

Georg Cavallar, *Kant's Embedded Cosmopolitanism – History, Philosophy and Education for World Citizens*, De Gruyter, Berlin/Boston, 2015.

Jelena Govedarica

Cosmopolitanism is a doctrine in moral and political philosophy, according to which all human beings, regardless of their individual differences, should belong to one community as “citizens of the world”. Different versions of cosmopolitanism define this community and its main characteristics differently. For example, some authors claim that it has to be based on moral norms, others on political institutions or global economic and commerce. We can also discern between thin (weak), moderate, and thick (strong) cosmopolitanism, depending on the value and role philosophers give to the ideal of world citizenship in the justification of political obligations and moral norms. These various types of cosmopolitanism are not mutually exclusive and the majority of contemporary theories include different elements of its basic forms. When analyzing cosmopolitan theories, in *Kant's Embedded Cosmopolitanism – History, Philosophy and Education for World Citizens*, Cavallar emphasizes its three main characteristics: global scope of the cosmopolitan community (all people belong to it), normative universalism (every human being has an equal moral status, usually derived from some essential human characteristics), promotion and understanding of cultures different from our own (p. 14). Although cosmopolitan ideas are one of the oldest ideas in political philosophy, inferred from the idea of natural law and promoted by the sophists in the fifth century BC, philosophers have not lost interest in this subject. On the contrary, torrents of new cosmopolitan theories are constantly emerging and plenty of them advertise Kant as the paradigm for their own views.

Seeing this as a prevalent trend in contemporary cosmopolitan discourse, Cavallar points out that Kant is predominantly understood as a “typical early liberal” (p. 128) and the founding father of contemporary cosmopolitan theories. However, this interpretation of Kant's philosophy is mainly unsubstantiated, oversimplified and controversial. One of the main reasons for these misleading views of Kant's theory, according to the author, is that scholars tend to disregard all ideas which are not coherent with “a homogenized view of the past” (p. 7) and to see only continuity from Kant to the present. Moreover, since many of them do not know enough about the historical roots of Kant's cosmopolitanism, their understanding of his philosophy is frequently biased and one-sided, and what is worse, generally anachronistic. Thus, if we affirm Kant as the key source of contemporary cosmopolitanism, we also have to underline the challenge his ideas pose to the present

cosmopolitan discourse as well as considerable difference existing between the two.

980

In order to understand this difference we need, firstly, to “embed” Kant in the eighteenth century context by analyzing his theory with reference to theories of his predecessors, and secondly, evaluate the distinctness of Kant’s approach by comparing it to various forms of contemporary cosmopolitanism. Furthermore, Cavallar emphasizes – thereby presenting his most important claim – that an adequate analysis of Kant’s theory must be focused on its two commonly neglected dimensions: pedagogical and republican, from which it is clear that “Kant’s cosmopolitanism should be understood as rooted in one’s particular community and thus embedded” (p. 12). Namely, from the perspective of positive freedom (the capacity of reason to be practical for itself), all human beings have moral predispositions and the duty to cultivate or develop them, and so the fundamental concept of Kant’s cosmopolitanism is “the vocation (*Bestimmung*) of the individual as well as the human species” (ibid). The development of this “cosmopolitan disposition” (p. 26) is possible only through the proper educational science and the individual accomplishment of persons, and in this process pedagogy must be given a crucial role. Also, because of the ever evolving nature of the cosmopolitan disposition, central in Kant’s teleological and reflective explanation of history and pragmatic anthropology, the author claims that Kant’s conception of cosmopolitanism is dynamic (p. 23). In other words, cosmopolitan values are not passively received, for that would imply the absence of the essential characteristic of human’s will – its freedom; rather, the cosmopolitan disposition can be actualized in a stimulating environment, made possible with what Kant calls “ethical didactics”, only by the agent himself. Cosmopolitan education is, however, only conceivable in a republic, because this form of government can ensure the external freedom of its citizens, which is necessary for people to develop their natural dispositions and moral potentials as autonomous agents. Thus, in Kant’s theory moral and legal cosmopolitanism is incorporated in “the republican patriotism” (p. 107) – citizens’ commitment to political self-legislation, which can lead to improvement of human capacities and realization of moral ends.

Those who are familiar with Cavallar’s works will notice that most of the chapters in this book are revised versions of already published articles.

Opposed to the readers who will be disappointed by this fact, one may consider it to be the book’s greatest value because it offers the final result of many years of research and reflection on the subject of Kant’s cosmopolitanism. What is also extremely valuable is that it contains numerous references to other authors who studied Kant’s political philosophy, with whom Cavallar constantly debates, offering us a rich source of literature for further reading and critical analysis. Additionally, apart from our possible agreement or disagreement with Cavallar’s claims, the fact that this book opposes mainstream interpretations of Kant’s political philosophy, giving us a different perspective and new insights, is one of its most significant contributions to the ongoing debate about cosmopolitanism.

The book itself is divided into eight chapters, the first and the eight being “introduction” and “conclusion”, which are the author’s new contributions to the subject. Owing to the limited space of this review, each chapter will only be briefly presented.

In the introductory part of the book, Cavallar critically examines the most prominent interpretations of Kant’s political philosophy, and by doing that not only does he demonstrate an extensive familiarity with wide variety of influential arguments on this topic, but he also situates his interpretation within already existing ones, enabling us a much better understanding of his main claims. He finds that Kant’s thoughts were frequently misunderstood, that his political philosophy was often perceived as a mere repetition of widely held Enlightenment beliefs, that Kant’s “minor” works, such as writings on religion and history, were not seriously analyzed with respect to ethics and politics, and also, perhaps most importantly, that his pedagogy and pragmatic anthropology were never taken into consideration as an integral part of his political philosophy. Determined to rectify these shortcomings, Cavallar begins his study with the most basic question: “Was Kant really a cosmopolitan?” (p. 19), aiming to discard the accusations that Kant could not have been a cosmopolitan since he had asserted some racist attitudes. In answering it, the author sides with “the developmental interpretation”, according to which Kant believed that “we are not equal in terms of our cultivated prudence, of cultural development, skin colour, talents, perhaps not even in terms of moral capacities. However, we are equal in terms of our humanity or dignity and our moral vocation.” (p. 21)

Hence, Kant must be regarded as a cosmopolitan because he did think that people are intrinsically equal, although they may not be equal in terms of their contingent characteristics. At this point the author affirms three above-mentioned fundamental features of Kant's cosmopolitanism: it is embedded, dynamic and pedagogical. Having asserted these attributes of Kant's thoughts on the world community in the introduction, the author persuasively elaborates the arguments in their favor throughout the book.

The second and third chapters are adjusted versions of previously published articles titled: "Cosmopolitanism in Kant's Philosophy" and "Kant's right of world citizens: a historical interpretation". Both chapters offer an understanding of Kant's cosmopolitanism, intertwined with a strong disapproval of the fact that, when reconstructing and interpreting his cosmopolitan theory, Kant scholars are primarily focused on its legal and political perspective. Cavallar calls our attention to some other types of cosmopolitanism easily discernible in Kant's writings, such as moral, religious and cognitive. For example, although Kant had always been praised for his secular conception of the global world order, the author claims he can also be pictured quite successfully as a representative of Christian cosmopolitanism, by stressing his conception of moral commonwealth explained in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. Furthermore, these different types of cosmopolitanism present in his works are by no means exclusive, and, given the fact that Kant's philosophy must be understood as a system, they are not just compatible, they have to be interpreted in the way that does not exclude either of them. On the other hand, Kant's third integral part of the public right – right of the world citizen, often viewed as the central feature of his cosmopolitanism and his greatest tribute to this subject, is not a good example of his originality. In order to show that this was not an unfamiliar idea at that time, Cavallar offers a historical contextualization of hospitality rights in the international law theories from Vitoria to Kant, claiming that Kant's inventiveness, as well as the value of this type of right for Kant's overall cosmopolitan system, lies in his philosophy of history, or more precisely, in "the spirit of commerce". Thus, Kant's version of cosmopolitan right is significant not just because of the right of people not to be treated with enmity while travelling or residing in a foreign country, or the right to free trade among people from different parts of the world, but because it "opens up a space"

for an intensive exchange of diverse ideas and values, which is in its essence, the author argues, a "thin version of global civil society" (p. 76).

Chapter four: "Educating Émile: Rousseau on embedded cosmopolitanism", examines Rousseau's reflections on the global community, and the fifth one explores two theories which, the author argues, had the most profound influence on Kant's version of cosmopolitanism: "Sources of Kant's cosmopolitanism: Basedow, Rousseau, and cosmopolitan education". In these chapters he comments on traditional picture of the Enlightenment as a paradigm for cosmopolitan era before the rise of nationalism, stressing that "the common feature of Enlightenment cosmopolitanism was that it tried to strike a tenable balance between patriotism and cosmopolitan obligations" (p. 77). Despite the fact that Rousseau was very critical of cosmopolitanism, stating for example that its cultural and economic types are "degenerate, deformed and immoral" (ibid), Cavallar points out that Rousseau's formulation of civic patriotism is quite consistent with his authentic moral and republican cosmopolitanism. By articulating his theory of "the embedded cosmopolitanism" – a synthesis of a thin moral cosmopolitanism and republican patriotism, achievable through the proper education, Rousseau had made a decisive influence on Kant's thoughts. Yet, the author thinks that Kant did not interpret Rousseau's writings accurately, because Rousseau had claimed that it is impossible to overcome "the dilemma of education": either we choose a cosmopolitan education of the *homme* or the patriotic education of the *citoyen*, who considers all foreigners potential enemies (p.93); also, Rousseau had never believed in the possibility of the progress in history, which is one of the most important ideas in Kant's conception of cosmopolitanism. On the other hand, contrary to the impact of Rousseau's theory on Kant which is frequently acknowledged, the author states that the influence of the educational theory of Johann Bernhard Basedow on Kant's formulation of proper education was never analyzed before. In the attempt to explain this connection, in chapter five he offers a comparative analysis of Basedow's and Kant's conceptions of cosmopolitan education, showing that, even though Kant had not agreed with Basedow on some key features of proper cosmopolitan education, they have both believed that "cosmopolitanism was closely connected with religious toleration, open-mindedness, moral education, and political reforms at the level of states" (p. 111).

Having explained the historical roots of Kant's thoughts on education and cosmopolitanism, in chapters six and seven, titled: "Taking a Detour: Kant's theory of moral cosmopolitan formation" and "Res publica: Kant on cosmopolitical formation", Cavallar analyzes Kant's understanding of the connection between moral education, republican form of government and cosmopolitanism in an exhaustive and systematic manner. He argues that one of the most important differences between Kant's theory and contemporary cosmopolitan education is that Kant never postulates or imposes values typical for this doctrine as something that needs to be "simply instilled or inculcated in pupils" (p. 127). In this respect he is always taking a detour: the moral character with cosmopolitan virtues is the result of development of the cosmopolitan disposition, by means of a long-term "moral formation" (*Bildung*). "Kantian cosmopolitan education is education for moral freedom: educators cannot and should not directly influence, manipulate or cause anything in their pupils, because the ultimate goal is that these students themselves become moral beings and adopt a moral disposition." (p. 166). Therefore, the aim of this process can only be moral self-legislation and adoption of maxims that can be universalized, which in turn produces a distinctively cosmopolitan point of view. If our maxims have moral worth, they could be shared by all people, and thus, reflect the necessary provisions for cosmopolitanism. That is why Kant often uses the term "cosmopolitan" when he refers to a proper educational method. Given the aforementioned types of cosmopolitanism, the author argues that Kant's theory of moral formation "especially relates to the moral, political and religious forms of cosmopolitanisms." (p. 113)

In addition, Cavallar insists that often disregarded observation Kant had made in his essay on perpetual peace that a proper moral formation of the people is the result of a good state constitution – the republic (which is constantly striving towards the ideal – *the respublica noumenon*) has an enormous importance for Kant's conception of cosmopolitanism. It implies that Kant believed that a good system of education, essential for morality and virtue, can only exist in a republican form of government, because good laws themselves also have an educational function. If the laws are bad (and laws are always less perfect in any form of government other than republic, for various reasons Kant offered), the education and its consequence – morality of the people, will not

reflect cosmopolitan values. However, Kant had firmly asserted the distinction and separation between legality and morality: while juridical laws can only constrain the external freedom of people, moral laws can also determine our internal freedom; because of this the causal relationship between the republican constitution and moral character of its citizens can only be affirmed, but never proven. Hence, the claim that juridical laws and education can have any impact on people's morality calls for further explanation. With this in mind, Cavallar argues that the dynamic process of cosmopolitan education, which consists in "cultivation, civilization and moralization or moral formation" (p. 131), is possible only because Kant held that these two separate spheres of law (legal and moral) can mutually influence each other. By carefully reconstructing Kant's reasoning, in the last chapter he discusses three possible spheres of influence central for the explanation of the connection between republican form of government and morality of people: "republicanism and peace; publicity and the process of Enlightenment; the pedagogical function of the republican constitution" (p. 134). Although proper moral education is only possible in a republic, citizens' republican patriotism is not incompatible with cosmopolitan values, as the common bonds between citizens are republican principles and not some form of ethnic or national identity. "This way Kant offers a form of embedded cosmopolitanism, with people identifying with the local and the embedded, while also conceiving themselves in terms of universal obligations and rights." (p. 133)

In the last chapter, the author offers a succinct overview of further development of cosmopolitan ideas from Kant to Herbart, evaluating contemporary cosmopolitan and educational theories by comparing them to Kant's views. With this evaluation he aims at both critical analysis of main claims present in subsequent theories, in which either nationalism or some form or more radical moral cosmopolitanism often became a prominent feature, and, more importantly, providing the external standpoint from which he can assess main merits and shortcomings of Kant's theory. Having done this, Cavallar argues that Kant's legacies to the cosmopolitanism have to be located "in his critical epistemology, in particular the power of transcendental arguments, in his search for a shared conception of thin morality, in his attempt to combine patriotism with cosmopolitanism and his ensuing qualified statist cosmopolitanism, and in his strict separation of

moral and juridical forms of cosmopolitanism.” (p. 155) Author’s concluding observations reflect a deep dissatisfaction with the fact that Kant’s greatest cosmopolitan idea – his educational theory – had been thoroughly neglected and undetected by Kant scholars. Even more disappointing is the fact that his theory was never accepted as a

normative framework in any educational system. Contemporary education “emphasize success and usefulness and usually focuses on competences, skills and their evaluation” (p. 163), it is, unfortunately, essentially utilitarian and completely at odds with Kant’s main goal: moral formation of human beings.