

ROOTS OF RACISM: MONTAIGNE TO KANT

2020-2021

Master Philosophy

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In Europe, from the late Middle Ages onward the concept of 'race' was used in order to distinguish different kinds of people. As a rule the distinctions drawn between human races were accompanied by clear cut moral hierarchies. Most early modern Europeans appear to have considered racial differences the result of a variety of external circumstances, but during the Enlightenment as a result of taxonomical attempts to classify man within the wider context of nature a modern, allegedly scientific racism arose, according to which these distinctions had a biological basis. In this course we will concentrate on the way in which European authors active prior to Darwin, who denied the reality of different human 'species', and to such 19th- and 20th-century racists as De Gobineau, Chamberlain, and Rosenberg tried to meet the challenge implied by the discovery of peoples and cultures that looked fundamentally different from the ones early modern Europeans had been accustomed to, born as they were into a world which only recently had started to globalize. Some of the texts involved take the superiority of the inhabitants of Europe for granted. Other early modern authors, however, reveal an evident fascination sometimes coupled with genuine admiration for indigenous 'natives'.

Course Outline

We will start with four introductory lectures on proto-racist attitudes in Classical Antiquity and (early) Christianity, focusing on the Greco-Roman notion of 'barbarians' and biblical accounts of human diversity. Next, the outlines will be drawn of some of the major medieval and early modern strands of thought on race. Finally, in the last two sessions, we will read a number of texts, from Montaigne to Kant, which students will be expected to present and discuss in class. Students will be graded according to the quality of their presentation and a separate paper on the primary text they have (co-)presented.

Recommended literature:

- Abulafia, David, *The Discovery of Mankind. Atlantic Encounters in the Age of Columbus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).
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- Bethencourt, Francisco, *Racisms. From the Crusades to the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).
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- Devyver, André, *Le sang épuré. Les préjugés de race chez les gentilshommes français de l'Ancien Régime (1560-1720)* (Bruxelles: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1973).
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- Doron, Charles-Olivier, 'Race and Genealogy. Buffon and the Formation of the Concept of "Race"', *Humana Mente* 22 (2012), 75-109.
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- Eigen, Sara, and Mark Larrimore (eds.), *The German Invention of Race* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006).
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- Flickschuh, Katrin, and Lea Ypi (eds.), *Kant and Colonialism. Historical and Critical Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
- Fredrickson, George M., *Racism. A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).
- Garnsey, Peter, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to St Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
- Goldenberg, David M., *The Curse of Ham. Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).
- --, *Black and Slave. The Origins and History of the Curse of Ham* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017).
- Hacking, Ian, *The Social Construction of What?* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).
- --, 'Why Race Still Matters', *Daedalus* 134 (2005), 102-116.
- Hannaford, Ivan, *Race. The History of an Idea in the West* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).
- Hardimon, Michael O., *Rethinking. Race. The Case for Deflationary Realism* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2017).
- Haslanger, Sally, 'Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do we Want Them To Be?', *Nous* 34 (2000), 31-55.
- Hochmann, Adam, 'Against the New Racial Naturalism', *Journal of Philosophy* 110 (2103), 331-351.
- Isaac, Benjamin H., *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).
- Kidd, Colin, *The Forging of Races. Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
- Kleingeld, Pauline, *Kant and Cosmopolitanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
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- Machery, Edouard, and Luc Faucher, 'Why Do We Think Racially? Culture, Evolution and Cognition', in Henri Cohen and Claire Lefebvre (eds.), *Categorization in Cognitive Science* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2005), 1009-1033.
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- Ward, Julie K., and Tommy L. Lott (eds.), *Philosophers on Race. Critical Essays* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).
- Zack, Naomi, *Thinking about Race* (Belmont Ca.: Wadsworth Cengage, 2006).
- Zammito, John, *Kant, Herder, and the Birth of Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
- <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/race/> (Michael James)

Primary Sources

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