Reporter: Lu Zhao

Winter Semester

Room Gamma

08-12-2021 15 PM

# A Consistent Egalitarian: an Analysis of the Relationship Between Kant’s Race Theory and Moral Philosophy

# Abstract: Kant is regarded as the spokesman of the contemporary declaration of human rights and the forerunner of global citizenship theory. However, this noble image has been questioned by critics for his empirical racial hierarchy argued in the pre-critical period: Kant’s moral law applies only to the white race with the “full person”. Around the question of whether Kant’s pure moral philosophy was impregnated by his racist view, the defenders of Kant either adopt the negative defense strategy of affirming the transcendental moral philosophy and negating the racial thought, or try to justify the consistency of Kant’s theory from the perspective of his later philosophy of right. The deficiency of these two justifications is that they do not directly deal with the relationship between moral philosophy and race theory. When Kant developed a mature moral theory in the mid-1780s, he also constructed a systemically mature race theory under the guidance of teleology principles to defend the unity of mankind. This theory can be used as the explanatory basis to prove the universality of Kant’s moral philosophy, which reflects the deep correlation between moral philosophy and race theory. From this perspective, it can not only make up for the lack of defenders and respond to the critics’ doubts, but also portray a consistent egalitarian image of Kant.

# Keywords: Racist; Teleology; Race Theory; Moral Philosophy

# INTRODUCTION

Contemporary cosmopolitan theorists have tended to enshrine the ideas of freedom and equality embedded in Kant's cosmopolitan thought, with the aim of constructing a cosmopolitan community whose moral status is respected and whose rights are equally guaranteed. However, with the publication of Kant’s unpublished works and the extension of the field of Kant studies, a “little-known” Kant has emerged.

In terms of the capacity of the **human mind**, Kant inherited Hume’s assertion that blacks are fundamentally different from whites and “it seems to be just as great with regard to the capacities of mind as it is with respect to color”. In addition, blacks “ completely black from head to foot, a distinct proof that what he said was stupid”(2: 253; 2:255). In the aspect of **education and culture**, Kant argued that “The (native) American people acquires no culture. It has no incentives; because affect and passion are absent in it ...... The Negro race can only acquire a slave culture”, while “The white race contains all incentives and talents in itself” (25: 1187); In his *Physical Geography*, Kant ranked the races in a **hierarchical order**, “Humanity has its highest degree of perfection in the white race. The yellow Indians have a somewhat lesser talent. The Negroes are much lower, and lowest of all is part of the American races”(9: 316). There is no doubt that these narrowly racist comments not only eclipsed Kant’s moral-political cosmopolitanism, but also caused him to diverge from the sublime image that has long crowned him as the greatest philosopher of the Age of Enlightenment.

An immediate consequence caused by the above comments is how to deal with the relationship between Kant’s biased doctrine of race and his practical philosophy advertised by universality. At present, three lines of inquiry have emerged: the defenders, represented by Allen Wood, take the position of “**Independence Theory**”(IT). This position does not deny the ladder of skin color laid by Kant, but only regard it as “certain false empirical beliefs and inessential derivative theses”[[1]](#footnote-0) and claim that they do not erode Kant’s universalist practical philosophy. We should pay more attention to philosophical moral theory than to insignificant racial discourses[[2]](#footnote-1). Critics, represented by Mills, insist on the “**Consistent Thesis**” (CT). They assert Kant’s “full personhood” is a “threshold concept”. White Europeans are exclusively entitled to full moral person because of their perfection in developing rational predispositions and fulfilling their moral vocation, while nonwhites, who stand in a “sub-person” status, are not qualified to be considered by categorical imperatives due to their deficiencies in moral and physical capacities. And therefore, Kant’s moral philosophy applies only to the white race. From this point of view, Kant’s doctrine of race does not contradict his moral philosophy, i.e., Kant is **a consistent inequalitarian[[3]](#footnote-2)**. The “**Evolution Thesis**”(ET) attempts to justify Kant. They argue that Kant’s racial assertions underwent a progression from prejudice to neutrality, and that Kant’s late political cosmopolitanism, with its critique of colonialism, corrected the racial stereotypes created by previous empirical observations, thus transforming Kant from an inconsistent egalitarian to a consistent egalitarian[[4]](#footnote-3).

This article critically examines each of these three positions in turn. **The first section** presents the negative defense strategy adopted by the **IT** and clarifies the need to inquire into the relationship between Kant’s theory of race and his moral philosophy; **the second part** shows the deep connection between Kant’s mature race theory and universal moral philosophy by reconstructing his teleological racial doctrine’s defense of the unity of human (category) in a world of difference. **Finally**, I explore two approaches in which the CT criticize Kant, then point out the strengths and weaknesses of the “ET” in refuting the CT. On this basis, it responds to the two criticisms of the CT by looking at the connection between moral philosophy and race theory. Given the inner compatibility of his mature race theory with moral philosophy in the mid-1780s, we consider Kant to be a consistent egalitarian.

# I Answer the Question: Is It Necessary to Examine the Relationship between Kant’s Theory of Race and Moral Philosophy

As mentioned above, Kant’s notorious racial prejudice contradict his practical philosophy of displaying human’s autonomy, equality and independence, and how to deal with and reconcile the two, or how to interpret Kant, is not only a major task for Kant scholars, but can also be seen as a theoretical demand of Kant’s philosophy for contemporary scholars. In the preface to the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant states that “ the duty of philosophy was to abolish the semblance arising from misinterpretation” (A Xiii) and that if philosophy deliberately avoids this task in its search for truth, then human beings will inevitably wander in a state of “self-incurred minority” (8: 35). The task now before us is to inquire whether Kant’s exalted position in the history of philosophy obscures his racist status or whether his philosophy is itself pure and colorless. Only by clarifying the misconceptions involved will we be able to mature our reason and thus restore a “true Kant”.

The defenders of IT adopt a **negative defense strategy**, either ignoring Kant’s racial ideas altogether, arguing that whether Kant himself sincerely followed his cosmopolitan ideas is only of biographical significance and has no philosophical value[[5]](#footnote-4), or acknowledging that Kant’s moral and political principles contradict his racial views, but that the racial view does not affect the core thrust of Kant’s pure philosophy, so we should focus on the theory of moral autonomy that defends the absolute value of *person[[6]](#footnote-5)*. In my view, all of the above positions intentionally or unintentionally neglect the relevance of Kant’s racial doctrine to his practical philosophy, and thus do not add much to Kant’s reputation in answering the following two questions.

For one thing, is Kant’s idea of race so worthless for philosophical study that we can turn a blind eye to it? Before answering this question, it is necessary to first make a strict distinction between his racist remarks as well as his theory of race. According to the texts, much of Kant’s colorful racist commentary stems from his private lectures on physical geography and anthropology in the pre-critical period. Kant first introduced the *physical geography* to the University of Königsberg in 1756, in which the question of the natural attributes and morphological differences of human beings, that is the problem of race, was included as one of the three major topics of the discipline (2: 9), with the aim of increasing students’ “adequate knowledge of history matters” (2: 321). Moreover, the *lectures on* *anthropology*, which began in the winter term of 1772, also explored “the races of human beings as products belonging to the play of nature” (7: 120). It is worth noting that, at that time, Kant’s own knowledge and judgments about races were derived from the uncritically examined and verifiable empirical claims of travel reports, official collections of travel texts, and explorers (2: 4), which also contributed significantly to Kant’s racist statements in this period. However, since the appearance of *On the Different Races of Man* in 1775, Kant began to systematically reflect on the racial thesis and make it under the review of his critical philosophy. By 1785, under a dual examination of the principles of reason and teleology, Kant completely rejected the empirical racist thesis he had passively embraced in the pre-critical period and went on to construct a mature, unbiased theory of race that defended the unity of the human species[[7]](#footnote-6). While critics might cite the racist comments in the 1802 *Physical Geography* to show that Kant did not change his position, however, this book, complied and published according to notes from a different period, has recently been confirmed by scholarship as being taken from manuscripts from the summer term of 1774 and from Kant’s oral texts prior to 1760S[[8]](#footnote-7). So it does not represent the mature racial thought of Kant’s critical period. To sum up, given the apparent shift in Kant’s attitude toward race, his pre-critical racist views cannot simply be equated with his non-racist theory of race.

Since Kant’s pre-critical and post-critical racial thought cannot be compared, we cannot help but ask what its mature race theory is and what value it has. Firstly, As far as the **purpose** of his theory of race is concerned, Kant’s systematic theory of race is to defend “an idea of the way in which the greatest degree of manifoldness in the generation can be united by reason with the greatest unity of phyletic origin” (8: 164). In other words, the main work of Kant’s race theory was to use the concept of reason to reveal the unity of different races (with obvious differences in skin color and personality ) in biological classes, in opposition to the proposition that mankind belong to different species, as insisted on by those “polygenesis”. This explanation provides biological basis for Kant’s moral judgment that “**both non-whites and whites exist as rational beings and hence have equal moral status because of the end in themself**”. For if we take the *major premise* provided by his moral philosophy that “all men are rational beings” and the *minor premise* provided by his theory of race that “both non-whites and whites are human beings (belong to the same species)”, we can *conclude* “both non-whites and whites are rational beings”. For Kant, rational beings have unconditional value as an end in themselves, and are therefore equal in moral status, so that there is nothing unequal between non-whites and whites, apart from their physical differences. Following this line of reasoning, it is questionable for the CT advocates to accuse Kant of creating an innate inequality between the races by merely assigning rational personality to the white race (see Section 3 for details). Thus, on the basis of Kant’s racial theory defending the unity of the human race, we can get a glimpse of the universal character of his moral philosophy.

Moreover, in terms of the **specific content** of his theory of race, it also presents an intrinsic fit with moral philosophy. Guided by his regulative principle of reflective judgment, Kant used the combination of “ efficient causes (nexus effectivus)” and “ final causes (nexus finalis)” (5: 372) to reflect on the grounds for the generation and unfolding of the organism, constructing a new kind of teleological preformation theory in the field of organic reproduction. When this doctrine is applied to the theory of race, the ethnical differences exhibited by the same species are rationalized: nature wants humans to inhabit every corner of the earth, and therefore pre-equips their ancestors (*the first human couple or a single phylum*) with intrinsically purposive predispositions. And then their descendants’ predispositions develop in the process of gradual migration, in accordance with different geographical environments, and create different racial characteristics according to the principle of permanent inheritance. **In short, human physical and mental differences are not at the level of species, but rather between different races of the same specie**s. Let’s see how this relates to Kant,s moral philosophy. In *Collins notes* from 1784-1785, Kant argued that “the final destiny of the human race is moral perfection” (27: 470), but that this vocation can not be achieved by a single individual, “rather only the whole human species can reach its destiny” (25: 1196). Given that Kant’s concept of the human species refers to all races, including non-whites and whites, and not just the “white species”, each race is given the same moral vocation in the process from nature to freedom. Therefore, it is wrong to claim that Kant sees non-whites as incapable of moral progress and sees them as an obstacle to permanent peace[[9]](#footnote-8). Thus, Kant’s theory of race, based on a teleological approach, likewise provides a crucial link in proving the equality of races in moral status.

The second question that the holders of the IT need to answer is whether Kant’s purely practical philosophy is “clean”. It is well known that Kant’s definition of human right in his political philosophy does not depend on the external good (wealth, power, birth, etc.); rather, he provides a more normative basis for the command to respect human rights, namely, the FH and FA (derived from the categorical imperative). Every rational being has unconditional value because of being an end in themselves, not just a means, and enjoys equal legislative status in the moral world. In this sense, Wood calls Kant’s theory “unconditional egalitarianism”[[10]](#footnote-9). However, as the holder of CT questioned, “suppose it turns out that not all adult humans are persons for him, either (depending on how we want to draw the conceptual geography) because they constitute a separate

category of their own, or because within the category of personhood......**It would mean that his vaunted universalism and egalitarianism are restricted to the white population**”. In other words, Kant’s claim that the personality of the rational being himself belongs only to the white race and does not apply to other members of the human race in the biological sense. So, in this respect, is Kant still an absolute egalitarian? Is his practical philosophy a philosophy of “color”?

In my view, the proponents of the **IT** positively affirm a practical philosophy with a stronger element of universality, but do not clarify the legitimacy or “purity” of this theoretical value and therefore cannot answer the challenge posed by the **CT**. It seems to me that if Kant is creating a purely categorical imperative with tinted glasses, then this supreme moral principle may well be potentially embedded in the attitudes that shape racist policy. As scholars have noted “proposing a universal morality for all human beings does not, by defmition, exclude the possibility of a coexisting racist doctrine”[[11]](#footnote-10). Given their preference for Kant’s purely moral philosophy and their disregard for the doctrine of race, IT advocates hence lack insight into the possibility of such a symbiosis between morality and prejudice. After all, the IT advocates champion “a new, slimmer, more elegant Kant,after he has undergone liposuction and had the surplus removed ”[[12]](#footnote-11), so the possibility of examining the co-existence of Kant’s moral philosophy with his racism is ruled out. In this case, if his moral philosophy ascribes rational identity (full person) to the white race alone, then we should be cautious or even discard Kant’s moral theory, no matter how much it proclaims freedom and equality, ends and dignity.

In summary, this defense strategy of absolutely separating Kant’s moral doctrine from the racial perspective both confuses racial prejudice with mature race theory, thus losing the potential of the teleological racial doctrine to justify his moral philosophy, and fails to examine the purity of his moral philosophy, thus failing to provide a positive response to the accusation of CT. Only by acknowledging the deep connection between race theory and his moral philosophy can the secret of the consistency of Kant’s nature (race theory) and freedom (moral philosophy) be uncovered. It is therefore necessary to examine in detail how Kant’s theory of race is logically consistent with the positive values of his moral philosophy.

# II Bio-philosophical bases for a universal moral theory

The fundamental task of Kant’s moral philosophy is to search for a supreme moral law applicable to all rational beings, according to which each rational being shares an equal moral legislative status in the kingdom of ends by virtue of its innate capacity for rational legislation. However, the validity of this universal moral proposition for all persons as finite rational beings presupposes not only the recognition that “all human beings are rational beings” but, more importantly, the affirmation of the “biological unity of all human beings”, i.e., that non-whites and whites (regardless of differences in color and intelligence) are of the same species. For if, according to the “ polygenesis” blacks and whites belong to two species, it is difficult to determine whether the identity of rational beings belongs to whites alone or whether it should cover all non-whites. Does the application of the rational moral claim that persons are ends have some priority at this point?

Therefore, in order to explain that Kant’s moral theory includes all human beings rather than just a certain kind of superior race, it is necessary to defend the biological unity of different human groups showing obvious differences, that is, to prove that all non whites and whites belong to one biological species. In this way, as one of the members of human species, everyone is endowed with the peculiarity of rational beings in the moral sense, and is treated equally as the basic carrier of his universal moral theory. Just as Alix A. Cohen says, “**without a theory about the common origin of humanity, it seems impossible to ground general claims about human nature**”[[13]](#footnote-12). In my view, Kant’s mature race theory just provides theoretical support for this assertion[[14]](#footnote-13).

After 1775, Kant began to systematically construct his theory of race in order to prove the biological unity of human members with different physical characteristics. And regarding it as a means of opposing polygenesis’ view. Kant’s gradual abandonment of the racial prejudices he had accepted in the pre-critical period and his systematic rethinking of the race thesis were due to two opportunities offered by the field of biology at that time: the controversy over the theory of the origin of species and the controversy over the theory of organic reproduction. In response to both controversial issues, Kant gradually developed a scientific modern theory of race based on teleological principles[[15]](#footnote-14). To what extent, however, was Kant a builder of the modern concept of race? How can the unity of human species be explained within the framework of his racial theory? By virtue of the two opportunities mentioned above, we can answer these two questions appropriately.

In his most mature treatise on race in 1785, Kant gave the most elaborate overview of his theory of race,

“*the* ***concept of a race*** *contains first the concept of* ***a common phylum****, second* ***necessarily hereditary characters*** *of the classificatory difference among the latter’s descendants. Through the latter, reliable grounds of distinction are established according to which we can divide the species into classes, which then, because of the first point, namely the unity of the phylum, may only be called races and by no means kinds*”(8: 99).

It can be seen that Kant’s theory of race consists of two interdependent parts, first, the “monogenesis”, which defends the unity of the natural human species, and second, the “seeds” theory of heredity, which explains the differences between the races. Both also constitute the main elements of the response to two opportunities mentioned above.

We begin by examining Kant’s defence of the “**monogenesis**”. One of the pressing questions in the field of biology in the eighteenth century was to clarify whether different ethnic groups belonged to the same species, that is, whether human beings shared the common origin. Proponents of **polygenesis** theory argued that the apparent differences in skin color, for example, suggested that different ethnic groups originated from separate genetic sources and formed fundamentally different species[[16]](#footnote-15). Such interpretation tends to characterize the differences in body image of ethnic groups as a hierarchy of inner personalities, such as mental intelligence, and the resulting racial inequalities can easily become a theoretical weapon for colonialists to justify their atrocities. Maurice L. Wade also believes that **polygenesis** gives some ethnic groups higher moral status and lays a racial ladder. It is easy to draw the conclusion of racial supremacy according to this view[[17]](#footnote-16).

Kant expressed the opposite position at the beginning of his first essay on race *Of the Different Races of Human Beings*. He transplanted Buffon’s rule applicable to the definition of animal species, that is, “animals which produce fertile young with one another (whatever difference in shape there may be) still belong to one and the same physical species” (2: 429), into the definition of human species. He claimed that according to the common law of propagation, “*all human beings on the wide earth belong to one and the same natural species because they consistently beget......this unity of the natural species, which unity is tantamount to the unity of the generative power*”(2: 430). And the only reason for this unity is that they “ all belong to a single phylum”, in this case, “human beings belong not merely to one and the same species, but also to one family”(2: 430). According to the this principle, the indisputable fact that the black and white communities produce mixed offspring through their interbreeding shows that they belong biologically to the same natural class, i.e. that each human being exists as a member of the human species regardless of his or her physical characteristics, and that the ultimate reason for this judgement stems from the **monogenesis**. Thus, Kant first explains the biological unity of the human species from the standpoint of its **monogenesis**. George foster, a contemporary of Kant (who agreed with polygenesis), strongly opposed this classification and asked “ if the thought that

blacks are our brothers has ever, anywhere, even once, caused the raised whip of the slave driver to be lowered?”[[18]](#footnote-17). However, he also ignored the connection between Kant’s moral philosophy and theory of race. Kant’s moral philosophy assigns to each human being the moral quality of “finite rational being”, and in terms of their universally valid fertility and origin from the same ancestral, blacks and whites, as members of the same human species, share the moral identity of rational beings and are equally respected for the universal legislative will in practical reason itself.

Kant’s proposition of monogenesis has two advantages over his opponents. Firstly, understanding legislates for nature rather than nature for understanding. The latter, represented by **Linnaeus**’ taxonomy (school division), bases the division of natural classes on the external “resemblances” of natural objects (8: 164). However, this representation determines that the classification of understanding is contingent, since they do not examine the inner structure of man, and deny the examination of man from the “relationship in terms of generation” (2: 429). So they are therefore merely **descriptive**. The **natural division**, on the other hand, follows the principle of the legislation of understanding (which here is only **analogous** to the understanding of the causal law of theoretical philosophy, which “seems” to legislate nature in a teleological perspective), because understanding needs to bring phenomena under the law, which shows the causal relations between phenomena and helps to reveal the the true structure of nature. This system of classification, which requires the participation of understanding in the legislation, is **prescriptive** and, as Kant put it, this division creates“ a natural system for the understanding” which “aims at bringing creatures under laws”(4: 429). Secondly, in arguing that humans originate from the same phylum, Kant always upheld the principle of Occam’s razor. The universally valid principle of propagation is the only basis for Kant’s explanation of the common origin of humans, and according to the polygenesis, since humans belong to different species, the explanation of how they reproduce with each other must resort to causes other than the common principle of propagation, which Kant saws as “an opinion which needlessly multiplies the number of causes” and that “without need start from two principles if it can make do with one” (8: 165). The contemporary biological judgement of the common ancestral origin of mankind also largely confirms Kant’s scientific foresight. The two methodological innovations mentioned above thus provide strong proof for Kant’s defense of the biological unity of the human species, while at the same time laying the foundation for Kant’s granting of equal moral status to every member of the human species.

Although the law of common reproduction under the category of the legislation of understanding corroborate the biological unity of human beings, the question of the diversity of races or classes, i.e., why are there ethnic groups with different skin colors?, has not yet been addressed. Therefore, the question of how to explain the diversity of human races in keeping with the theory of the unity of the class constitutes the main element of the second opportunity of Kant’s theory of race.

In Kant’s time, **mechanistic epigenesis** and **preformationism** were the two opposing views that explained the reproduction of biological organisms. According to mechanistic epigenesis, organic molecules make up the matter of all living organisms and are organized into specific structures under a mechanism of motion similar to Newtonian micro forces, which is sufficient to explain the formation, growth, and many other problems of organic matter[[19]](#footnote-18). While this view explains that the formation of organisms is the result of matter following mechanical laws, it does not clarify why the structure of organisms is so constituted, i.e., it lacks a teleological interpretive orientation; instead, from a preformationist perspective, the Creator (nature) pre-arranges a kind of pre-existence of primordial germs in the genealogy of species. And these germs develop into a complete organism under fertilization[[20]](#footnote-19). In other words, long before the organism is formed, its specific physical characteristics (e.g., skin color) are prescribed by the Creator and subsequently unfold themselves over time in the case of fertilization. In this respect, organisms are simply unfolding, rather than naturally developing. While connoting teleological overtones, **preformationism** also ignores the important role of mechanistic principles involved in explaining organic reproduction.

Kant combines these two positions. Guided by the principle of teleology and on the basis of the “clues” provided by reflective judgement, he constructs a new type of teleological “**preformation of species**” in the field of organic reproduction. On the basis of organism’s own characteristics (*its parts [as far as their existence and their form are concerned] are possible only through their relation to the whole; its parts be combined into a whole by being reciprocally the cause and effect of their form; as an organized and self-organizing being* 5: 373-4), Kant treats it as a “**natural end**”. But as Kant said, if we follow the model of efficient causes (mechanical law) , we can never “adequately come to know the organized beings and their internal possibility in accordance with merely mechanical principles of nature, let alone explain them”[[21]](#footnote-20) (5: 400). In this case, “teleological judging is rightly drawn into our research into nature” (5: 360). Under the interpretive framework of the teleological principle, on the one hand, nature, which does not perform futile tasks, puts the “internally purposive predispositions”, i.e., the “germ” or “seed”, into the organic individual in advance, thus retaining the element of **preformationism;** onthe other hand, the “**formative power**” the organism has in itself plays an significant role in organism’s unfolding process, and closely cooperate with the environment on which this development process depends. From this point of view, Kant absorbed the epigenesis’ principle. We believe that it is based on this interpretive frame that Kant explained the **racial differences**.

The concept of race is the key to solve the problem of racial difference. In *Of the different races of human beings*, Kant made a clear definition, “Among the subspecies, i.e., the hereditary differences of the animals which belong to a single phylum, those which persistently preserve themselves in all transplantings (transpositions to other regions) over prolonged generations among themselves and which also always beget half-breed young in the mixing with other variations of the same phylum are called races”(2: 430). In other words, the **genetic trait** embedded in the concept of race is the underlying cause of the racial differences that humans exhibit in the same ancestral phylum. But how are such genetic traits formed? Why are there different genetic types in the same phylum? Here again, the theory of natural end comes in handy.

Kant argued that “the human being was destined for all climates and for every soil”[[22]](#footnote-21)(2: 435), so nature pre-equipped the original ancestors with various germs and natural predispositions. According to the location they choose, these pre-determined predispositions either be unfolded or restrained, so that he so that he would become suited to his place in the world. With the gradual immigration of its descendants and the lasting development in the long process of time, racial differences formed. That is, the “seeds” of all races (White, Black, Yellow, and American) were pre-programmed into our original ancestors to cope with the different circumstances encountered in later development, and each of us could be Black, White, Yellow, and red-copper American. Racial differences emerge from the gradual dispersal of their descendants around the world, where local climatic conditions then activate corresponding “germs” that seem to be born to local environments, i.e., the development of the predispositions depended one the places, and the places did not have to be selected according to the already developed predispositions (8: 173). Over a long historical period, once a race has taken root and has suffocated the other germs, it resists all transformation just because the character of the race has then become prevailing in the generative power (2: 442). We can see that the development of a racial predispositions is irreversible. Once triggered, no matter how people migrate, their corresponding predisposition will inevitably be inherited, thus preventing the possibility of its transformation into other races. The external environment merely stimulates the growth mechanism of the racial “seeds”, but cannot modify any of the hereditary characteristics, which is the fundamental reason why the color of the skin of a black man who has been a permanent resident of France cannot fade with time [[23]](#footnote-22)(8: 92). This permanent genetic characteristic, determined by pre-equipped germs, guarantees the permanence of racial differences.

In summary, the development and transmission of pre-existing “germ” in the same phylum ensure the permanent genetic characteristics of racial characteristics, while the “**formative power**” in human being helps the unfolding of their predispositions according to the external environment, and inhibits the expansion of other racial germs and allows only one germ suitable for the local environment to be fully developed. Together, they explain the problem of racial diversity. As noted earlier, because the “germs” for racial development are embedded in the same single phylum and presuppose human uniformity, so human differences exist only at the racial level, not at the species level. As Kant said, “the class of the whites is not distinguished from that of the blacks as a special kind within the human species, and there are no different kinds of human beings” (8: 100). His genetic theory proves the unity of the natural class of human beings in a negative way, i.e., indirectly, that non-whites and whites, despite their physical and mental differences, both exist as members of the human species, not as separate species.

One conclusion of Kant’s defence of the unity of the species is that when he speaks in his moral philosophy of “all men as rational beings” and “the moral vocation of mankind can only be realized in all species”, we think he is referring to all races. In other words, Kant’s doctrine of universal morality is universal because it applies to all human beings on earth, not just to the white race. The deep connection between this kind of unity and universal moral philosophy becomes an important basis for refuting the CT.

# III “The Consistent Thesis”: Criticism, Response and Absence

One of the tenets that racists adhere to is to flaunt skin color as a symbol of ability or intelligence and regard it as the basis for classifying racial superiority or inferiority. The white race occupies the highest place on the moral ladder because of its own superior capacity for self-improvement and its contribution to human progress, and other people of color have inherent deficiencies in cognition and character, and therefore being “relegated to a lower rung on the moral ladder......they are biologically destined never to penetrate the normative rights ceiling established for them below white persons”[[24]](#footnote-23). When tracing the historical origins of this creed, Kant has been accused by contemporary scholars of being the founder of this position (Mills, Bernasconi), claiming that his racist thought simultaneously permeated his moral philosophy, rendering the concept of “moral person” applicable only to the white race. Thus, Kant was not an inconsistent egalitarian (as the holders of the IT would have it), but a consistent inequalitarian. We call this view CT, i.e., **Kant’s theory of race and moral doctrine both exhibit unequal characteristics**.

Similar to the IT, the CT also conflates the racial views of the pre-critical and post-critical periods of Kant. Unlike the IT, however, those pre-critical racial prejudices were cited by the CT proponents as a way of emphasizing the unequal character of Kant’s moral philosophy during the Critical period. In order to illustrate the intrusion of Kant’s racist views into universal moral philosophy, the CT supporters gives two arguments.

The first is the argument of “threshold of person”. The typical representative of this position, Mills, introduces a concept of “sub-persons” into Kant’s moral philosophy, in which he argues that, for Kant, intelligence and autonomy are the minimum threshold for the acquisition of **full person**, and that non-whites do not meet this minimum because they lack the capacity for self-improvement and moral maturity. Under this concept (sub-person)s, whether human beings originate from the same phylum or from multiple, it refers to a certain inferior race, and the norms and laws that apply to the full person do not apply to this kind of race, so that when Kant speaks of “all human beings”, he is thinking only of “all the white”[[25]](#footnote-24) who have full personal integrity. Reinhard Brandt stands on the same side, claiming that “the white is intellectually morally superior to the remaining three not only in degree but qualitatively”, and Kant “applied the categorical imperative only to the first class”[[26]](#footnote-25).

The second argument emphasizes **the permanence of the racial hierarchical order**. They argue that skin color represents the innate ability of each race and is permanently inherited and non-transformable, and that the original inferiority of non-whites is “a biologically and metaphysically inherited type”[[27]](#footnote-26). This inborn deficiency in ability prevents them from developing to the same level as whites and allows them to act as servants of whites in scientific and artistic achievement[[28]](#footnote-27). According to this genetic view of ability, the inequality of moral status between the races is an innate and constant fact, and no matter what progress non-whites make, their contribution to the completion of human moral vocation is limited.

This rather subversive position, however, promptly invites a response from Kant’s defenders.

The defenders of the **ET** position argue that the holders of CT view Kant in a “static” light, thus ignoring the “dynamic changes” in his racial thought over time. Pauline Kleingeld notes that Kant defended a racial hierarchy until the late 1780s, but that after 1792, with the introduction of cosmopolitan right, Kant completely abandoned his previous racial prejudices and gradually became a “consistent egalitarian”[[29]](#footnote-28). Claudio Corradetti argues that “the more Kant matured the idea of cosmopolitanism as a human emancipatory project, the more he felt the need to revise his precious views on the hierarchy of races”[[30]](#footnote-29).

This approach deserves recognition in two respects: on the one hand, it corrects the unbalance in temporal dimension in CT’s argument. As noted above, Kant’s views in the field of race theory are not static. Although we recognize that he did make some narrowly racist comments in the pre-critical period, these prejudices did not remain with him to the end of his life, and the growing maturity of his critical system led him to abandon those unexamined comments in favor of a theory of race compatible with his universal moral philosophy. It is therefore unreasonable to embed the racist views of Kant’s pre-critical period in his mature moral philosophy in order to create a “consistent” (inequality) image of Kant.

On the other hand, it shows us that Kant not only made a change in the theory of race, but also tried to defend in practice the equality of status between races. Although we are granted the “hospitality right” to try to interact with others based on our original possession of the earth and our state of communion with the land, this right is premised on the obligation of “universal hospitality” (a legal rather than an ethical duty) and is intended as a critique of the unjust colonialism prevalent in Europe at the time. The appropriation of land of non-white races, Kant notes, “ can only by contract, and indeed by a contract that does not take advantage of the ignorance of those inhabitants with respect to ceding their lands” (6: 353). We argue that if Kant is silent on the issue of slavery in his moral philosophy, his exclusion of colonial violence and affirmation of the contracts suggests that he is seeking to construct a discourse system of equal interaction in which both non-whites and whites are seen as equal carriers of rights. Since, in Kant’s context, “right and coercion are one and the same”, the cosmopolitan right is limited to “universal hospitality” is in fact a coercive obligation imposed on the European colonial powers. In this sense, we do not think that there is a disconnect between Kant’s theory and reality[[31]](#footnote-30).

Unfortunately, however, this line of defence also overlooks the theoretical potential of pure moral philosophy in defending the racial equality[[32]](#footnote-31). Moreover, while it is true that starting with Kant’s late doctrine of cosmopolitan **right** may support his egalitarian turn, the problem lies in the fact that, from an “*dependence perspective*”, the normative basis of the doctrine of right (ensuring that your external freedom can coexist with the freedom of everyone under the constraint of a universal law) derives from the fundamental value of freedom or an end in itself which was put forward in his previously established moral philosophy. As Mr. Bian Shaobin puts it, “pure practical reason and the value of freedom it characterizes are the normative prerequisites that justify the principle of right”[[33]](#footnote-32). In other words, Kant’s duty of right is derived from his highest moral law. Therefore, if the blood of racism runs in that supreme moral principle, then the doctrine of right based on a priori freedom (morality) naturally cannot escape its immersion. Therefore, in order to defend Kant’s egalitarianism from a **right** perspective, the purity of his moral philosophy must be clarified.

As noted earlier, Kant’s affirmation in the mid-1780s of the propositions that “both non-whites and whites have absolute value” and that “the moral vocation of mankind must be fulfilled by the whole specie’s demonstrates the inherent consistency between his moral philosophy and his theory of race in this period. Therefore, his purely moral philosophy can be taken as a perfect tool for defending the true Kant. Therefore, on the basis of the **ET** position, we try to respond to the criticism of the CT by looking at the intrinsic connection between moral philosophy and race theory, aiming at creating a “consistent egalitarian” image of Kant.

The first view, based on the CT, that non-white races are relegated to “sub-persons” because of their own intellectual and mental disadvantages, is, in our view, a misreading of Kant’s a priori moral philosophy. On the one hand, on such a view, Kant’s moral geography needs to be redrawn. In the *Groundwork*, Kant divided beings into two categories, namely things that are used only as means and just have conditional value, and rational beings (persons) that have unconditional value by virtue of being an end in themselves (4: 428), both of which constitute the Value Carrie rof Kant’s moral philosophy. Man as a finite rational being is able to act out of pure respect for the moral law because he is endowed with pure practical reason, which gives him a *personality* that is an end in itself. According to Kant’s theory of race, the non-white race is a member of the human species because it belongs biologically to the same ancestral phylum as the white race, so that when we claim that every human being is a rational being, both non-whites and whites exist as “full person”. The “sub-persons” advocated by CT divides the moral subject into whites, non-whites, and things, a trichotomy that is inconsistent with both Kant’s proof of the unity of the species and the original dichotomy of his moral philosophy.

On the other hand, can intelligence (ability) be used as a basis for classifying *person* as superior or inferior? Although Kant’s pre-critical ranking of the capacities of the different races is careless and places the white race in a superior position, even so, capacity is by no means the criterion by which Kant determines *personality*. In fact, as early as 1772 (although a mature racial theory has not yet been developed), Kant clearly stipulated this division standard, “*The personal worth that we attribute to a human being rests on talents and dispositions. The former belongs to his capacities, the latter to his will. The former are means to good ends, the latter a will to make*

*use of those. (Through talents a person is good for something, through dispositions he is good in himself.) The first comprise the conditional worth of the person, the second the unconditional worth*”(15: 513). The dispositions Kant said here is same with “the predisposition to personality” which was put forward in his *Religion*, and it “alone is rooted in reason practical of itself, i.e. in reason legislating unconditionally” (6: 28). That is, the human individual has absolute value (person) by virtue of the innate legislative capacity to practice reason (autonomy), which is “ therefore the ground of the dignity of human nature and of every rational nature” (4: 436). Therefore, whether non-white or white, because they belong to the same species and are endowed with the capacity for autonomy, regardless of the differences in ability and intelligence, they are equal in moral personality.

We argue that what Mills calls ability/capacity is only the second of the rules of practice in the Kantian context, namely the rules of prudence. In the *Lectures on Ethics*, Kant divides practical rules into three categories: rules of skill, rules of prudence, and rules of morality(27: 245), whereas the prudential rule as a norm of the hypothetical imperative is intended to be a realistic intention, the aim of which is to attain the greatest happiness, and therefore, what Mills calls ability, intelligence, which also refers to the means of pursuing this sensible end, has only a relative value, i.e., “a practical command established on the basis of prudential reason does not guarantee the morality of action and unconditional personality value”[[34]](#footnote-33). For Kant, the common law of propagation determines that everyone is one of the members of human species regardless of their skin color. Only this fact itself is enough to illustrate that **everyone is endowed with equal absolute value because of his own rational legislative peculiarity**, and that the intellectual and mental disadvantages exhibited by non-whites as a result of their environment do not mean that they do not have the right to the FA (formula of autonomy ); his very rational existence already determines his or her own absolute value. In short, **the holders of CT confuse Kant’s unconditional value with relative value, and invert the determine ground of Kant’s personality, thus ignoring the fact that each member of the human race exists as a carrier of absolute value. Finally they wrongly conclude that the categorical imperative applies only to the white race**.

The key evidence to refute the second view of CT lies in Kant’s racial heredity. According to

the second section above, racial differences in the human species arise because the “germ” or “natural predispositions” that nature equipped in the original single phylum unfolds in response to a contingent environmental stimulus, and the racial traits it develops in that environment are permanently passed on to descendants. What, however, is **necessarily inherited**? In his 1785 essay, Kant clearly noted that “no other characteristic property is necessarily hereditary in the class of the whites than what belongs to the human species in general; and so with the other classes as well” (8: 94), and “those four differences in color are the only ones among all hereditary characters that are unfailingly hereditary”(8: 98). According to the degree of adaptation to the environment, Kant does express differences in the capacities developed in the corresponding environment, but he does not include such traits in the category of necessary heredity; it is only the **colour of the skin** that can be inevitably inherited. By virtue of the color of one’s skin, we can conjecture how the geographical environment in which one lives is, but not how one’s moral and mental qualities are, that is, **there is only a metaphysical genetic doctrine of skin color and not an innate genetic principle of moral capacity**. According to Kant’s moral philosophy, every human being is innately endowed with such a moral disposition: the ability to make the categorical imperative the prescribed ground of the will. However, there is no evidence that the white race is superior to the non-white race in developing this disposition; rather, both play the same role in fulfilling the ultimate vocation of humanity (the perfection of the moral disposition), which, after all, in Kan’s view is fulfilled by the human species as a whole (25: 1196). And based on Kant’s definition of the species it is clear that non-whites and whites as members of the human species have an equal ability of moral development. Therefore, it is unreasonable for the holders of the CT to argue for the innate inheritance of ability and the lack of moral perfection in non-whites.

In 1785 *Conjectural beginning of human history*, Kant said, “the human being had entered into an equality with all rational beings, of whatever rank they might be; namely, in regard to the claim of being himself an end......In this, and not in reason considered merely as an instrument for the satisfaction of various inclinations, t**here lies the ground of that so unlimited equality of the human being even with higher beings**, however superior beyond all comparison they might be to him in natural gifts, none of whom has therefore a right to deal and dispose with him merely at their discretion” (8: 113). This statement clearly illustrates the relationship between talent and personality: **it is not talent that determines our moral status, but the rational nature with which we are born.** The existence of reason itself, as the substratum which gives them absolute internal legislative authority and the external legal right to freedom by birth, guarantees that members of each race are to be treated with equal respect. **Even if there existed a creature superior in talent and ability to the white race, it would not be entitled to treat the white race, of which it is the end, as a mere means, and similarly, even if the white race were superior in some capacity to the others, it could not be concluded that they were morally and rightly superior to the non-whites**. Thus, the CT charge against Kant’s use of innate genetic deficiencies as a measure of racial moral status is untenable.

In summary, firstly, the holders of the CT firstly impose a concept of “sub-persons” into Kant’s moral philosophy out of thin air, creating an awkward “intermediate identity” for the non-white race that is inferior to rational beings but superior to things. Secondly, mistakenly treats prudential reason based on prudence rather than pure reason as the determined ground of personality, and then concludes that the moral law applies only to the white race; and finally, transplants a priori elements of Kant’s moral philosophy into his theory of race, thereby fabricating an innate hierarchy brought about by racial inheritance. While such an approach can make Kant appear more consistent (unequal), it is a complete departure from the true face of Kant’s moral philosophy. In contrast, we believe that Kant’s theory of race provides an explanatory basis for the universal character of his a priori moral philosophy: “**monogenesis**” classifies non-whites and whites as the same species according to the universally valid laws of propagation, so that when Kant claims that every human being is a rational being, it also means that non-whites and whites as the subset of human species share the moral identity of rational beings. The unconditional value of rational existence itself determines that they share the same “full person”, so that Kant’s moral philosophy applies to human individuals in general and not just to the white race. The doctrine of teleological heredity limits skin color to the only necessarily inherited property. There is no innate deficiency in the developmental capacity of the moral endowment and its spiritual attributes of non-whites; rather, as rational beings, they have the same moral vocation as the white race in achieving human moral perfection. Therefore, the claim that the non-white race is incapable of self-development because of its innate deficiencies of ability is also untenable. On the basis of the perfect compatibility of Kant’s theory of race with his moral philosophy, we consider Kant to be a consistent egalitarian.

1. Thomas E. Hill, Jr. and Bernard Boxill, “Kant and Race”, in *Race and Racism*, ed. by Bernard Boxill, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 449. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Lucy Allias, “Kant’s Racism”, *Philosophical Papers*, 45 (1-2), 2016, pp. 1-36; Allen Wood, *Kant’s Ethical Thought*, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 5, p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. Charles Mills, “Black Radical Kantianism”, *SGIR Review* 2 (2), 2019, pp. 23-64; Victor F. A. Guerra, “How to Deal with Kant’s Racism—In and Out of the Classroom”, *Teaching Philosophy* 41 (2), 2018, pp. 117-35; Jimmy Yab, *Kant and the Politics of Racism: Towards Kant’s racialised form of cosmopolitan right*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2021, pp. 189-236. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. Pauline Kleingeld, “On Dealing with Kant's Sexism and Racism”, *SGIR Review* 2 (2), 2019, pp. 3-22; “Kant’s Second Thoughts on Race”, *The Philosophical Quarterly* 57 (229), 2007, p. 575. Claudio Corradetti, *Kant,* *Global Politics and Cosmopolitan Law The World Republic as a Regulative Idea of Reason*, London and New York: Routledge, 2020, PP. 87-95. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. Georg Cavallar, “Cosmopolitanisms in Kant’s philosophy”, *Ethics and Global Politics*, 2012, 5(2), p. 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. McCabe, David. “Kant Was a Racist: Now What?”, *APA Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy*, 2019, 18 (2), p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
7. In ***1785*** *Review of J. G. Herder’s Ideas for the philosophy of the history of humanity. Parts 1 and 2*, Kant criticized Herder’s reckless acceptance of one-sided reports from ethnography and travel notes, and believed that the concept of race was not very clear to Herder. He also claimed that philosophers should have their own principles to judge these questionable travel reports; Similarly, in his second paper on race “*Determination of the concept of a human race*”, which was also published in 1785 and with the aim of defending the unity of race, Kant carefully corrected his previous prejudice, strictly limited the racial difference to the physical characteristics of skin color inheritance under the guidance of his teleological principle, and believed that there was no difference in moral and cognitive ability. In the same year, the publication of the *Groundwork* also gave us reason to believe that Kant’s transcendental moral philosophy, which defended the value of human freedom, promoted the transformation of Kant’s racial position. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
8. Robert Bernasconi, “Kant’s Third Thoughts on Race”, in *Reading Kant’s Geography*, eds. by Stuart Elden and Eduardo Mendieta, Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2011, p. 296-7；Another widely cited pro-slavery text *reflexionen 1520, 15:878* was also confirmed to be from before *Groundwork,* see Samuel Fleischacker, *What is Enlightenment?*, London and New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 212. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
9. Inés Valdez, “It’s Not about Race: Good Wars, Bad Wars, and the Origins of Kant’s Anti-Colonialism”, *American Political Science Review*, 2017, 111 (4), pp. 831-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
10. Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. xvii. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
11. Joris Van Gorkom, “ Kant on Racial Identity”, *Philosophy in the Contemporary World*, 2008, 15 (1), p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
12. Robert Bernasconi, “Will the real Kant please stand up”, *Radical Philosophy*, 2003, 117, p. 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
13. Alix Cohen, “Kant on epigenesis, monogenesis and human nature: The biological premises of anthropology”, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 2006, 37 (4), pp. 675-93. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
14. In fact, as early as *1765-1766 the announcement of lectures for winter semester*, Kant emphasized that people should be investigated “from the point of view of the variety of his nature properties and the differences in that feature of man which is moral in character”. He claimed that “the consideration of these things is at once very important and also highly stimulating as well. **Unless these matters are considered, general judgements about man would scarcely be possible** ” (2: 312-313). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
15. See Stella Sandford, “Kant, race, and natural history”, *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 2018, 44 (9), pp. 950-77; [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
16. David Morris, ‘The Place of the Organism in Kantian Philosophy’, in *Reading Kant’s Geography*, eds. by Stuart Elden and Eduardo Mendieta, Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2011, p. 186; Thomas McCarthy, *Race, Empire, and the Idea of Human Development*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
17. Maurice L. Wade, “From Eighteenth to Nineteenth Century Racial Science: Continuity and Challenge”, in *Race and Racism in Theory and Practice*, ed. by Berel Lang, (Roman and Littelefield Publishers, 1999), p. 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
18. Georg Foster, “Something More About the Human Races”, in *Kant and the Concept of Race*, trans. and ed. by Jon M. Mikkelsen, New York: State University of New York Press, 2013, p. 165. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
19. Alix Cohen, “Kant on epigenesis, monogenesis and human nature: The biological premises of anthropology”, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 2006, 37 (4), pp. 675-93. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
20. Phillip Sloan, “Preforming the Categories: Eighteenth-Century Generation Theory and the Biological Roots of Kant’s A Priori”, *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 2002, 40, (2), p. 252. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
21. Here Kant referred to Newton, “ it would be absurd for humans even to make such an attempt or to hope that there may yet arise a Newton who could make comprehensible even the generation of a blade of grass according to natural laws that no intention has ordered”. 5: 400. What Kant meant to express here is that we need the other principles to interpret the formation of organism. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
22. In *Friedländer*’s notes, Kant pointed out that people must be aware of the universal intention or natural arrangement in nature, that is, God wants human beings to live on the whole earth, animals have their own climate, but human beings must be everywhere in the world. The reason is that people’s unsociality makes them separate and can’t live in clusters. See Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Anthropology*, 25:680, p. 215. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
23. Although **Buffon** supports the monogenesis, he believes that racial differences are determined by the external environment. The skin color of Africans who live in Europe or the Europeans living in Africa will change after several generations. See, Theodore Vial, *Modern religion, modern race*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 34.From the perspective of contemporary genetics, the genetic differences created by Kant’s “germ” are more convincing. Kant believed that external factors may be the *occasioning causes* of inevitable inheritance, but they are by no means the *producing* one (2: 435), [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
24. Charles W. Mills, *Racial Contract*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press,1999, pp. 16-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
25. Charles W. Mills, *Black rights, white wrongs: the critique of racial liberalism*, (Oxford University Press1997), [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
26. Reinhard Brandt, *D’Artagnan Und Die Urteilstafel: Uber Ein Ordnungsprinzip Der Europaischen Kulturgeschichte*, Stuttgart: Franze Steiner, 1991, pp. 135-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
27. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, “The Color of Reason: The Idea of ‘Race’ in Kant’s Anthropology”, in *Post Colonial African Philosophy: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Eze, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), pp. 124-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
28. Joris van Gorkom, “Kant on Racial Identity”, *Philosophy in the Contemporary World*, 2008, 15 (1), p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
29. Pauline Kleingeld, “Kant’s Second Thoughts on Race”, *The Philosophical Quarterly* 57 (229), 2007, p. 575. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
30. Claudio Corradetti Kant, Global Politics and Cosmopolitan Law The World Republic as a Regulative Idea of Reason, (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), P. 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
31. Victor F. A. Guerra questioned the practical feasibility of Kant’s moral law, stating “I am unsure if it amounts to much in practice, for there is a difference in being worthy of equally moral consideration in the eyes of the moral law and ultimately being treated differently than others once that moral law is applied”, see “How to Deal with Kant’s Racism—In and Out of the Classroom”, *Teaching Philosophy*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2018, pp. 117-35. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
32. Based on Kant’s third essay about race, that is 1788 *On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy*, ET supporters believe that until the late 1780s, there was still a contradiction between Kant’s moral philosophy and race theory. The key evidence they cite is that in 1788 essay, according to the adaptability of various races to the environment in different areas, Kant **ranked** the diligence ability of different races (8: 176), see Pauline Kliengeld, *Kant and Cosmopolitanism,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 107. We believe that Kant’s evaluation of the abilities of different races is based on their adaptability to the local environment. For example, the tropical areas where blacks live are rich in resources and can make a living without too much labor, which leads to their inertia or less active (Kant does not use the concept of laziness). And this ability does not mean the morally racial hierarchy, nor can it be inferred that the race with higher intelligence has control over other races. This is only a **fact judgement** and does not involve any **value judgment**. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
33. 卞绍斌，《强制与自由：康德法权学说的道德证成》，《学术月刊》，2017（5），第19—39页。 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
34. 卞绍斌, 《法则与自由：康德定言命令公式的规范性阐释》,《学术月刊》, 2018 (3), 第42—56页。 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)