[56] Creating community agreements supports student buy-in because in crafting these

agreements, they are collectively choosing to engage with each other, the instructor, and the material

in ways that best meet everyone's needs. Rather than being forced to follow rules handed down by

someone in power, they are invited to establish terms of engagement that work for them, and to

hold themselves and each other accountable for doing their best to support each other and the

learning community as a whole.[57]

Another reason why it is important to create community agreements is that teaching Kant

through 'world'-travel will require students to engage in difficult conversations about privilege,

harm, racism, sexism, heterosexism, and other oppressive systems that are difficult and emotionally

charged. In asking students to think about Kant's theory as a 'world' that we inherit and asking them

to reflect on their own 'worlds,' we will ask them to reflect on the positions they occupy in various

systems of power. In thinking about power and oppression through 'worlds,' these conversations

become less abstract and more personal. The goal is to reflect on how we are implicated in these

oppressive systems (how we are harmed by and how we benefit from them), not just to think about

oppression in the abstract, in impersonal and highly theoretical ways. These personal conversations

will inevitably give rise to discomfort and other difficult emotions such as grief, despair, anger,

defensiveness, etc., as well as feelings of deep alienation from each other. Because our project

implicates us in these difficult conversations, community agreements are indispensable. Agreements

such as using "I" statements, listening to understand instead of listening to respond, siting with

discomfort, acknowledging the difference between our intentions and the impact our words and

actions have on others, accepting non-closure, and taking breaks to practice nervous system

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[56] While I agree with those in organizing spaces who argue that we cannot build safe spaces because we cannot guarantee safety, I do believe we should aim to engage in practices that help everyone feel safe. Feeling safe should not be confused with feeling comfortable. We should help students understand the difference between feeling uncomfortable or challenged and feeling unsafe while encouraging them to sit with discomfort while knowing they are safe.
[57] https://www.mindfulschools.org/inspiration/creating-a-safe-container-student-community-agreements/

regulation when emotions are running high can help us engage in emotionally charged conversations that are generative and prevent or reduce harm. We should also expect that conflict may arise when discussing these topics, and we must build a container in which conflict can be held and harm repaired. Creating community agreements will help us grow trusting relationships while the agreements themselves will serve as tools to navigate challenges that might arise in conflict. For these purposes, the community agreements should be reviewed at the beginning of each class to ensure that everyone reflects on these agreements as they engage with each other, and we should be in the practice of appealing to the agreements to highlight, identify and address generative, productive, unhelpful or harmful behaviors as they arise. In order to make the most out of community agreements, there should be ongoing reflection on how our interactions both exemplify and live up to as well as fall short of our agreements and how these agreements might need to change to accommodate our changing needs.

Another important aspect of engaged pedagogy that is crucial for teaching Kant through 'world'-travel is it's emphasis on wholeness. According to hooks, engaged pedagogy "makes the classroom a place where wholeness is welcomed and students can be honest, even radically open. They can name their fears, voice their resistance to thinking, speak out, and they can also fully celebrate moments where everything clicks and collective learning is taking place" (hooks, 21). Welcoming students' wholeness is particularly important if we want students to explore their own and each other's 'worlds' in the classroom. In order to see why it is important that students feel encouraged to bring their whole selves into the classroom it might be helpful to consider an example. As I mentioned in Section 12, the Eurocentric worldviews that dominate Western and westernized academic philosophy take as given several schisms that are rejected by non-Western worldviews, ontologies, and cosmovisions. One of these schisms is that between nature and the human. If our students have been educated in Western or Westernized spaces, they have likely understood that this is a schism

that is taken for granted and cannot be questioned. This means that students whose traditions and cultures reject this schism might have learned that they cannot bring this part of their 'world' and their traditions' views into the classroom. By inviting students to bring their whole selves into the classroom, we encourage them to bring even the most transgressive aspects of their alternative worldviews into the classroom, allowing us to create generative encounters between their 'world' and Kant's (or other dominant) 'world.' Furthermore, as I mentioned earlier, we can only engage in meaningful discussions about difficult topics if our students feel encouraged (even if not always comfortable) to speak about how the material and our discussions affect them emotionally, psychologically, and somatically. Inviting our students to bring their whole selves into the classroom requires us to welcome more than just their questions, thoughts, and arguments.

Having discussed the preliminary (though ongoing) work of building a learning community of engaged practitioners, let me now turn to scaffolding, sequencing, and content. One of the biggest challenges we encounter when teaching Kant's moral theory through a critical lens is making sure that we provide enough class time for students to get acquainted with Kant's complex moral theory while also providing enough time for students to engage deeply with non-canonical and otherwise critical perspectives. As I have shown in this chapter, we cannot teach Kant's moral theory responsibly without exposing students to both critical analyses of his theory as well as the philosophies and perspectives of those who theorize from marginalized and subaltern perspectives, perspectives that are excluded from the Western philosophical canon. I address this challenge in the following ways.

First, I designed the course as an upper-level undergraduate seminar to ensure that students come in with prior knowledge of the history of philosophy, moral theory, and (hopefully) Kant's philosophy. If we can build on students' prior knowledge of Kant or the history of (Western) philosophy, we can spend less time on Kant's theory and thereby make sufficient room for deep

engagements with critical and non-canonical perspectives. Second, I carve out space for engaging with other theorists and perspectives by breaking up the course into two main sections.

The first section focuses on introducing the basics of Kant's moral theory. The goal here is to provide a primer on the aspects of Kant's moral theory that are most relevant for our purposes (i.e., reckoning with our inheritance of his problematic views). Since we will have a chance to complicate and fill out Kant's picture as we read various scholars' reconstructions and interpretations of Kant, we can afford to start the course with a not-so-nuanced picture of Kant's moral theory. Knowing that we are aiming to gain a basic grasp on Kant's framework will keep us from getting stuck on complicated and controversial interpretive puzzles, discussions of which are likely to drag on, impinging on the time set aside for critical engagement and other philosophers' perspectives. With these considerations in mind, I chose to begin the course by relying heavily on secondary sources and introductory texts such as the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry which help students access Kant's ideas without having to reconstruct them from scratch (i.e. from the less accessible primary texts). Of course, it is important that students read Kant's own words, so I will also provide excerpts from the primary texts to compliment the secondary literature.

I also try to minimize time spent on reconstructing Kant's moral theory by narrowing our focus on the Categorical Imperative's Formula of Humanity and the role it plays in his broader theory. As I discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the Formula of Humanity is often thought to express Kant's commitment to moral universalism, and it is this formulation of the Categorical Imperative that is said to be at odds with (or to resolve the issues with) Kant's racism and sexism. By focusing on this specific element of Kant's moral theory, I hope to make our engagement with Kant more manageable, drawing out the aspects of his theory that are most in tension with his racist and sexist views. My hope is that narrowing our focus will help is make room for critical analyses of Kant and for marginalized perspectives that are crowded out by Kant's Eurocentric worldview. Narrowing our

focus on the Formula of Humanity will also help us orient ourselves towards the kinds of questions about universalism and exclusion that will occupy our attention for the coming weeks.

After getting a primer on the aspects of Kant's theory most relevant to our course, we will take up Kant's views on race and provide some context by placing him in the dark side of the Enlightenment (Week 3). Getting a quick primer on Kant with a specific focus on the Formula of Humanity also allows us to address Kant's views on race and gender early in the course and thus avoid marginalizing these views, something that often happens in our classrooms. We will explore some of the tensions that arise between the dominant interpretations of Kant's Formula of Humanity (Week 2) and his views on race and gender. At this point, we are only looking to identify some of the tensions that arise, and to get a richer picture of the context and positionality from which Kant theorized. This sets up scaffolding for us to think about Kant's problems so that we are aware of them when we look at various appropriations and interpretations of his theory. However, we are not yet looking to resolve the tensions between his ideal theory and his views on gender and race, nor are we looking to give definitive answers to the bigger questions guiding our inquiry: questions about how we should deal with Kant's problematic views or how they affect his broader moral theory. We will have the opportunity to do a deeper dive into these issues and get more clarity on these questions when we take up Huaping Lu-Adler's and Inder Marwah's views on these matters (Week 6). At this point, students need only be aware of some of Kant's problematic views so that they can think about how different approaches ignore, address, deal with, or potentially reproduce these problems.

The remainder of Section 1 will be spent looking at different ways in which Kant scholars approach Kant's moral theory and his problematic views. We begin by looking at feminist appropriations of Kant that either ignore his problematic views (Korsgaard), argue that these views are marginal and can be discarded (Hay), or argue that his views on gender are not in fact as

problematic as they sound and that the problems arising from these views can be solved by reading

Kant against himself (Varden) (Week 4). We then look at scholars who argue that Kant's racism can

be removed from his core theory (Fleischacker) or that Kant changed his views on race for the

better (Kleingeld) (Week 5). I chose to cover these accounts before covering accounts that explicitly

argue that Kant's problematic views cannot be easily excised from his broader theory in order to

give students the opportunity to come up with their own views on whether his theory can be saved

from racism and sexism, as well as their own ideas about how these problematic views relate to or

affect his broader moral theory.

It was important for me to expose Kant's problematic views early in the course because if

students are given a whitewashed or color-blind version of Kant's moral theory, their initial

impressions of the theory might prime them to think that his problematic views are mere personal

prejudices or mistakes that can be simply ignored. After all, I think many of us would have had a

very different understanding of Kant's theory had we been exposed to his problematic views early in

our studies. Furthermore, having a more complete understanding of Kant's texts (the good, the bad,

and the ugly) might have made it easier to challenge the idea that Kant's theory is robustly

universalist. I present Kant's context in the dark side of the Enlightenment and his views on race

before taking up feminist interpretations of Kant without yet exposing students to arguments that

purport to show that his problematic views infect or inflect the rest of his theory. In doing this, I

hope to give students a more honest and fuller picture of Kant's worldview and the seeming

contradictions between his problematic views and the more abstract moral principles such as the

one expressed in the Formula of Humanity. I want to give students the opportunity to grapple with

the big questions about what to do with Kant's racist and sexist views, and what influence they have

on his broader moral theory before engaging with scholarship that presents compelling arguments

for the view that his racism and sexism shape his moral theory in profound ways. Through this

specific sequencing, I try to strike a balance between presenting a version of Kant that is not whitewashed while leaving these tough questions open for students to grapple with.

After we have grappled with these questions ourselves, we then look at theorists who argue that Kant's problematic views cannot be neatly removed from his broader moral theory (Weeks 6 & 7). By this point, students will be familiar with a wide variety of interpretations and arguments and will be well positioned to evaluate each position. The final readings in Section 1 will give students strong reasons to think that Kant's problems cannot be simply ignored or neatly excised from his theory, but, by this time, they will also be able to draw from the previous weeks' material in order to engage critically with each perspective and set of arguments. At this point, students will be asked to critically engage with one of the approaches or accounts that we have covered in a first attempt to articulate their own positions on how we should deal with Kant's problematic views. We will then enter Section 2 of the course where we will shift our approach to Kant's problematic views. Instead of focusing on the place that these views have in Kant's theory, we will turn our attention to the ways in which these views constitute a dominant worldview that shapes 'worlds.'

The second part of the course is designed for students to practice engaging with Kant's theory through 'world'-travel. Having read various accounts and reconstructions of Kant's moral theory, students will now focus on engaging with Kant's theory as a 'world' while developing their own understandings of the various 'worlds' they and other members in the learning community inhabit. We begin Section 2 by discussing Iris Marion Young's "Five Faces of Oppression" (Week 8). Students will be asked to present on one of the faces of oppression, explaining what their chosen face is and providing an example of how this face of oppression manifests in our society. We will develop a working understanding of oppression and try to identify some connections between the different examples students provide and Kant's problematic views. An example of such a connection might be the exploitation of women's labor as caregivers and Kant's relegation of

women to the domestic sphere. At this point, we are simply trying to draw vague connections between Kant's worldview and conditions of oppression and injustice in our society. As we draw these loose connections, we will begins to explore the links between racist, sexist, ableist, etc. ideology in Kant and our material conditions.

Once we have a working understanding of oppression and have explored how oppressive conditions can be linked to harmful views and ideologies about oppressed groups, we will explore Maria Lugones' account of 'world'-travel (Week 9). We will think through her account, asking what Lugones means by 'world' and what she means when she says that we inhabit different 'worlds.' Here students will be asked to begin thinking about the different 'worlds' they inhabit as well as the various ways in which our 'worlds' and Kant's 'world' intersect. We will also think about what it means to travel from one 'world' to another, what skills we need in order to travel between our own 'worlds' and to travel to other people's 'worlds' in playful (ethical) ways. We will reflect on the different ways in which things are constructed in different 'worlds,' including how the self and the other are constructed in various 'worlds.' Through our discussions we will nurture a growing consciousness of our various identities and positionalities while putting ourselves in our place (just as we did with Kant) by acknowledging that our 'worlds' exist among many, and there are 'worlds' that we have not and perhaps still cannot see. We will also think about what it would mean to travel to each other's world in ethical ways. What relationships do we need to build to engage in loving 'world'-travel? What conversations and experiences do we need to create?

Once we have a working understanding of 'worlds' and 'world'-travel, as well as some tools for exploring our different 'worlds,' we will delve deeper into specific aspects of Kant's worldview by looking at how his various problematic views shape the academic 'world' that we share (with Kant and with each other). We will explore Kant's Orientalism and how it was used by his followers to shape the Western philosophical canon in exclusionary ways (Week 10). We will think about how

our educational experiences have been shaped by Kant's Orientalism and explore how Kant's constructions of so called "Orientals" shape our various 'worlds' as well. An example of this might be the ways in which Asian men are often depicted as too feminine, or the ways in which Asian languages are thought of as less logical.[58] We will also explore the ways in which Kant's conception of true philosophy as necessarily systematic has shaped our ideas about what counts as philosophy and the kinds of thinking, knowing, and being that are deemed unphilosophical and thus excluded from academic spaces (Week 11). We will also explore the ways in which academic institutions and academic philosophy excludes and erases marginalized people's 'worlds' by failing to recognize their ways of knowing as legitimate, and denying them the status of competent producers of knowledge (Week 12). We will end our course by revisiting the guiding questions from Section 1. Students will be asked to reflect on how their interpretations of Kant's moral theory has shifted considering our various discussions. They will be asked to reflect on how seeing Kant's theory as a 'world' that we inherit and inhabit, a world shaped by various oppressions, has informed their thoughts about the right way or ways to approach Kant.

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[58] I am grateful to Huaping Lu-Adler for bringing this connection between Kant's 'world' and our 'world' to my attention.

What is Philosophy? What do We Want It to Be?

Brave Space: "a classroom environment that acknowledges the challenges that both students and faculty have when attempting to have discussions around difficult and/or sensitive topics such as race, power, privilege and the various forms of oppression for the purpose of learning. Brave Spaces are created when both students and faculty commit to actively engaging in the 6 Pillars of a Brave Space"
1. Vulnerability 2. Perspective Taking 3. Lean into Fear 4. Critical Thinking 5. Examine Intentions 6. Mindfulness (read about the 6 pillars at link)

Feminist Principles: https://actionaid.org/feminist-leadership

Week 1: Co-Creating Community & A Feminist Classroom
- bell hooks "Engaged Pedagogy"
- Cait O'Connor's "Creating Community Agreements to Start the Year Strong (link)
- Listen to Pedagogies for Peace's "A Conversation with Sheryl Lightfoot" (link)

Questions: What do we need to create a learning community where everyone is accountable for creating the learning experiences we want to have? What do you need to learn and teach well and what will you commit to doing so others can have what they need? What guidelines will we use to interact with each other and the material?

First Section: Kant's Moral Universalism & Kantian Approaches

Week 2: Primer on Kant's Moral Theory (The Formula of Humanity)
- Sections from Robert Johnson & Adam Cureton "Kant's Moral Philosophy" in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (link)
- Excerpts of Kant's Groundwork
- Christine Korsgaard's "Kant's Formula of Humanity"

Questions: Why does Kant think morality must be grounded on *a priori* principles? According to Kant, what is the supreme principle of morality? What is the Categorical Imperative's Formula of Humanity? According to Kant, in virtue of what do persons have moral status?

Week 3: Putting Kant in His Place
  - Excerpts from Walter Mignolo's *The Darker Side of Modernity*
  - Georg Forster's "Something More About the Human Races"
  - Excerpts from Kant's "Idea of a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim"
  - Kant's "Determination of the Concept of a Human Race"

Questions: How do Kant's views on race complicate or compromise the apparent universalism of his moral theory (the Formula of Humanity specifically)? What is Kant's account of how germs (Keime) are developed? What does this theory entail for people of different races? We see that Georg Forster tried to engage Kant on questions of racial injustice. What should we make of Kant's doubling down on his racist views? Mignolo suggests that we should pay attention to what he calls the dark side of the Enlightenment. Should we take this context into account when we engage with Kant's theory? How would our interpretations/approaches to Kant's theory change if we took this context seriously?

Week 4: Feminist Appropriations of Kant
  - Carol Hay on Self-Respect in *Kantianism, Liberalism, and Feminism: Resisting Oppression*
  - Adrian Piper's "Xenophobia and Kantian Rationalism"
  - Helga Varden's "Kant and Women"

Questions: This week we read three different ways of appropriating Kant. Hay argues that if we get rid of the marginal sexist views, we can use Kant's moral theory for feminist purposes. Varden, on the other hand, argues that Kant's views are not deeply sexist as they might seem at first glance. Both approaches seem to suggest that Kant's theory is not fundamentally sexist. Are you convinced? Piper argues that we can remove Kant's racism from his theory of cognition which in turn can help us resist xenophobia. What are the upshots and the risks of taking Kant's racism out of his moral theory in the way Piper does? Do these three approaches save Kant's theory or do they reproduce (perhaps just by ignoring) Kant's problems?

Week 5: Getting Rid of Kant's Problems?
  - Sam Fleischacker
  - Mills "Ideal theory as Ideology"
  - Pauline Kleingeld "Kant's Second Thoughts on Race"

Questions: Kleingeld and Fleischacker argue that Kant's racism is not central to his moral theory. How does each author argue for this conclusion? Does Fleischacker's solution for distinguishing between Kant's ideal and non-ideal theory escape Mills' charge that any such attempts beg the question? Does the fact that Kant criticized slavery in the "Sugar Islands" imply that he changed his racist views? What conception of racism might each author be working with such that Kant's core theory appears to be non-racist (Fleischacker) or that Kant stopped being a racist later in life (Kleingeld)? Are there other conceptions of racism that might still apply to Kant's views and theory?

Week 6: Holistic Approaches: Centering the Non-Ideal Works
- Excerpt from Huaping Lu-Adler's *Kant, Race, and Racism: Views from Somewhere*
- Inder Marwah "What Nature Makes of Her"

Questions: Lu-Adler and Marwah suggest that we cannot simply take Kant's racism and sexism out of his moral theory. Why do they think that Kant's non-ideal theory is an integral part of his overall moral theory? How are these two components (ideal and non-ideal) connected according to each author? How does recognizing these connections push against the mainstream interpretation of Kant's theory as universalist?

Week 7: Reinventing Kant & Constructing Complicity: Taking Kant's Problems as Our Own
- Dilek Huseyinzadegan's "For What Can a Kantian Feminist Hope For?"
- Excerpts from Jordan Pascoe's *Kant's Theory of Labour*
- Jameliah Inga Shorter-Bourhanou's "Reinventing Kant?"

Question: This week's readings exemplify different approaches to Kant from the ones we saw in previous weeks. Huseyinzadegan argues for adopting a constructive complicity approach. What is this approach? Why does she think other approaches risk reproducing Kant's problems? Do the previous Kantian accounts we have read make the mistakes Huseyinzadegan warns about? Shorter-Bourhanou adopts a different approach by reinventing Kant. How is this approach different from Huseyinzadegan's? Shorter-Bourhanou says that her approach avoids the white-washing of Kant's theory? What does white-washing mean here? Does Shorter-Bourhanou's reinvention of Kant avoid the problems that Huseyinzadegan warns about?

Second Section: Inheriting Kant and 'World'-Travel

We have considered different interpretations of Kant's theory and different approaches to dealing with his problematic (antagonistic) views. For the rest of the semester, we will take up Dilek Huseyinzadegan's constructive complicity approach to Kant's moral theory. We will assume (though we can question and disagree with this assumption in our discussions) that we are complicit in Kant's problems. We will ask in what ways we are complicit and in what ways we inherit Kant's problems. The guiding question will be: **"How should we engage with Kant's moral theory as inheritors of his problems and his 'world'?"** (Here, it is important to keep in mind that each one of us is positioned differently in society and in relation to Kant's theory. This means that the answer to this question might be different for each of us).

Week 8: Oppression in Our 'Worlds' & Kant's 'World'
- o   Marylin Frye's "Five Faces of Oppression"
- o   "Tools for Social Change" link

Questions: Sign up to present on one of the five faces of oppression. 1. Explain in your own words this face of oppression and why it counts as oppression. 2. Provide an example of this kind of oppression. 3. Are there any connections you can draw between the example you chose and Kant's problematic views? Explain.

Week 9: Kant's Moral Theory as a 'World'
- o   María Lugones' "Playfulness, "World"-Travelling, and Loving Perception"
- o   Alexis Shotwell's "Appropriate Subjects: Whiteness and the Discipline of Philosophy"

Questions: What does María Lugones mean by 'world'? What are some skills we need to engage in playful 'world'-travel? If we thought of Kant's moral theory as a 'world' what would be some of the features of this 'world'? Shotwell talks about Charles Mills' idea of conceptual whiteness. What is conceptual whiteness? According to Shotwell, what are some of the practices through which the conceptual whiteness of philosophy is reproduced? How has Kant's worldview contributed to shaping philosophy's whiteness?

Week 10: Inheriting Kant's Orientalism: Canon Construction

o   Excerpts from Peter Park's *Africa, Asia and the History of Philosophy: Racism in the Formation of the Philosophical Canon*
o   Excerpts from Bryan Van Norden's *Taking Back Philosophy: A Multiculturalist Manifesto*

Questions: What is a canon? According to Park, how was the Western philosophical canon constructed? Again, thinking about Kant's theory as constructing a 'world,' how has Kant's Orientalism contributed to constructing the academic 'world' we inhabit? How does Van Norden think we should deal with the Western philosophical canon? Do you agree with his multiculturalist approach? Are there any problems with the canon and how we teach philosophy that his multiculturalist approach does not address?

Week 11: Inheriting Kant's Conception of Philosophy & Philosophical Problems
o   Excerpt from Huaping Lu-Adler's *Kant, Race, and Racism: Views from Somewhere*
o   Excerpts from Minna Salami's *Sensuous Knowledge: A Black Feminist Approach*
o   Excerpts from John Harfouch's *Another Mind-Body Problem: A History of Racial Non-Being"*

Questions: According to Lu-Adler, what is Kant's conception of philosophy? How does his conception of philosophy shape canon formation and academic philosophy today? Explain in your own words Salami's idea of Europatriarchal knowledge. How are emotions and non- Europatriarchal ways of knowing rejected in academic spaces? Can you see connections between Kant's views and the privileging of Europatriarchal knowledge in academia?

Week 12: 'Worlds' Otherwise
o   Melanie Bowman and María Rebolleda-Gomez's "Uprooting Narratives: Legacies of Colonialism in the Neoliberal University"
o   Kristie Dotson's "Radical Love: Black Philosophy as Acts of Inheritance"

Questions: According to Bowman and Rebolleda-Gomez what are some ways in which academic institutions harm members of marginalized communities? Why are marginalized communities' ways of knowing seen as illegitimate in academic spaces? What harms arise from the delegitimization of marginalized communities' knowledges? Dotson says that academic philosophy is anti-black. What are some

examples of academic philosophy's anti-blackness? How and why is Black women's knowledge production erased? How does academic philosophy's anti-blackness make working on Black people's theoretical productions difficult? What does Dotson think is required to do Black philosophy in an anti-black academic context?

Week 13: Revisiting Kant: Playful 'World'-Travel
- Excerpts from Kant's *Groundwork*
- Choose a text we have covered in class, something you have written or created for class, or something that represents a 'world' that you have been putting in conversation with Kant's 'world'

Final Questions:
- How do we understand Kant's moral theory now that we have thought about his worldview as a 'world' and explored how his worldview shapes our on 'worlds'?
- Revisit our examples from the "Five Faces of Oppression" exercise: How might the various approaches to Kant's theory either address and solve or reproduce/enable oppression?
- How do the links that have drawn between Kant's theory and oppression in our world change the way you interpret and understand Kant's theory?
- Choose one of the approaches we have looked at and assess in light of what he have learned this semester. How does this approach resolve Kant's problems or exacerbate them?
  - How can we improve this approach or if you think it already works say how it addresses at least one of Kant's problems.
- Which approaches to Kant are better suited to helping us address and transform Kant's problems and how they show up in our 'worlds'?

Projects:

- **Week 1-Reflection for Community Agreements:** Please reflect on your needs, desires, strengths, growth areas, and accessibility needs as a learner, teacher, and community member. What do you need to bring your knowledge to the classroom and collaborate with others in learning and teaching? What are the community agreements you would like us to honor as we interact with each other? Please prepare something to share your thoughts with the class. This can be a diagram, a video, PowerPoint, poster, essay.

- **Week 3-Essay (option 1):** This week we read about Western knowledge production. Please reflect on how you have previously thought about knowledge and how our discussion of knowledge *production* changed or shifted the way you think about knowledge. How do power relations shape what we take ourselves to know and what we ignore?

- **Week 7-Five Faces of Oppression:** Sign up to present on one of the five faces of oppression. 1. Explain in your own words this face of oppression and why it counts as oppression. 2. Provide an example of this kind of oppression. 3. Are there any connections you can draw between the example you chose and Kant's problematic views? Explain.

- **Week 8-Conversation (Option 2):** This week we talked about Kant's theory as a 'world.' For this assignment, you will work in groups. Please have a conversation about what it means to think of Kant's theory as a 'world.' What insights do we gain from this approach that we might miss when we think of the theory as a static text/set of ideas? Ask each other about how you see yourself constructed in Kant's world. In what ways do each of you inherit Kant's world? Where are there points of connection between your 'worlds' and Kant's?
  - o It is up to you how you present the conversation you had to the class. You can create a podcast episode, write a dialogue based on the recording of the conversation, make a zine with the insights that arose from the conversation, re-enact the conversation in front of the class, put on a skit expressing your insights, etc. Get creative!

- **Week 9-Essay (option 3):** What is a canon? This week, we read about how the Western philosophical canon came to be. What were some of the factors that determined who got included into or excluded from the Western philosophical canon? What insights can we gain from learning the history of the canon?

- **Week 11-Reflection:** Tell us a little bit about at least two 'worlds' that you inhabit. What is your experience with traveling across 'worlds.' This assignment can be written in essay form, recorded video, journal entry, fictional short story, myth, poetry, etc.
- **Final Class project:** Identify at least two ways in which Kant's problems (ableism, sexism, racism, heterosexism, Orientalism, anti-blackness, etc.) have shaped our realities (within the University or in our town). We will discuss the

problems we see in our community that we have inherited from Kant. After our discussion we will pick one issue and start thinking about how we, as a class, will intervene through direct action, public education, mutual aid, agitation, consciousness raising, etc.

CITED LITERATURE

Abbreviations of Kant's works

Anth   "Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View." *In Anthropology, History, and Education.* Edited and translated by Robert Louden. Cambridge University Press, 2006. pp. 231–429.

Anth-Frie   "Anthropology Friedländer." In *Lectures on Anthropology*. Edited by Allen W. Wood and Robert B. Louden. Cambridge University Press. pp. 37–255.

Anth-Mensch "Menschenkunde." *In Lectures on Anthropology,* Edited by Allen W. Wood and Robert B. Louden. Cambridge University Press, 2012. pp. 281–333

Anth-Mron   "Anthropology Mrongovius." *In Lectures on Anthropology,* Edited by Allen W. Wood and Robert B. Louden. Cambridge University Press, 2012. pp. *335–509.*

GTP   "On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy." *In Anthropology, History, and Education,* Edited by Günter Zöller and Robert B. Louden. Translated by Günter Zöller. Cambridge University Press, 2006. pp. 195–218.

GMS   "Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals." Translated by Arnulf Zweig and Edited by Thomas Hill and Arnulf Zweig. Oxford University Press, 2002.

OBS   "Remarks in the Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime." *In Anthropology, History, and Education,* Edited by Günter Zöller and Robert B. Louden. Translated by Paul Guyer. Cambridge University Press, 2006 pp. 18–62.

MM   'The Metaphysics of Morals'. Edited and translated by Mary Gregor Cambridge University Press, 1996. AA6: 211–491.

BBM   "Determination of the Concept of a Human Race." *In Anthropology, History, and Education,* Edited by Günter Zöller and Robert B. Louden. Translated by Holly Wilson and Günter Zöller Cambridge University Press, 2006 pp. 145–59.

VRM   *"*Of the Different Races of Human Beings.*" In Anthropology, History, and Education,* Edited by Günter Zöller and Robert B. Louden. Translated by Holly Wilson and Günter Zöller. Cambridge University Press, 2006 pp. 82-97.

Ideas   "Review of J. G. Herder's Ideas for the philosophy of the history of humanity. Parts 1 and 2 *(1785)*" in *Anthroppology, History and Education.* Edited by Günter Zöller and Robert B. Louden. Translated by Allen Wood. Cambridge University Press, 2006. 121-142.

Päd   "Lectures on Pedagogy." In *Anthropology, History, and Education,* Edited by Günter Zöller and Robert B. Translated by Robert Louden. Cambridge University Press, 2006. 437-85.

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