



The Racial Grammar of Kantian Time

Rei Terada

To cite this article: Rei Terada (2017) The Racial Grammar of Kantian Time, *European Romantic Review*, 28:3, 267-278, DOI: [10.1080/10509585.2017.1314674](https://doi.org/10.1080/10509585.2017.1314674)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10509585.2017.1314674>



Published online: 17 May 2017.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 416



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 1 View citing articles [↗](#)



The Racial Grammar of Kantian Time

Rei Terada

Department of Comparative Literature, University of California Irvine, Irvine, CA, USA

ABSTRACT

This essay reconsiders Kant's "Analogies of Experience" in *The Critique of Pure Reason* to show how Kant's grounding of perception in temporally understood cause and effect helps to institutionalize a racialized grammar that continues in globalization today. Kant's proof establishes subjective and non-subjective beings in a hierarchical cause and effect relation which is also a consecutive relation in time. One can recognize in Kant's procedures a logic that underlies enlightenment notions of history, race, and globalization. Tracing Kant's logic can help us to see how race is embedded in interlocking pieces of the apparatus of universal exchange, even where it is not named.

Discontented with your present state, for reasons which threaten your unfortunate descendants with still greater discontent, you might wish to be able to go backward; and this feeling should be a panegyric on your first ancestors, a criticism of your contemporaries, and a terror to the unfortunates who will come after you. (Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* 133)

Objects are destined *for me*; they *are for me*. Desire as a relationship with the world involves both a distance between me and the desirable, and *consequently* a time ahead of me, and also a possession of the desirable which is prior to the desire. (Levinas, *Existence and Existents* 21; *my italics*)

In his *Discourse on Inequality*, Rousseau indicates the well-known aggressive uses of locating a past/present threshold anywhere. Noting that placing something in the past may in itself praise, criticize, and terrorize in various directions, Rousseau works from object relations to time and back again. In the second epigraph above, Levinas ventriloquizes a voice of intentionality issuing from the concentric spacetime of intentionality. For this "me," not only the temporal direction but the very being of objects is "for me." The spatial distance between the "me" and the object creates both "a time ahead" and "a possession of the desirable which is prior to the desire" (21). Interestingly, Levinas's phrasing is stronger than that of logic. Not only a possessibility of the desirable is prior to the desire—"also," somehow, the distance has already been crossed. The spatiotemporal structure of desire—distance, consequence, time—rationalizes what has already happened: the possession.

The past/present threshold is not only an instrument of this or that political interest, as it is in Rousseau's text, but a boundary of the political altogether. To the extent that the

past lies “behind” intention, it disappears from the grid of Levinas’s desiring subject.¹ Invocation of naturalized spatiotemporal presets implies that there is something beyond politics. This something is often figured as pre-symbolic or inanimate substance and, as well, as the racial, thought of as some part of human substance outside the symbolic.

These are the larger issues surrounding the limited investigation of a passage of Kant I would like to undertake here, in dialogue throughout with Denise Ferreira da Silva’s important book *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (2007). I will suggest how romantic and post-romantic organizations of spacetime are racialized and excluded from being political through Kant’s construction of the conditions of possibility for telling the past from the present. Kant’s grounding of a past/present distinction reflects an already existing analytic of race determining what can count as political space. Silva lays out such an analytic in enlightenment philosophy from Descartes to Hegel. Such work shows how necessary it is to expand the methodology of the study of race beyond attention to instances that already assume that the reader can recognize what counts as race and racism (and therefore what counts as a reference to it), or attention that limits itself to what a period text thinks race is. In the First Critique, it is possible to see that, while not any *possible* notion of past whatever is necessarily racialized, the past that has been philosophically established is, and remains so even in projects that are not thematically concerned with race.

1. Why non-reciprocal relations do not coexist in time, or, two moving images

In Kant’s First Critique, time is known through causality. Establishing the enabling limits of any possible community² in its debts to space and time, Kant also cements political strictures on community in the conditions of space and time that explain them—as in Levinas’s ventriloquy of the perspective of teleological spacetime.³

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, two sets of relations—between entities or forces that are present at the same time and those that are not—with their subsets, are seen to organize the field of possible spacetime configurations. Something must be present and theoretically accessible in an infrastructure of simultaneous relations, or not available in that way and so therefore not assuredly present. There exist positions for which these options are a lose/lose situation, like a “fork” in chess. Silva, emphasizing other elements of Kant’s project, argues that enlightenment philosophy greets the “others of Europe” with “engulfment” or “obliteration,” and the homology with Kantian knowable time is compelling. “Engulfment” is coerced inclusion, and corresponds in my reading of Kant to co-presence on condition of availability. Obliteration in turn occurs by disavowal or elimination: disavowal means non-Europeans’ not registering at all, while obliteration means their appearing as there-yet-unavailable in a way that seems intolerable to the perceiver and may incite symbolic and physical extermination. Race comes into view in the structural homology between European and other social positions and the grammar of possible knowledge offered in transcendental texts.

The restrictive choice that Kant offers to all knowable entities—to be always available in principle, on call, as it were, or not to be in the present—appears in the two illustrations that Kant uses in the “Analogies of Experience” section of the First Critique to secure the two kinds of temporal relations, “coexistence” and “succession.” In the “Analogies of

Experience” Kant sets himself the task of grounding both successive and coexisting states, not directly by their subjective appearance in the sensory field, but through their connections to cause and effect in the reasoning that he believes he must use to grasp them.⁴ Kant starts with succession, and provides two supposedly contrasting prompts from the visual field. He does this while making the point that visibility is not responsible for the insight and has to be abstracted.

The first image is “the apprehension of the manifold in the appearance of a house which stands before me” (A 190/B 236):

I have to show what sort of connection in time belongs to the manifold in the appearances themselves. For instance, the apprehension of the manifold in the appearance of a house which stands before me is successive. The question then arises, whether the manifold of the house is also in itself successive. This, however, is what no one will grant ... That something happens, *i.e.* that *something, or some state which did not previously exist, comes to be*, cannot be perceived unless it is preceded by an appearance which does not contain in itself this state. For an event which should follow upon an empty time, that is, a coming to be preceded by no state of things, is as little capable of being apprehended as empty time itself. (A 191–92/B 236–37; my italics)

Kant must evoke a *moving* image; the example is cinematic. He is striving to explain *how* one uses cause and effect to decide that a state of things necessarily follows another without access to an appearance “that does not contain in itself this [new] state.” For Kant, what he has here is the apprehension of a successive flow of motion and time—it feels like time passes—without authority to assign cause and effect. Kant’s shot of the house is brief and undeveloped, as if there was nothing to it. He implies that it does not lead anywhere cognitively. This implication is deliberately misleading—as he will explain later, the example actually shows *grounded simultaneity* instead of grounded succession. In a moment, Kant will actually prefer this kind of image, an Antonionian image in which “nothing happens.” It will be the image of rampant reciprocity.⁵ But it is not Kant’s rhetorical tactic to begin there. At the moment, he needs a clear determination of cause in succession, and the moving image of the house does not provoke that.

In contrast is the kind of successive appearance that only occurrences, or “happenings” ‘Geschehen,’ have:

I see a ship move downstream. My perception of its lower position follows upon the perception of its position higher up in the stream, and it is impossible that in the apprehension of this appearance the ship should first be perceived lower down in the stream and afterwards higher up. The order in which the perceptions succeed one another in apprehension is in this instance determined, and to this order apprehension is bound down. In the previous example of a house my perceptions could begin with the apprehension of the roof and end with the basement, or could begin from below and end above; and I could similarly apprehend the manifold of the empirical intuition either from right to left or from left to right. In the series of these perceptions there was thus no determinate order specifying at what point I must begin in order to connect the manifold empirically. But in the perception of what is happening [was geschieht] there is always a rule that makes the order in which the perceptions ... follow upon one another a *necessary* order. (A 192–93/B 237–38; translation modified)⁶

Kant now asks the reader to work with the comparison between the examples. For him, again, the house image shows only the succession “common to all apprehensions,” in which “nothing is distinguished from anything else” (A 198/B 243). It seems to contain

merely the subjective sense of time passing, whereas Kant wants a line of reasoning that “necessitates some one particular mode of connection of the manifold” (A 191/B 236) and through that particular necessity plants itself in general necessity. Thinking about the appearance of the ship’s movement does the trick when Kant locates his reasoning’s lawlike constraint, that he cannot conceive of the locations actually happening in the opposite order.

If Kant were substituting perception of movements for understanding of causality, that would be “subreption” *par excellence*—conflating sensation with nonempirical relations. But Kant has been easily defended from that charge, since he is explicitly considering not his visual experiences but the reasoning around them.⁷ Kant’s point is that the fact that the static shot of the house is experienced by him as having duration—“the apprehension ... is successive”—does not mean that it could only be that way. A cinematic way of getting at the point might be to say that if we ran some Antonioni clips in reverse—say of leaves rustling in a wind—it is possible that no causal impossibility would be seen. What is going on in such an apprehension that prevents Kant from penetrating to necessary cause and effect? Relations between weather conditions, changes of light, and fluttering leaves, as well as changes in the observer, for example, retinal adjustments, are part of the scene. Each of these must be thought of as causal—none escape, and there is nowhere to escape to. Chained and meshed, however, they are potentially successive in multiple directions in a way that proliferates what it means to be successive. In fact, this kind of image contains many reciprocal cause and effect relations. The proliferation of relations seems to mean to Kant that they do not necessarily have to be thought of as successive overall—that is, they do not have to be thought of as adding up to a change in which some state that “did not previously exist, comes to be.”

But is that so? Kant does make a substitution here, not a substitution of perception for reason, but of one idealization of succession for all succession. Kant is presupposing a standard for tense that he is supposed to be grounding. A static shot of nearly stationary objects turns up the kinds of dynamics that nonlinear partial differential equations express, and that often lead to singularities when followed out. In setting aside the static image that is too dynamic, Kant leaves the impression that nothing in the image has to be thought of as having happened successively, but only in a certain *already constructed sense* of “happening” located back at his definition of *Geschehen*. Henry Allison, noting the need to be precise about a specific kind of succession that Kant is looking for, proposes to translate Kant’s term *Wechsel* (both “change” and “exchange”) with “replacement change” (204). But it is what counts as “happening” that Kant is supposed to be constructing *now*, and not already using. Instead, the house image’s kind of spatiotemporality appears as different in kind from succession because succession is already “replacement change.” That it has to be, reflects Kant’s exclusion of middle between past and present in the first place. This, finally, allows us to notice the social effects of Kant’s argument. When at the beginning of the section, he writes that he needs a way to tell at any juncture “whether this manifold, as object of experience, is coexistent *or* in sequence” (A 182/B 226), the elision of a possible “and,” “coexistent and in sequence,” marks a *social* division between coexistence—which is now confined to relations in the present—and sequence. The exclusion of coexistence with the past is a particular figuration of the past that already expresses the supersession of the past by the present.⁸

The *Critique of Pure Reason* maintains an idealized difference in kind between (1) consecutive (“replacement”) states that are not reciprocal, and (2) the thin or full reciprocity of the world that is and the community that ought to be, alike. Compared to *either* of the latter, “an object A that belongs to past time ... can no longer be an object of apprehension at all” (B 258). Coexistence is coexistence only against the backdrop of this nothingness. Similar effects of positioning a past on the other side of a threshold have been discussed in debates about historical “transition”; Subaltern Studies’, black studies’, and other critiques of anthropology and history; environmental policy; psychoanalytic theory; and transitional justice and reparations. Robert Meister, whose book *After Evil* analyzes the eschatological and psychoanalytic mechanisms of transitional justice, goes beyond the point that it is convenient to decide that the time of atrocity has passed, and proposes that “justice itself is an intertemporal problem (the supersession of one time by another)” (19). Thinking about the lesser relevance that the past is often assumed to have, I keep recalling a joke of Meister’s about the limits of historical justice—that no one wants to calculate “the present value of the damages to the Carthaginians or the Albigensians” (247).⁹ But if Meister is right that justice itself is an intertemporal problem, and if the Carthaginians can be excluded from political relevance simply because they are in the past, all determinations of position in time will appear as problems of justice.

As ever, Kant carefully abstracts empirical perception and the notion of substance usually correlated to it. He insists that he cannot see or experience *laws* of cause and effect as though they were exposed to him directly by the collisions and transformations of objects in space. Because critical philosophy is structural and relational rather than essential, it at first seems antithetical to the racial science of the period, which Peter Kitson describes as “shift[ing] in the late eighteenth century from being a system of arbitrary marks that distinguish between humanity to being ‘an ascription of natural signs’ written on the body” (518, quoting Lloyd 69). Yet, if the Kantian system rejects any authority of traits, its potential anti-racism is confined to a *racism based on traits* that is less and less convincing as an account of what racism is.¹⁰ Kant’s refusal of inherence, then, can be seen as an early instance of the substitution of anti-essentialism for anti-racism.

Up till now, it seems as though Kant wants the reader to see simultaneous relations as less useful philosophically than successive relations. The latter seem clearer and more criterial. As I mentioned earlier, though, Kant has set this impression up only so that he can turn the values around. Out of the failure to determine succession in the house image as opposed to that of the ship, “a difficulty arises with which we must at once deal” (A 202/B 247), that of *necessary simultaneity* (“Zugleichseins”), which must also be known through cause and effect. For Kant, if indetermination is subordinate philosophically to necessary succession, necessary succession is inferior to necessary simultaneity, in which “states” can perform the interlocking, interdependent relations that Kant favors ethically—most spectacularly in *Perpetual Peace*. “Zugleichseins”—“coexistence” in the interesting translation of Norman Kemp Smith—relies on *reciprocal* cause and effect. On one hand, as Kant points out, even “when cause and effect are simultaneous” in experience, as when “the stove, as cause, is simultaneous with its effect, the heat of the room” (A 202/B 248), their necessity remains successive—for, he goes on, their relation too can only be conceived in one causal order, which, since that is the only order that counts, does not fall outside of sequence. On the other, it is peculiar to simultaneous relations that they coexist causally, and therefore necessarily, only when they follow the “law of reciprocity

[Wechselwirkung]” (B 257) “immediately or mediately [oder mittelbar]” (A 213/B 259), which, as above, proliferates cause and effect toward maximum complexity.

By the time that necessary reciprocity introduces the kind of realm that Kant prefers ethically, the socially relational implications of the whole discussion lie on the surface. These have been developed subtly in recent work by Kevin McLaughlin as I will address in a moment. First, though, as is clear from the social perspective assigned to Kant’s object, the following conclusions have emerged so far:

- (a) Time of any kind, successive or simultaneous, *reflects forces and states that are in the grammatical position of subjects* (A 204–05/B 249–50). To condense: time takes its character from subjects. Succession can be established as necessarily happening only when a force acts transitively to produce an effect; and *coexistence, therefore and complementarily, can only occur between two causes*. That’s the remarkable punchline of the “Analogies of Experience.” Relevant to the relationship to justice, in Kant’s world temporal coexistence *does not exist without reciprocity* and implies (“arcs toward,” so to speak) equality, these demands being characteristics of the *only necessary* apprehensions of perceptions of coexistence that can be known. This is a recognizably liberal humanist view, with the disadvantages thereof.
- (b) The negative corollary of this conclusion, taken back to the social realm, is even more striking: any relation *lacking* in causal reciprocity can only be critically verified as to its temporal orientation if it is successive. Moreover,
- (c) states in subject/object cause and effect do not coexist in time.¹¹

2. Why coexistence in space and time is not “ethical”

Making the social stakes still more explicit, Kant goes on to specify weaker and stronger versions of reciprocity, the stronger only achieving commutation, or community. When and only when forces not only can be reciprocal, but each grounds the determination of the other, the relation is “of community [Gemeinschaft],” to which the Third Analogy of Experience is then devoted. But Kant has been reverse-engineering community into the structure of time all along, as if he were illustrating Hannah Arendt’s principle that politics is possible only among equals.

Kant knows that the causal standard for reciprocity is infra-thin. Water against fin/fin against water and bullet against flesh/flesh against bullet are “reciprocal” only in a specialized sense. Therefore, there is one more twist that McLaughlin emphasizes. In the Third Analogy, commutation splits once again into “*communio* or *commercium*.” The dynamic coexistence of commutation arrived at above is *commercium*—and *communio* fascinatingly goes missing, never ruled out logically and never to be referred to again. *Commercium*, translatable as “trade,” becomes the name of the chains of causal reciprocity that “lead our senses from one object to another” (A 213/B 260), and are that specialized logic of universal equivalence by which the flesh enwraps the bullet. Kant portrays the exchange space of universal equivalence as a scopic totality of positions: “the light, which plays between our eye and the celestial bodies, produces a mediate community between us and them, and thereby shows us that they coexist” (A 213/B 260).¹² (In this way, Kant rejoins the perceptible, able to rest with it as a result.) McLaughlin goes

thoroughly through the implications of this last distinction between commerce and community, and writes:

on this point Kant is unambiguous: when it comes to the cognition of community, what we perceive is a *commercium*. Temporal simultaneity is a matter of a community of entities interacting on one another at the same time. Empirical community, in other words, is commercial interaction. Kant does not speculate about nonempirical simultaneity in this section of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. However, he is explicit about not refuting its existence. (5)

Kant's actually existing coexistence is a realm of political economy whose unsatisfactory qualities he acknowledges (since they need supplementation by the utopian *communio*). *Commercium* is not much—and it is everything knowable. The exchange space is necessary for Kant not in its specific historical characteristics and uses, but in its generality, its *bounds*. And again, it looks at first as though its universality might be supposed to distinguish it from the sciences of racialization. Yet, this structure too reflects a liberal gambit of postracial universalism; standing beyond use in its formalism, it and its grammar alone can be used, nothing can ever be used instead of it.

Although the disconcerting thinness of the sociality that spatiotemporal laws can authorize is evident, establishing the transcendental security of a single infrastructure for “exchange” is no small move. On either side of Kant's invocation of the mediating light are these passages:

It is therefore necessary that all substances in the [field of] appearance, *so far as they coexist*, should stand in *thoroughgoing community of mutual interaction*. ...

We cannot empirically change our position, and perceive the change, unless matter in *all parts of space* makes perception of our position possible to us. For only thus by means of their reciprocal influence can the parts of matter establish their simultaneous existence, and thereby, though only mediately, their coexistence, *even to the most remote objects*. ... I do not by this argument at all profess to disprove void space, for it may exist where perceptions cannot reach, and where there is, therefore, no empirical knowledge of coexistence. But such a space is not for us an object of any possible experience. ...

[T]his is a reciprocal influence, a *real community* (*commercium*) *of substances*; without it the empirical relation of coexistence could not be met with in experience. (A 213–15/B 260–61; my italics)

Like Levinas's desiring subject, Kant's argument here starts with a real abstraction that has already been “met with.” The “thoroughgoing community of mutual interaction” that connects Kant's body, quite frighteningly, to “matter in all parts of space” (A 213/B 260) is what social theorists still mean by inescapability of minimal relation; it is also what Silva means by “engulfment.” In social relation construed as thin but inescapable, all bodies take part in a lawfully inevitable mesh of forces in which each effect has some counter-effect and each in principle can reach any other, “insofar as they coexist.” Conceiving of *relation* in this way, as transcendental and real, is so prevalent that it is difficult to see its impact; and when its impact is seen, it is usually celebrated in liberal terms, as if connection in principle to all things were necessarily good, and even ethical—keeping “us all” in check, or constituting the very possibility of communicability. But it does not keep “us all” in check; it keeps some of us in check. What is offered as enthusiasm for communicability reads differently for those who are the targets of its accession system. The “thoroughgoing community of mutual interaction” that connects Kant's body to “matter in all

parts of space” makes connection itself merely a logistical challenge, and this suggests that what is at stake in “coexistence” and “relation” is as much *access* as communicability and reciprocity. To put it another way, communicability and reciprocity are also about access: why, and for whom, has finding their principle become urgent? To his credit, Kant notes an *ethical* problem of the successful arguments: if there is “thoroughgoing community,” it has to be curbed by the complete exemption of the “human” from the instrumental. But that Kant adds the qualification, shows that he knows what has already been done: it is access to bodies and global regions that the lawfulness of causality *describes*. The instrumentalization of the human is not given the status of an impossibility.

Kant’s Doctrine of Right attempts to contain the business opportunity of “thoroughgoing community” by maximizing its mutuality. It is filled with containment gestures, like the quick braking above, that Hegel will resent and unbinds, pointing out that they already have been surpassed anyway. Peter Fenves notes Walter Benjamin’s objection to Kant’s effort, in the Doctrine of Right,

to expand the concept of right ... on the basis of the postulate that every nonpossessed thing must be available for my use under the condition that I be able to bring it “under my control” ... [A]t the outset of the Doctrine of Right, then, is the following thesis: *Gewalt* in all its troubling ambiguity prepares the ground for right, *which should eventually extend to every part of the globe* under the sign of “eternal peace.” (14)

These moves show Kant constrained by his conclusion in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Right has to walk in the path trod by access, because Kant has established critically that there is no other path. Kant still needs the path to exist “by analogy with presenting the possibility of bodies moving freely under the law of the equality of action and reaction” (*The Metaphysics of Morals*, Part One, Doctrine of Right, §E, 6: 233). As Fenves notes, this conclusion throws in one’s lot with the legal system—one can only send the police and lawyers after to enforce the human exemption—whereas Benjamin throws in his lot with violence. As clear as the problems become in Kant’s social science texts, something is gained by working with the *Critique of Pure Reason* rather than the Doctrine of Right or Kant’s *Anthropology*. The First Critique is no less a tracing of the global stage with which Kantian cosmopolitanism is concerned over the long term; it is, by its own definition, the infrastructure of that stage as of all else.

Finally, then, what does it mean that, in seeming deference to all of the problems of violence above, Kant reserves the possibility of a nonempirical community that would be neither succession nor “commerce”—the lost possibility? To the (a), (b), and (c) ending Section 1 above, we need to add: (d) States in unknowable relation and non-relation coexist, but not in time. This coexistence is *no longer spatiotemporal*. But it is still restricted; it is still coexistence. For Kant, space (d) *can still only be reciprocal*, since it is a subset of community. The symmetry to which Kant always returns is, and is meant to be, a guardrail for what interaction can be—in contrast, for example, to violence for radicals. McLaughlin argues that Kant’s utopian preservation of community partakes of his presentation of “a shared and sharing ability” (5): “Reason after Kant, in this sense, dictates a vision of community as a matter, not of a common possession of a thing like a parcel of land or sea, but of a communicability shared by all rational beings” who also share its limits and inabilities (6). Kant’s movement away from the substantive is here

potentially anti-racist, in that it is anti-possessive and anti-nationalist. But that could be only if nation and possession are treated as symmetrical and interchangeable.

Over the course of this passage, a categorical ability that is also an inability—an “a priori principle of community,” a “communability”—becomes more important than what can be gained or lost, “a parcel of land or sea.” McLaughlin continues, “the commonness of this community derives from an a priori sense of the common—a commonality that is independent of common experience” (113). These statements thus extend a Kantian ethical tradition in which unknowable commonality and areas that no one can possess or represent are seen as void of both dangerous particularity and dangerous unity. This “void space,” as Kant calls it, passes from Kant to Laclau, to nonsubstantive sovereignty and political formalism. Yet, the trade that brings a void space that no one has in exchange for “a parcel of land and sea” is troubling. The community that forms around this void space comes to lose the hang of a language and logic that can speak of parcels as prosaic and distinctive—sometimes irreplaceable—benefits, instead of as pejorative seeds of “particularism” that have to be prevented from growing into nationalism. The loss of such a language is unevenly felt. Speaking it risks the “peace” of the space at every moment; but arguably, it is risked at every moment anyway, because the guardrails have already failed, and the land and sea already taken.

3.

For contemporary purposes, it matters that theories that conceive the inevitability of “relation” as a real infrastructure carry over from the global situation here literally rationalized by Kantian spacetime a concept of “relation” that they bury beneath the political plane. Relation becomes a natural armature that can be called upon to set a political limit, and to set race outside the political limit. By its criterion, many forms of actual social interaction appear unreal, unpolitical, unmodern, and racialized. Meanwhile, normatively, routes of access open in principle from any point to any other are in this view and in this view only, assumed to be already there awaiting use, *not awaiting construction*.

Thus, Silva “propose[s] a reading,” in her words, “of modern representation that recuperates the racial as a political-symbolic weapon, a strategy of engulfment, whose crucial effect is to produce human bodies and global regions as signifiers of the productive play of universal reason” (32).¹³ Contributing to this project of modernity, Kant’s infrastructural claims for causal time, and therefore kinds and bounds of community, relieve society of the burden of designing the means as well as instances of social interaction, some of which could be able to exist without being able to be conceived as “relation,” and some of which might be better off not having to exist. His architectonic offering to the analytics of race is to create, for society’s already present real abstractions of universal equivalence, spatiotemporal conditions that ensure that there is nothing else that can count as known. Rendering the uneven availability of bodies to one another into a principle of “coexistence” that must be ethically policed, but cannot be rejected, is an operative part of the analytic of race, even though it makes no thematic reference to the theories of human substance and essentialism for which racism has sometimes been mistaken. Rather, the structural racism of genocidal colonialism that has already occurred leaves the impress of its route in philosophy, where its extensiveness becomes its universality, and the occurrences it brings about placed in the past, in a subcategory (at best) of existence. As much as

assertions of essentialism, assertions of “inherent” minimal reciprocity are important components of racism, describing the means by which racism’s benefits are collected and justified.¹⁴ In addition to analyses of romantic-era biological racism and white supremacy that rely on racial references, studies like Tim Fulford, Debbie Lee, and Peter J. Kitson’s account of the indefatigable scientific and commercial networker Joseph Banks similarly have no need to stabilize a concept of “race” in order to illuminate racist processes.

Finally, the human rights discourse that Meister analyzes can be seen to have channeled a technology that a causal distinction between past and present, and the bundle of instruments that goes with it, already absorbs from a prior racial violence. Analytic philosophy’s conversations about tensed and “detensed” time freely confess that the stake of temporal technology is “human freedom”: temporal organization must be settled in order to secure the possibility of the “human” being’s “autonomous control over what does or does not exist” (Oaklander 347, 336). That racial modernity is to win every time is the contingent, yet persistent assumption preceding the architectonics that model its reach.

Notes

1. Bergson writes as this kind of intentional possessor, as Donna Jones has argued. He takes the different tack of rendering the past into an accessible reservoir of objects of desire after all; for Bergson, the past, too “is for me.”
2. Social arena, I would say, but “community” is Kant’s preferred term.
3. Grasping this reciprocity has to depart from a reconstruction of what Kant thinks he is doing in that the analytic of race is much larger than Kant; it is not “in” his text but transcendent to it in turn.
4. Kant observes that it is noncontroversial to ascribe permanence to substance: “the permanent ... is substance in the [field of] appearance” (A 182/B 225). This truism suggests that at one pole, wherever time exceeds the imagination of *activity*, it appears congealed as substance. Seeking a temporal analogue to the permanence of substance, Kant makes “time itself” a container for various kinds of relations (A 183/B 226).
5. Reminiscent of Derrida’s multiplication of distinctions.
6. “Ich sehe z.B. ein Schiff den Strom hinab treiben. Meine Wahrnehmung seiner Stelle unterhalb folgt auf die Wahrnehmung der Stelle desselben oberhalb dem Laufe des Flusses, und es ist unmöglich, daß in der Apprehension dieser Erscheinung das Schiff zuerst unterhalb, nachher aber oberhalb des Stromes wahrgenommen werden sollte. Die Ordnung in der Folge der Wahrnehmungen in der Apprehension ist hier also bestimmt, und an dieselbe ist die letztere gebunden. In dem vorigen Beispiele von einem Hause konnten meine Wahrnehmungen in der Apprehension von der Spitze desselben anfangen und beim Boden endigen, aber auch von unten anfangen und oben endigen, imgleichen rechts oder links das Mannigfaltige der empirischen Anschauung apprehendiren. In der Reihe dieser Wahrnehmungen war also keine bestimmte Ordnung, welche es nothwendig machte, wenn ich in der Apprehension anfangen müßte, um das Mannigfaltige empirisch zu verbinden. Diese Regel aber ist bei der Wahrnehmung von dem, was geschieht, jederzeit anzutreffen, und sie macht die Ordnung der einander folgenden Wahrnehmungen (in der Apprehension dieser Erscheinung) nothwendig” (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft* A 192–93/B 237–38).
7. Kant stresses that the issue is not “making the representation of objects distinct, but in making the representation of an object possible at all” (A 199/B 244).
8. It is not a particularly romantic figuration—rather, one that is there to be argued over from various romantic positions, and drawing out its political implication helps us reevaluate the stakes of the various arguments. As a side note, romantic nationalism as a main locus of romantic racialization would now be seen as only one, essentialist side of a pincer structure of racialization.

9. The Albigensians, called after the city of Albi, were eleventh- and twelfth-century heretics who were systematically massacred in the tens of thousands. Historians debate whether it is necessary to view their persecution as racial in order to call it a genocide.
10. The literature of structurally conceived racism is vast, but for some recent phrasings of the inadequacy of the equation between essentialism and racism, see Hesse; Wilderson. For consideration of Kantian formalism and teleology as structural racism, see Moten. See also Bernasconi's valuable "Kant as an Unfamiliar Source of Racism" (2002).
11. Except insofar as all tenses are contained ultimately, in the metaphysical distance, by one time.
12. "Mediate community" grounded by the infrastructure of transcendental laws will be remodeled by Hegel into "mediation," that is, in another anti-essentialism, the social relation to which alone all qualities historically belong. Social relation from this perspective is transcendental infrastructure seen as being generated by global historical drive. Kant, in contrast, treats the economic mobilization of mediate community as though it were *latent*. Whether it looks to him as if it has not happened yet, or he thinks it is better strategically to act as though it is not too late, I cannot tell.
13. Hegel is a larger player in Silva's argument than Kant, and I differ with her claim that Kant's main contribution to racial logic is his production of a sovereign interiority and "disavowal of exteriority as a dimension of knowledge" (61). I do not think that that is what Kant does partly because I do not believe interiority can be more sovereign than exteriority: I have a less optimistic idea of what interiority can be, or perhaps how much it can be. But this does not make her broader frame any less convincing.
14. In a recent interview, Timothy Morton rehearses from the diametrically opposite position what I have been trying to show—Kant's apprehensive and yet compelled architectonic of thresholds between succession and coexistence, commerce and community. Only, for Morton, as for Hegel, Kant ought to enjoy the "access" he has supported, as others do:

[I]t all started with Immanuel Kant who I believe is the first really modern philosopher, who is actually coincident with the beginning of the Anthropocene ... and the thing about him is that he basically says that there are things—but you can't access them directly. And what object-oriented ontology is saying is that. There are things, you can't access them directly. It's just that there's a kind of anthropocentric copyright control on who gets to access, right? And it turns out to be us lot. And once you get rid of the copyright control and once you get rid of Kant's nervous restriction on what access means; access for him is mathematizing philosophy, like everything is just extension and so if I know things mathematically I know them extensionally, right? If you take that away and, you know, a raindrop touching me, I'm also accessing it. I'm having a feeling about it, that's also accessing it. So if you take that away and you take the anthropocentric block, inhibition, away, what you get is that everything in the universe gets to access everything else, and the way that everything accesses everything is such that nothing is ever exhausted, everything is always completely sparkling with some kind of unfathomable, vivid, bristly reality, you know? And ultimately that's funny, it's like it's a comedy, it's not a tragedy, it's not horrific. There are these other speculative realists who are quite interested in sort of, 'Ah!', Home Alone face kind of, the horror sort of stuff, and I think no, that's actually not right, the tragedy thing is actually deeply caught up in the ecological problem thing, and fundamentally reality is an anarchy, so we better get used to having some kind of sense that there's no top level way of proceeding. And that actually at bottom everything is playful, like everything is a toy, including political systems, political systems are also toys, and economic systems are also toys. So let's have lots and lots of toys.

Kant's "nervous restriction on what access means" lies, as I suggested above, in his acknowledgment that "coexistence" is an ethical and economic problem. Kantian limits already grant the infrastructure that universal exchange uses. Because he

cannot think of anything to be afraid of in the “access” of everything to everything else, Morton removes even Kantian limits and winds up with an epistemology of sparkly universal colonialism.

References

- Allison, Henry. *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale UP, 1983. Print.
- Bernasconi, Robert. “Kant as an Unfamiliar Source of Racism.” *Philosophers on Race: Critical Essays*. Ed. Julie K. Ward, and Tommy L. Lott. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002. 144–56. Print.
- Fenves, Peter. *The Messianic Reduction: Walter Benjamin and the Shape of Time*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2011. Print.
- Fulford, Tim, Debbie Lee, and Peter J. Kitson. “Sir Joseph Banks and His Networks.” *Literature, Science, and Exploration in the Romantic Era: Bodies of Knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 33–45. Print.
- Hesse, Barnor. “Self-Fulfilling Prophecy: The Postracial Horizon.” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 110.1 (2011): 155–78. Print.
- Jones, Donna. *The Racial Discourses of Life Philosophy: Negritude, Vitalism, and Modernity*. New York: Columbia UP, 2010. Print.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. Norman Kemp Smith. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965. Print.
- . *Kritik der reinen Vernunft. Gesammelte Schriften (Akademie-Ausgabe) I-XXIII, Electronic Edition*. Vols. 3–4. Charlottesville, VA: IntelLex Corporation, 1999. Web. 9 Feb. 2017.
- . *The Metaphysics of Morals. Practical Philosophy*. Ed. and trans. Mary J. Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996. Print.
- Kitson, Peter. “‘Bales of Living Anguish’: Representations of Race and the Slave in Romantic Writing.” *ELH* 67.2 (2000): 515–57. Print.
- Levinas, Emmanuel. *Existence and Existents*. Trans. Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne UP, 2001. Print.
- Lloyd, David. “Race under Representation.” *Oxford Literary Review* 13 (1991): 62–94. Print.
- McLaughlin, Kevin. *Poetic Force: Poetry after Kant*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2014. Print.
- Meister, Robert. *After Evil: A Politics of Human Rights*. New York: Columbia UP, 2011. Print.
- Morton, Timothy, and Hans Ulrich Obrist. “[C]onversation ... held on the occasion of the Serpentine Galleries' Extinction Marathon: Visions of the Future.” *Dis Magazine*, Oct. 2014. Web. 9 Feb. 2017.
- Moten, Fred. “Black Kant (Pronounced Chant): A Theorizing Lecture at the Kelly Writers House.” Kelly Writer's House, 27 Feb. 2007. *PennSound*. Web. 9 Feb. 2017.
- Oaklander, L. Nathan. *The Ontology of Time*. New York: Prometheus Books, 2004. Print.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality. The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*. Ed. and trans. Victor Gourevitch. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997. Print.
- Silva, Denise Ferreira da. *Toward a Global Idea of Race*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2007. Print.
- Wilderson, Frank. *Red, White, & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2010. Print.