Kant and Racism

A One-Day Workshop with Lucy Allais (UC San Diego, Wits University)

20th of June 2018 | LMU Munich | Munich Center for Ethics | Room M-210

Kant is considered to be one of the paradigmatic philosophers of enlightenment, moral rationalism and human dignity. However, in some of his lesser known works, he also develops a theory of race, according to which the white race comes out on top and "[t]he yellow Indians do have a meager talent. The Negroes are far below them, and at the lowest point are a part of the American people". Many of his lecture notes are abundant with racist remarks and in his *Groundwork* he complains about South Sea Islanders who supposedly all let their talents rust (IV:423.9-10).

Kant was not simply a child of his time who could not have known any better. His views on race were challenged by alternative and at least less racist approaches, but Kant saw it necessary (and thought it was possible) to stick to his own theory of race. In his 1788 article *On the use of teleological principles in philosophy*, Kant reacted critically to Georg Forster's non-hierarchical account of race. Moreover, while people like Forster became active in fighting racism and slavery, Kant until very late in his life, failed to even condemn the practice of slavery in his writings.

There is now a lively scholarly debate on Kant's racism and on how Kant contributed to specifically modern and (pseudo-)scientistic forms of racism. Whilst some scholars point out that there is evidence that Kant renounced his earlier views on race in the 1790s, others argue that Kant did not change his racist views even in the light of his developed conception of moral equality and autonomy. Most recently, Lucy Allais has proposed that Kant's views on race are instructive objects of study for a deeper understanding of the structure of racism. The presentations of this workshops address exegetical questions, discuss systematic implications of Kant's views on race for his philosophy, as well as discuss whether and how Kant's philosophy can help us to understand racism.

Organizers: André Grahle (LMU Munich), Rebecca Gutwald (LMU Munich, Munich School of Philosophy), Martin Sticker (Trinity College Dublin)

Registration: andre.grahle@lmu.de

10:00 Welcome

10:15-11:00 Lucy Allais (Wits/San Diego): *Introduction*

Chair: Martin Sticker (Trinity College Dublin)

--coffee break--

11:15-12:00 Ansgar Lyssy (LMU Munich): *Kant on the Unity of the Human Species*

Chair: Alice Pinheiro Walla (Bayreuth)
12:00-12:45 Jeremy Hovda (KU Leuven, Bochum): *The Development of Kant’s Race Theory (Without Second Thoughts)*

Chair: Rebecca Gutwald (LMU Munich, Munich School of Philosophy)

--lunch break--

14:15-15:00 Darla Migan (Vanderbilt, FU Berlin): *Orienting Imagination: Sensus Communis, Self-Deceit, and Racism*

Chair: Micol Bez (ENS Paris)

--coffee break--

15:15-16:00 Alice Pinheiro Walla (Bayreuth): *Kant and Judaism*

Chair: Jeremy Hovda (KU Leuven, Bochum)

16:00-16:45 Micol Bez (ENS Paris): *Race and Order: Anti-Racism as a Chaotic Practice*

Chair: Darla Migan (Vanderbilt, FU Berlin)

--coffee break--

17:00-18.30 Panel: *Thinking, Talking and Teaching about Race*

Panelists:
Lucy Allais (UC San Diego/Wits University)
Jennifer K. Uleman (SUNY/Purchase College, The Racial Imaginary Institute)
Halis Yildirim (Activist and former PhD-Student at LMU Munich)

Chair: André Grahle (LMU Munich)

19:00 Speakers’ Dinner (location: TBA)