

Introduction

I THE COUNTRY OF WORLD CITIZENS

According to Immanuel Kant, Germans are model cosmopolitans. In his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* of 1798 he writes that they are hospitable toward foreigners, they easily recognize the merits of other peoples, they are modest in their dealings with others, and they readily learn foreign languages. Finally, "as cosmopolitans," they are not passionately bound to their fatherland (ApH 7:317–18). Germany "is the country of world citizens" where strangers feel at home (R 15:590).

This description is remarkable not just for its evocation of an intellectual world that was about to be swept away, in the early nineteenth century, by a wave of nationalism. It also paints a picture of the cosmopolitan that is quite different from the image of the rootless traveler often associated with the term. The cosmopolitans Kant describes here do not fit the stereotype of the individualistic citizens of nowhere, who relish their unattached and unencumbered existence, are self-satisfied with their self-styled identity, pick and choose cultural tidbits from many parts of the world, and regard the more rooted mortals around them with unmistakable condescension.

Instead, on Kant's view, cosmopolitanism is an attitude taken up in acting: an attitude of recognition, respect, openness, interest, beneficence and concern toward other human individuals, cultures, and peoples as members of one global community. One need not travel at all to merit the designation of being a citizen of the world. As his own biography famously illustrated, Kant found the commitment to cosmopolitanism perfectly compatible with spending one's entire life in one's home town. He emphasized that Königsberg, with its sea port, university, government offices, and international commercial traffic flow, which facilitated contact with countries with different languages and cultures, was a perfect place "for broadening one's knowledge of human beings as well as of



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the world ... also without traveling" (ApH 7:120–21n.). Whether or not Kant's cosmopolitanism might have benefited from a bit more travel, it is important that, on his conception, the cosmopolitan is not rootless or unattached. In fact, Kant even goes so far as to claim that cosmopolitans ought to be good patriots.¹

The uprooted variety of world citizenship stands in a tradition that started with the Cynic philosopher Diogenes of Sinope, who is commonly regarded as the father of the term "cosmopolitan." When he was asked where he came from, he reportedly answered: "I am a citizen of the world." With this answer, Diogenes seems to have meant that he did not recognize any special ties to a particular city or state. Denying local affiliations and obligations (more than affirming obligations to the larger whole of humanity), Diogenes endorses a *negative* conception of world citizenship. He defends a personal attitude of extreme individualism and disregard for social conventions. Traveling with his knapsack, clothed in rags, he is the perfect image of the unencumbered, ultra-mobile individual: "Without a city, without a home, without a country / A beggar and a vagabond, living from day to day."

Kant's cosmopolitanism, by contrast, stands more in the tradition of the Stoics, who developed a *positive* conception of world citizenship that differed significantly from the Cynic view.⁴ For the Stoics, cosmopolitanism involved the affirmation of moral obligations toward humans anywhere in the world because they all share in a common rationality, regardless of their different political, religious, and other particular affiliations. The Stoic cosmopolitans held the view that all humans live together "as it were in one state." They conceived of this community in moral terms, however, and although some Stoics lived during the era of the Roman Empire, they did not advocate the establishment of world-wide political institutions. They used world citizenship as a metaphor for common membership in a single moral community.⁶ The Stoics regarded such moral world citizenship as compatible with

- ¹ See Chapter 1.
- ² Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 6:63, ed. and trans. Robert Drew Hicks (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925).
- 3 Ibid., 6:38, cited by Diogenes Laertius. Diogenes of Sinope is said to have declared that this statement applied to himself.
- 4 On Kant and Stoic cosmopolitanism, see Martha C. Nussbaum, "Kant and Stoic Cosmopolitanism," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 5 (1997): 1–25.
- Marcus Antoninus, *The Meditations of the Emperor Marcus Antoninus*, ed. and trans. A. S. L. Farquharson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1944), iv.4.
- ⁶ See Eric Brown, *Stoic Cosmopolitanism* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming) for a discussion of the different versions of Stoic cosmopolitanism.



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political membership in (and special obligations toward) a particular city or state.

Kant, too, defends a cosmopolitan moral theory, but he takes cosmopolitanism in many other directions as well. In addition to the moral aspect of cosmopolitanism as an attitude in acting, he also develops the political, economic, and cultural dimensions of world citizenship and elaborates the necessary global institutional arrangements for realizing a genuine "cosmopolitan condition."

Kant was by no means the only one to defend cosmopolitanism in his time, however. In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, many other authors in the German-speaking world developed philosophical defenses of cosmopolitanism. This discussion started in the 1770s when Christoph Martin Wieland, the editor of the influential journal Der Teutsche Merkur and a towering intellectual figure in his day,7 revived the ancient philosophical concept of world citizenship. The term was already in use at the time as a synonym for open-mindedness and as an antonym for parochialism. Wieland, however, brushed up its older meaning from antiquity.8 He first portrayed Diogenes of Sinope in his 1770 Socrates Gone Mad: The Dialogues of Diogenes of Sinope.9 A few years later, in his successful series The Abderites (1774–80), he introduced and defended a more Stoic-inspired version of cosmopolitanism, which he elaborated in subsequent publications. In the years following Wieland's texts, many other German authors debated the moral, political, economic, and cultural aspects of cosmopolitanism, as well as the possibility of realizing cosmopolitan ideals. In 1788, Wieland credits himself with having inspired widespread interest in cosmopolitanism through his Abderites (GKO 15:207).

Although Kant has long been recognized as a major defender of cosmopolitanism, this wider debate has gone largely neglected. Once the nationalist perspective of the nineteenth century took hold, cosmopolitanism was treated with hostility and contempt, and this debate was largely forgotten or denounced. This neglect is regrettable, however, because the German debate reveals a spectrum of possible positions in

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 $^{^{7}\,}$ Kant, in his discussion of genius in the $\it Critique$ of $\it Judgment$, mentions Wieland next to Homer (KdU 5:309).

⁸ This is not to deny that there were important cosmopolitan elements in earlier writings. For discussions of Christian Wolff (1679–1754) and Emerich de Vattel (1714–67), see Francis Cheneval, Philosophie in weltbürgerlicher Bedeutung: Über die Entstehung und die philosophischen Grundlagen des supranationalen und kosmopolitischen Denkens der Moderne (Basel: Schwabe, 2002) and Georg Cavallar, Imperfect Cosmopolis (Aberystwyth: University of Wales Press, 2011).

⁹ Socrates mainomenos, oder die Dialogen des Diogenes von Sinope. Later editions appeared under the neutral title, Unpublished Work of Diogenes of Sinope (Nachlaß des Diogenes von Sinope), 8: 220–314.



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cosmopolitan theory that is much broader than is generally recognized in today's debates.

In current moral and political philosophy,10 "cosmopolitanism" is most often equated with the endorsement of the idea that a theory of global justice should address the needs and interests of human individuals directly - regard them as citizens of the world - rather than indirectly, via their membership in different states. Since its origins with the Cynics and Stoics, however, the term has had multiple meanings, and the spectrum has since broadened much beyond the individualist renunciation of particular affiliations or the endorsement of a common bond with all other humans. The range of meanings now includes, in addition to a position on global justice, a particular view of modern identity, a political theory about the proper relations among the states of the world, the view that states should dissolve into a unified world state, and many other views as well, as will become clear in this book. There is no common core of these different positions that can be captured by a definition containing more than the rather uninformative statement that philosophical cosmopolitanism is the endorsement of some conception of world citizenship. In Chapter 1, I show that even the presumption of the equal moral status of all human beings - often regarded as the lowest common denominator of philosophical cosmopolitanisms - is not a necessary ingredient. Cosmopolitanism employs the idea of world citizenship either literally, in the context of some political theories, or as a structuring metaphor or model, in other philosophical contexts, and this allows for a broad range of positions. Furthermore, the meaning of the term also varies greatly depending on the conception of citizenship involved.11

2 OVERVIEW OF THIS BOOK

The two-fold aim of this book, in the most general terms, is to provide a comprehensive statement of Kant's cosmopolitan theory and to situate it in relation to other German cosmopolitan conceptions of his time.¹² One

My focus is on the philosophical debates. Outside of philosophy, there is also an extensive literature on cosmopolitanism, especially in areas such as history, literature, and the social sciences. To mention just two examples from the latter: Ulrich Beck and Natan Sznaider, "Unpacking Cosmopolitanism for the Social Sciences: A Research Agenda," in Beck and Sznaider (eds.), special issue Cosmopolitanism, British Journal of Sociology 57 (2006): 1–23; Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen (eds.), Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context, and Practice (Oxford University Press, 2002).

 $^{^{\}scriptscriptstyle \mathrm{II}}$ I return to the issue of defining cosmopolitanism in Chapter 7.

¹² The term "German" here refers primarily to authors who wrote in German or who lived or were born in German-language territory. A precise demarcation of this group is neither possible nor



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reason for doing so is to draw attention to this wider spectrum of cosmopolitan positions. Another reason is that despite Kant's stature and his reputation as a cosmopolitan thinker, there is no full-scale philosophical study of the cosmopolitan aspects of his thought.

This book has a number of more specific Kant-related aims as well. As I argue in the chapters to follow, important aspects of Kant's views have been misunderstood. Each of the chapters of this book has at least one interpretive thesis of its own, in addition to the contribution it makes to achieving the book's overall aim. Together, these different theses themselves exhibit a pattern. First, they show that Kant changed his cosmopolitan theory radically during the mid 1790s, much more radically than has been recognized to date. Second, they show that Kant, in his later years, defends a rich conception of cosmopolitanism that is much more coherent than is usually thought.

I have organized the material thematically, rather than chronologically or by author, in order to focus on the philosophical questions at issue. Thus, each chapter of this book thematizes one aspect of Kant's cosmopolitanism in conjunction with selected arguments of some of his contemporaries. In this way, I hope to showcase some (often largely forgotten) historical figures, while letting their arguments bring into relief the specific features of Kant's thought.

In the first chapter, I discuss the moral cosmopolitanism of Wieland and Kant. I examine the relation between cosmopolitan commitments and particular allegiances. The key question here is whether (and if so, how) one's membership in a cosmopolitan moral community can be reconciled with special obligations stemming from particular relationships. Opponents of cosmopolitanism tend to equate moral cosmopolitanism with the Cynic variety and criticize it for not being able to account for the value of special relationships. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for example, writes that cosmopolitans "boast that they love everyone [tout le monde, which also means 'the whole world'], in order to have the right to love no one." And the dictionary of the Académie Française defines a cosmopolitan as "he who does not adopt a country," adding, "a cosmopolitan is not a good citizen" (fourth edition, 1762). Similar criticisms are

desirable for the purposes of this study, given the complex political situation and the fact that the linguistic community did not map onto a political community. Indeed, some of the authors here included would not identify themselves as Germans. This is most clearly the case for the Prussian-born migrant "citizen of the world" Anacharsis Cloots; see Chapter 2.

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¹³ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Du Contrat Social*, Manuscrit de Genève. In *Oeuvres complètes*, eds. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), 3:287. Cf. Émile ou de l'Éducation, in *Oeuvres complètes*, 3:21.



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found in the German literary world, for example in the work of Johann Georg Schlosser.¹⁴

Kant and Wieland have different replies to this line of criticism, and they merit attention. Hardly any authors have examined Kant's defense of patriotism in depth, however, and to this day Kantians are said to be unable to defend duties toward one's own country. Wieland, for his part, is often regarded as inconsistent because he defends both cosmopolitanism and patriotism. Contrary to these assessments, I show that there are several ways to combine cosmopolitanism and patriotism, by bringing out the theoretical structure of the – interestingly divergent – arguments that Kant and Wieland present.

Related issues emerge in the discussion of political cosmopolitanism, which I take up in Chapter 2. Whereas in the case of moral cosmopolitanism, the term "world citizenship" is used metaphorically, here it is taken more literally as requiring certain kinds of world-wide political institutions. A core issue for political cosmopolitanism concerns the role and importance of states. It is often asserted that cosmopolitans cannot consistently defend the existence of a plurality of individual states. Some have argued that political cosmopolitans must instead be committed to the ideal of a world state, while others have claimed that there should be an entirely different form of political organization in which states would lose their pivotal role. This set of issues was also discussed in Kant's era. The most radical eighteenth-century defense of the world state is found in the work of Anacharsis Cloots, a Prussian-nobleman-turned-Frenchrevolutionary-turned-world-citizen. Cloots argues, on the basis of the principles of social contract theory, that genuine cosmopolitanism indeed demands the abolition of all states and the establishment of a "Universal Republic." Kant, by contrast, advocates the ideal of a federation of states, and this raises the question whether he does so consistently. His theory of peace is often criticized on precisely the point of the status of states. On the most common interpretation, Kant is thought to defend the establishment of a non-coercive league of states on the grounds that the normatively preferable stronger international federation with coercive powers is an unrealistic or dangerous idea; and Kant is then commonly criticized for scaling down his normative ideal to what is feasible in practice. I argue that this widespread interpretation is fundamentally mistaken. Kant has good reasons to resist a Clootsian approach and defend a plurality of

¹⁴ Johann Georg Schlosser, "Der Kosmopolit," in "Politische Fragmente," *Deutsches Museum* 1777/I, 106.



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(federated) states. Furthermore, the voluntary league should be understood as a first step in a process toward an international federation that is much stronger than a loose league of states. I show that Kant started defending this position only during the mid 1790s, whereas in the earlier decade he defended the establishment of a strong international federation with coercive powers much like a state. Kant's reasoning behind his advocacy of a voluntary league makes clear that his change of mind was well founded

In Chapter 3, I turn to Kant's theory of cosmopolitan right (Weltbürgerrecht), which he first introduces in Toward Perpetual Peace. Cosmopolitan right, 15 which Kant discusses in terms of a "right to hospitality," is concerned with the juridical relations between states and foreign individuals (or groups) whom he regards as citizens in a single all-encompassing juridical realm. As such, it provides a necessary complement to Kant's mid-1790s discussion of the proper relations among states, and it represents an important part of his theory of right. Often read too narrowly as concerned merely with commercial trading relations, cosmopolitan right deals with topics such as colonialism and the rights of refugees, attributing equal juridical standing to humans on every continent.

Kant did not always hold this egalitarian position. As I show in Chapter 4, until the early 1790s he openly and explicitly defended a racial hierarchy according to which "whites" were the only non-deficient race. His 1780s theory of race was forcefully attacked by several of his contemporaries, most notably by Georg Forster, who had sailed around the world with Captain Cook and who regarded Kant's race theory as empirically mistaken and his racial hierarchy as morally odious. It took Kant until the mid 1790s to change his mind and shift to an egalitarian position on race.

Kant's theory of race and his hierarchical account of the races have not received much careful examination in the literature so far, and the fact that he had second thoughts on race in the mid 1790s has gone entirely unnoticed. A proper understanding of Kant's theory of race, especially of his embrace of a racial hierarchy in the 1780s, sheds new light on his cosmopolitanism of this period, because his racial hierarchy also informs his ideal of the "cosmopolitan condition." Kant's change of mind on race, in the mid 1790s, leads to a more egalitarian and more consistent

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The term *Recht* is notoriously difficult to translate because of the structural differences between the juridical systems predominant in the German- and English-speaking worlds. I use "right" as a translation, which may sound unfamiliar in places but which may thereby also serve to draw attention to these differences.



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form of cosmopolitanism that allows him to create more room, within the parameters of morality and right, for cultural diversity. The debate between Kant and Forster also highlights the differences between Kant's and Forster's endorsements of cultural diversity.

In Chapter 5, I discuss cosmopolitanism in relation to economic justice and free trade. I start with a discussion of the views of a champion of free-market cosmopolitanism, Dietrich Hermann Hegewisch. Kant's claim that international trade promotes peace is often read as an implicit defense of the thesis that global trade should be "free" trade. A comparison between Hegewisch's and Kant's views on the issue, however, reveals that this inference is not correct. Rather, Kant's legal and political theory (especially his republicanism, his theory of property, and his defense of state-funded poverty relief) implies that trade should first of all be just, and that it can be "free" trade only within the bounds of justice. Again, Kant's views change during the Critical period (i.e., during the period from the publication of the Critique of Pure Reason in 1781 until Kant's death). As late as the Critique of Judgment, he highlighted the negative effects of trade, in particular what he saw as its debasing effect on a people's manner of thinking. A few years later, in Toward Perpetual Peace, he foregrounds the productive role of trade in approaching a condition of peace.

In the sixth chapter, I discuss Kant's account of the feasibility of the cosmopolitan ideal. Cosmopolitans are often criticized for being "unrealistic," and Kant is no exception. For example, key figures in Romantic cosmopolitanism, such as Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel, criticized Kant for relying on enlightened self-interest as conducive to peace and for disregarding the importance of feelings. They developed an alternative cosmopolitan ideal that revolved around the emotional and spiritual unity of humankind. By contrasting their views with Kant's, I show how Kant conceived of the emergence of cosmopolitan attitudes and moral dispositions. Kant incorporated the natural affective dimensions of human motivation into his cosmopolitan approach, as essential components of his account of the practicability of the moral cosmopolitan ideal.

In this way, the first six chapters show that Kant's philosophical cosmopolitanism underwent a number of interrelated and radical transformations in the mid 1790s. Furthermore, they show that, in its final form, Kant's cosmopolitan moral and political theory includes an account of the fundamental importance of particular affiliations, by defending, among other things, the importance of states, patriotism (of a specific kind), and cultural diversity. Third, the wider eighteenth-century German discussion



The historical and political context

of Kant's time reveals a spectrum of possible positions in cosmopolitan theory that is much broader than is often recognized in debates carried on under the banner of "cosmopolitanism" today.

In Chapter 7, I discuss the relevance of these results for current philosophical discussions, such as debates over the compatibility of cosmopolitanism and patriotism, the philosophical justification of a plurality of states, global economic justice, or the continuing impact of the history of racism and colonialism in cosmopolitan political theory.

3 A FEW WORDS ON THE HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

In writing this book, I faced several difficult decisions about what to include. Providing a complete historical overview of the entire late eighteenth-century German debate about cosmopolitanism might have filled in an important gap in the intellectual history of this period, but the wealth of historical details would have crowded out discussion of the philosophical arguments. Instead, I have chosen to focus in more detail on Kant's cosmopolitanism and the arguments of a select number of his contemporaries. Much additional work on the history of this philosophical debate remains to be done.¹⁶

Although my focus is not on the historical political and cultural context of this debate, a few brief remarks on this context are in order. The main texts discussed in this book were written during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The historical context of the increasing prominence of cosmopolitanism during this time is complex, but an important political circumstance was without doubt the fact that the "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation" was in a state of crisis. It was a heterogeneous amalgam of more than 300 sovereign territories and close to 1,500 *Ritterschaften*, half-autonomous regions, and independent cities, with entities varying from tiny units like Wieland's native town, the free city of Biberach with its 4,000 inhabitants, to large and powerful states like

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¹⁶ But see, for much excellent work in this larger area, Frederick C. Beiser, Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism: The Genesis of Modern German Political Thought 1790–1800 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Cavallar, Imperfect Cosmopolis; Cheneval, Philosophie in weltbürgerlicher Bedeutung; Sankar Muthu, Enlightenment Against Empire (Princeton University Press, 2003); Thomas Schlereth, The Cosmopolitan Ideal in Enlightenment Thought: Its Form and Function in the Ideas of Franklin, Hume, and Voltaire, 1694–1790 (University of Notre Dame Press, 1977). A very useful collection of texts is the edition by Anita and Walter Dietze, eds., Ewiger Friede? Dokumente einer deutschen Diskussion um 1800 (Leipzig and Weimar: Kiepenheuer, 1989).



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Austria and Prussia (and, further complicating matters, part of Prussia fell outside the Holy Roman Empire). Moreover, the German linguistic community and the political entity known as the Holy Roman Empire by no means mapped onto each other.¹⁷ The German-language intellectual community extended beyond the borders of the Holy Roman Empire and included not just the rest of Prussia, but also parts of Switzerland and Denmark, and these territories also included other languages. This complex situation provided ample occasion for debates about the pros and cons of various kinds of (cosmo) political organization, especially in comparison with the situation in France and Great Britain.

Another important political factor is that many of the Germanspeaking territories pursued active immigration policies on a massive scale. Prussia, for example, admitted political and religious refugees by the tens of thousands, as well as large numbers of people hoping to escape poverty, and it complemented this policy with laws requiring toleration.

Finally, there was a lively debate about the merits of the Germanic cultural heritage, which German intellectuals widely viewed as inferior to French and British culture. Indeed, even the King of Prussia, Frederick the Great, wrote a book – in French – arguing that German literature did not amount to much.¹⁸ Many cosmopolitan authors saw a silver lining in the absence of a strong German national culture, however, arguing that it enabled them to appreciate the cultural achievements of others without being blinded by nationalist bias. There was a steady stream of translations of "world literature" and a thirst, among the literate public, for knowledge about the cultures of peoples outside Europe.

Over the course of the 1790s, more and more authors (including, as we shall see, Kant) began to value cosmopolitanism itself as a specific part of the "German character." What was first seen as the *absence* of a German character became cherished as its *hallmark*, which, in a striking dialectical twist, re-emerged in the early nineteenth century as a basis for nationalist claims to German superiority. But from then on, German philosophical cosmopolitanism started to wane, and the French conquests caused a rapid ascent of German nationalism.

The debate about cosmopolitanism should not be seen merely in the light of the German political and cultural situation at the time, of course. For one thing, the idea of world citizenship has much older roots. As

¹⁷ Cf. Terry Pinkard's instructive discussion of "Germany" in Terry Pinkard, *German Philosophy* 1760–1860: The Legacy of Idealism (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1–15.

¹⁸ Ludwig Geiger, ed., *De la litterature Allemande (1780) von Friedrich dem Grossen* (Berlin: Behr, 1902) (orig. Berlin: Decker, 1780).