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Politics and Teleology in Kant

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Tatiana Patrone

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Pauline Kleingeld

1. Introduction

In his 1784 essay 'Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Perspective', Kant advocates the establishment of a worldwide federation of states. He writes that a 'cosmopolitan condition', which such a global federative body would create, is required for the security and stability of its member states. The security and stability of states, in turn, is required in order to facilitate the complete development of human predispositions for the use of reason, which Kant suggests is the final end of human history. The ideal of an international federation of states returns many times in Kant's later writings, for instance in the *Critique of Judgment* (1790), 'On the Common Saying: That May Be True in Theory, but It Is of No Use in Practice' (1793), *The Contest of the Faculties* (1798) and most notably in *Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (1795) and the *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797). It usually goes unnoticed in the literature, however, that although Kant uses some of the very same terminology of a 'federation of states' (*Völkerbund*)² and of a 'cosmopolitan' condition, the content of the ideal expressed by these terms changes greatly over time. Compared to its formulation in the 'Idea for a Universal History', Kant's later texts introduce fundamental changes on a number of important points, such as on colonialism and slavery, the nature of the international federation and the role of international trade. In other words, the view formulated in the 1784 essay is Kant's *early* view and he later modifies it in important respects.

If my thesis is correct, it means that there are clear dangers associated with the tendency, in much of the literature on Kant's cosmopolitanism, to take his work from the 1780s and 1790s as a unity. Commentators tend to pool the texts from this entire period and

quote from passages early and late to characterise 'Kant's view'. Authors are certainly aware of the fact that he developed new arguments during this period, but when one passage seems to contradict another, more often than not the debate is still over the question of *whether Kant is consistent*, rather than over the question of *whether Kant changed his mind*. Clearly, if it can be established that Kant's cosmopolitanism underwent significant development during the 1780s and 1790s, this will provide a new and very important hermeneutical framework for our understanding of the texts.

In this essay, I aim to highlight the most salient changes Kant made, by contrasting his account in the 'Idea for a Universal History' with his views as found in *Toward Perpetual Peace* and the *Metaphysics of Morals*. I start by explicating Kant's early cosmopolitan theory as found in the 1784 article (section 2). I subsequently examine which essential elements were revised in the mid-1790s (section 3) and which remained constant (section 4).

2. Kant's early cosmopolitan account

The cosmopolitan condition Kant envisages in the 'Idea for a Universal History' is that of a state-like federation of states.³ This 'strong' type of federation is required, on Kant's view, to guarantee the security of just states; and just states are in turn required for the full development of human predispositions for the use of reason. The full development of human rational capacities is to culminate in what Kant calls the transformation of society into a 'moral whole' (*IaG*, 8:21).⁴

Kant argues that the way in which states are to leave the state of nature to join into a state-like federation is structurally similar to the way individuals leave the state of nature to join into a state. In both cases, the hardship resulting from their rivalry and fights eventually forces them, in the interest of their own security and freedom, to give up their 'wild freedom'. *Individuals* unite into a state 'in which *freedom under external laws* can be encountered combined in the greatest possible degree with irresistible power' (*IaG*, 8:22). Similarly, Kant claims, *states* will be forced, by the hardship resulting from the rivalry and wars among them, to exit the state of nature and enter a juridical condition. States exhibit 'the same unsociability', they experience 'precisely the ills that pressured

individual human beings and compelled them to enter into a lawful civil condition' and thus states too will come to see the advantages of joining a federation with common laws and law enforcement (*IaG*, 8:24). This federation has the same features as a state. In such a federation of states

every state, even the smallest, could expect its security and rights, not from its own power, or its own juridical judgment, but only from this great federation of peoples (*Foedus Amphictyonum*), from a united power [*vereinigte Gewalt*] and from the decision in accordance with laws of the united will. (*IaG*, 8:24)

It is clear from the way that Kant explicates the function of this federation that it is not the voluntary league that he introduces more than a decade later in *Toward Perpetual Peace*. The federation meant in the 'Idea for a Universal History' is one that is supposed to guarantee the states' security and rights, which are grounded in the 'laws of the united will' and enforced and guaranteed through a 'united power'. Kant describes this cosmopolitan condition, which will come about once states form a federation, as 'resembling a civil commonwealth' (*IaG*, 8:25). He refers to the work of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, who had proposed a permanent senate and an international court of arbitration backed up by international law enforcement, as defending a view similar to his own. In fact, already in his Lectures on Anthropology from 1775–6, Kant had advocated an international federation with a 'general senate of peoples' that would adjudicate all international conflicts and whose verdict should be executed by a 'power of the peoples', which would mean that peoples should be subject to 'civil coercive power' (*bürgerliche Gewalt*) (*V-Anth/Fried*, 25:676).

Kant does not provide details as to the different institutions such an international political body should include. Thus, it remains unclear whether all states should have voting rights in a federal legislative body, whether the federation should have a standing army to enforce its rules and so on. Perhaps Kant's reference to the Abbé de Saint-Pierre means that he agreed with the latter's proposals on these matters. Perhaps, also, Kant simply left these matters undecided because his interest in the 'Idea for a Universal History' is in finding a unifying principle for organising human history – it is not meant to be a treatise on international relations specifically.

More surprising than the lack of detail, however, is the fact that Kant does not reflect on the possible injustice of a strong federation of states – a problem of which he is keenly aware when it comes to the state. With regard to the state, Kant famously discusses the problem that human nature prevents states from ever being fully perfect. The ‘crooked timber’ of which humanity is made does not allow the creation of something perfectly straight (*IaG*, 8:23), because rulers will always be inclined to let their own selfishness prevail over the general will. Moreover, Kant claims that a perfect state constitution cannot be achieved solely on the basis of self-interest, since it also requires a ‘good will that is prepared to accept it’ (*IaG*, 8:23); but a good will is more likely to develop within the good state. For these reasons, Kant argues in the ‘Idea for a Universal History’, the problem of creating a *perfectly just* state constitution is insoluble (*IaG*, 8:23).⁵

One would expect Kant to bring up this problem again in the context of his discussion of the cosmopolitan condition, but he does not. He fails to discuss the problem that imperfect states are likely to form an imperfect federation and that an imperfect federation with coercive powers may do great injustice. Later, in *Toward Perpetual Peace*, Kant seems to acknowledge precisely this problem when he introduces a looser kind of international federation in which states retain their full sovereignty and do not subject themselves to coercive powers at the federal level, as I shall explain below.

Another issue about which Kant says very little in the ‘Idea for a Universal History’ is the make-up of the federation. Who are the intended member states? Does the federation consist of European states only, or is it meant to extend globally? Kant’s language of cosmopolitanism seems to suggest the latter. But if so, is it an *egalitarian* federation? One off-hand comment in the ‘Idea for a Universal History’ makes it sound as if Kant’s conception of the final end of history includes colonial relationships. Kant suggests, toward the end of the essay and between parentheses, that ‘our part of the world’ (Europe) ‘will probably someday give laws to all the others [namely, the other parts of the world]’ (*IaG*, 8:29). Without further explanation, this comment is ambiguous. It could in theory be interpreted as an empirical prediction on Kant’s part about the (unfortunate) direction in which international relations are likely to develop.⁶ On the other hand, given that the entire essay outlines a teleological view of history as moving toward an ideal end-state, this reading does not seem plausible. If the situation in which

non-Europeans do not give laws to themselves but receive laws from Europe is not part of the final end of history, why would Kant mention it here? If he does not believe that Europe’s legislating for the rest of the world constitutes a kind of progress, mentioning it as the probable result of history would run counter to the teleological process he sketches in this essay.

If Kant does regard European legislation for the rest of the world as part of the final end of history, on the other hand, then this claim fits well with other comments he made elsewhere, also during the 1780s, to the effect that most non-white ‘races’ are *not capable* of self-legislation. A non-literal reading of Kant’s comment turns out to be implausible when the passage is read within the broader context of Kant’s views on racial hierarchy and colonialism.⁷ For example, Kant wrote that ‘[Native] Americans and Negroes cannot govern themselves. Thus, [they] serve only as slaves’ (Sketches for the Lectures on Anthropology, from the 1780s, *Refl*, 15:878). And according to his Lectures on Physical Geography Doenhoff, dated 1782, Kant explained to his students that India would be much happier under a stronger form of European colonial rule:

These peoples [i.e. in India] deserve a better fate than their current one, because it is a very manageable and easily governed people! The current fate of India depends as little on the French as on the English, but this much is certain, that if they were to be ruled by a European sovereign, the nation would become happier. (*V-PG Doenhoff*, p. 178)⁸

In his yearly anthropology lectures, Kant explained the details of the racial hierarchy as he conceived of it, in particular the various intellectual and agential deficits of the non-white races.⁹ In anthropology lectures from (probably) 1781–2, Kant asserts that Native Americans are the lowest of the races, as they are inert, impassive and incapable of being educated at all. He places the ‘Negroes’ above them, as they are capable of being trained to be slaves (but incapable of any other form of education); the ‘Hindus’ have yet more potential, but whites form the only non-deficient race (*V-Anth/Mensch*, 25:1187). Kant repeated such claims each year in his anthropology lectures, under the heading of ‘racial character’, at least through 1791–2 (the final year from which lecture notes are available). Also noteworthy is Kant’s endorsement, in 1788, only months after the publication of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, of a critique of abolitionism (*ÜGTP*, 8:174n.) and his reference to the ‘levels which we

have mentioned as racial differences' and various agency-related deficits on the part of non-Europeans (*ÜGTP*, 8:173–6). Against the background of Kant's views on racial hierarchy and his associated defence of colonialism that we find consistently repeated in his lectures and in some of his published writings from the 1780s, both before and after the 'Idea for a Universal History', it is clear how worldwide European legislation could be part of his conception of the final end of history.¹⁰

In the next section, I discuss the evidence that Kant changed his cosmopolitan theory in important respects. He does not provide autobiographical comments on the matter. Showing that Kant's views underwent substantial revisions, then, requires not just textual evidence that there is a *difference* between earlier and later views – after all, mere differences might be the result of confusion or carelessness on Kant's part. Rather, it requires evidence of a coherent *pattern* of changes, preferably in combination with some indication of why Kant might have preferred the later views over the earlier ones. I believe both can be provided.

3. Reconceiving the cosmopolitan condition

Kant's views on the 'cosmopolitan condition' undergo important modifications over time. In the 'Idea for a Universal History', he advocates the establishment of a strong federation of states with coercive authority at the federal level, and like the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, he appeals to the enlightened self-interest of rulers and states to defend the feasibility of this ideal. Later, however, most clearly in *Toward Perpetual Peace* and the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant changes his conception of the cosmopolitan condition. The idea of the republic now starts to play a pivotal role; Kant introduces a different type of federation, namely, a loose, non-coercive league; he introduces the notion of cosmopolitan right and becomes very critical of colonialism; and he conceives of a new role for global trade.

3.1. *Building straight with crooked timber: the new importance of the republic in Kant's philosophy of right*

Starting in the 1790s, Kant conceives of the ideal inner structure of the member states of the international federation as 'republican'. By

a 'republic' Kant means a state that is characterised by a separation of powers and by the fact that the subjects are also citizens, i.e. a state in which the legislative power is in the hands of the people through their representatives. The republic is the only kind of state that is fully in accordance with the normative requirements that follow from the principle of right (*ZeF*, 8:349–53, 8:366; *MS*, 6:341), which itself is grounded in individual freedom.

Kant regards the republican state as fully feasible. First, he explicitly addresses the objection that only a people of angels could produce and maintain a perfect state. Kant now replies that the self-interested inclinations of humans are sufficient to account for the possibility of the just republic. Even a 'people of devils' would form a republic, at least if they are intelligent (*ZeF*, 8:366). This is because the republic is the form of government that is most in accordance with the self-interest of individuals. Second, a despotic ruler can organise a war on a whim, as he will simply let his subjects bear the costs. An overspending despot is therefore more likely to cause the collapse of the state or be forced to make concessions to his subjects – creating opportunities to reform the state in the direction of a republic.¹¹

Thus, we find in the 1790s that Kant gives up his claims in the 'Idea for a Universal History' that 'good will' is necessary to establish the just state and that the 'crooked timber' quality of human nature implies that states will always be imperfect. Kant now claims that the just republic *can* be fully realised and that if the 'organisation' of the state is republican ('which is certainly within the capacity of humans', Kant adds) the selfish inclinations of people can in fact cancel one another out, so that 'the result turns out as if [these selfish inclinations] did not exist' (*ZeF*, 8:366). This is quite a departure from the 'Idea for a Universal History'. Not only does it imply a rejection of the earlier claim that a good will is necessary for the establishment of a good state, but it also implies that Kant now distances himself from the earlier and famous 'crooked timber' passage. His picture of human nature has not become more sanguine and he repeated its characterisation in terms of 'crooked timber' in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (*RGV*, 6:100). But Kant no longer believes that it creates insoluble difficulties for the realisation of a just state. In the idea of the republic, he found a solution to the problem. To extend Kant's metaphor from the 'Idea for a Universal History' and use Kant's 'organisation' terminology from *Toward Perpetual Peace*: if only the crooked pieces

of timber are organised in the right way, the resulting structure can be straight. Kant explicitly rejects his earlier statement that a good will is necessary for accepting a just state constitution, now claiming that 'it should not be expected that a good state constitution would arise from inner morality, but rather conversely that the good moral education of a people would follow from the former' (*ZeF*, 8:366).

With regard to the role of the republic for the establishment of an international federation, Kant again highlights the advantages of the republican constitution. A republic inherently tends toward peace, in his view, because it is in the interest of the republic's citizens to be peaceful toward other states. When the citizens of a republic deliberate about whether to go to war, they will realise that they themselves shoulder all the costs, financial and otherwise, and this will naturally make republics disinclined to go to war (*ZeF*, 8:352).

By introducing the notion of the peaceful nature of republics, Kant strengthens his argument for the feasibility of the 'cosmopolitan condition'. International peace is no longer merely in the interest of states and rulers. Given that there is a natural tendency toward republics and that republics have a natural tendency toward peace, Kant anchors the feasibility of international peace in the interests of both the republic as a whole and its individual citizens.

While working out his republican political theory, Kant continues to tinker with the relationship between the development of the just state and that of the international federation. In the 'Idea for a Universal History', he still regards the solution of the first as dependent upon the second, claiming that the achievement of a perfect state constitution is not possible until rightful external relations among states (in an international federation) have been achieved (*IaG*, 8:24). In later essays he turns the order around and claims that international peace will not be achieved until after states have become republics (e.g. *TP*, 8:311). In *Toward Perpetual Peace*, Kant revises his view again, arguing that the two requirements stand in a reciprocal relationship (along with a third requirement, that of cosmopolitan right) and that the one cannot be fully achieved without the other (*ZeF*, 8:349n.).

3.2. Inserting a different type of federation

Kant's elaboration of his republican political theory has significant effects on his conception of the normative ideal of the international

federation. If individual freedom is taken seriously as the ultimate justification of coercive political institutions and if, therefore, the republican state in which citizens co-legislate through their representatives is the only just state, then Kant has to argue that republican states should not be forced into an international federation against their will. He cannot consistently argue that it would be normatively right for a federation to incorporate an unwilling republic by military means, since this would show a flagrant disregard for the political autonomy of the people. In this regard there is a disanalogy between the state of nature among individuals, on the one hand, and the state of nature among states, on the other; for individuals do have this right to force one another into a state against their will (*ZeF*, 8:349n.).

This is likely to be part of the explanation for why Kant introduces, in *Toward Perpetual Peace*, the ideal of a voluntary association of states, also called a 'federation' but now one without coercive powers. In *Toward Perpetual Peace*, Kant argues that this 'federation of free states' aims at

securing and maintaining the *freedom* of a state for itself and also the freedom of other confederated states without these states thereby being required, as are human beings in the state of nature, to subject themselves to public laws and coercion under such laws. (*ZeF*, 8:356)

Kant here inserts a new type of institution between the state of nature and the cosmopolitan condition, namely a voluntary league of states without coercive powers. The fact that Kant continues to use the term 'federation' (*Bund*) to refer to this different type of institution can easily obscure the difference. The term '*Bund*' itself is neutral, however, as to whether the institution has the power to enforce its laws. Depending on the nature of the agreement between the states, federative unions can have a strong centralised federal government with binding public laws and coercive powers to enforce them; or they can lack coercive powers and take the form of a voluntary association of states that share certain goals; or they can fall somewhere in between. In 'Idea for a Universal History' Kant envisioned a strong federal authority; here in *Toward Perpetual Peace*, by contrast, he also uses the same term (*Bund*) for a much weaker kind of entity.

This league, while certainly not able to guarantee the security of states, will still have significant positive effects. By offering a forum for international arbitration and negotiation, it helps to reduce global conflict and increase the security of states (cf. *MS*, 6:350–1). This in turn allows for the further development of human predispositions, which will lead to a ‘gradual approximation of humans to a greater agreement on principles’ (*ZeF*, 8:367). This, then, paves the way for a stronger union in a stronger type of federation, which Kant still claims is the ultimate ideal, but only when voluntarily accepted by (and not coercively imposed on) its member states.

Kant does not give up the ideal of the strong, state-like federation that he defended in the ‘Idea for a Universal History’, but he now places it at the end of a more protracted process that first involves the establishment of a voluntary, non-coercive league. That Kant still defends the strong federation can be seen in a number of passages in both *Toward Perpetual Peace* and the *Metaphysics of Morals*. He expresses the hope that ‘distant parts of the world can peaceably enter into relations with one another, relations which can ultimately become publicly lawful and so bring humanity finally ever closer to a cosmopolitan constitution’ (*ZeF*, 8:358). He writes that justice requires ‘an internal constitution of the state in accordance with pure principles of right, and then further, however, the union of this state with other neighbouring or also distant states for the purpose of a lawful settlement of their conflicts’ (*ZeF*, 8:379). And he writes in the *Metaphysics of Morals* that before states leave the state of nature all international right is merely ‘provisional’ and that international right can come to hold definitively and establish a true perpetual peace only ‘in a universal union of states [*Staatenverein*] (analogous to that by which a people becomes a state)’, a union which Kant on the same page also refers to as a ‘state of peoples’ (*Völkerstaat*) (*MS*, 6:350).¹² He regards this as the ultimate ideal that can and ought to be approximated, even though it will perhaps never be fully realised.

3.3. *Toward a more egalitarian cosmopolitan condition*

Until the 1790s, Kant discussed the ‘cosmopolitan condition’ merely in terms of a federation of states. As he worked out more details of his political theory, however, he realised that a genuine global legal order requires more. Individuals establish a civil condition by their joint submission to a state with common laws and law enforcement

and states establish a civil condition by joining an international federation – but what about the lawful regulation of the relations between states and foreign individuals? Or between individuals from one state and peoples that have not yet formed a state?

In the ‘Idea for a Universal History’ Kant does not yet raise these questions, limiting his discussion to the juridical regulation of relations among individuals (in the state) and among states (in the international federation). Kant says very little, for example, about the conduct of European states elsewhere in the world. And as we saw, the only comment he makes on that subject should probably be read as meaning that Europe will probably eventually legislate for the rest of the world.

In *Toward Perpetual Peace* and the *Metaphysics of Morals*, by contrast, Kant explicitly strengthens the juridical status of individuals regardless of their ‘race’. Furthermore, he now takes a very critical stance on European practices on other continents, such as the slave trade and colonialism.

The fact that Kant strengthens the juridical status of non-whites is clear from his discussion of cosmopolitan right. In Kant’s political theory, cosmopolitan right (*Weltbürgerrecht*) is the third category of public right, in addition to constitutional right and international right. He argues that states and individuals have the right to attempt to establish relations with other states and their citizens, but not a right to enter foreign territory. States and non-state populations have the right to refuse visitors, but not violently, and not if it leads to the latter’s destruction (*ZeF*, 8:357–60; *MS*, 6:352–3). This implies an obligation to refrain from imperialist intrusions into non-state territories. Cosmopolitan right, as introduced in *Toward Perpetual Peace*, explicitly prohibits the colonial conquest, by states ‘in our part of the world’, of lands elsewhere. Kant also strongly condemns the subjugation of their inhabitants (*ZeF*, 8:358). In his notes for *Toward Perpetual Peace* (1794–5), Kant repeatedly and explicitly criticises the enslavement of non-Europeans in the strongest terms, as a grave violation of cosmopolitan right:

The principles underlying the supposed lawfulness of appropriating newly discovered and purportedly barbaric or irreligious lands, as goods belonging to no one, without the consent of the inhabitants and even subjugating them as well, are absolutely contrary to cosmopolitan right. (*VAZeF*, 23:173–4)

And in a famous passage from *Toward Perpetual Peace*:

If one compares [with the principle of cosmopolitan right] the *inhospitable* behaviour of civilized, especially trading states in our part of the world, the injustice they show in *visiting* foreign lands and peoples (which with them is tantamount to *conquering* them) goes to horrifying lengths. When America, the negro countries, the Spice Islands, the Cape, and so forth, were discovered, they were, to them, countries belonging to no one, since they counted the inhabitants as nothing. In the East Indies (Hindustan), they brought in foreign soldiers under the pretext of merely proposing to set up trading posts, but with them oppression of the inhabitants, incitement of the various Indian states to widespread wars, famine, rebellions, treachery and the whole litany of evils that oppress the human race. (*ZeF*, 8:358–9)

Note that here the Americas, Africa, India, ‘and so forth’ are explicitly mentioned. Cosmopolitan right is explicitly said to cover indigenous populations on other continents and not just (‘white’) Europeans. Dropping his earlier claim that Blacks and Native Americans cannot govern themselves and that Europe will probably eventually legislate for all other continents, Kant here envisions a world in which peoples on different continents together make public laws to regulate their interaction peacefully and in accordance with the normative principles of right.¹³

3.4. Trade

It is well known that Kant praises the ‘spirit of trade’ for promoting peace (*ZeF*, 8:368). But he did not always describe trade and peace in positive terms. In a striking passage in the *Critique of Judgment* (1790), for example, his attitude was rather negative, because of the bad effects he attributed to the inherent focus on self-interest operative in trading relationships. Kant contrasted the ‘sublime’ effects of war with the ‘debasing’ effects of the spirit of trade:

Even war, when it is conducted with order and respect for civil rights, has something sublime about it, and it also makes the manner of thinking of a people conducting war in this way only more sublime, the more dangers it was exposed to and was able to stand up to with courage. By contrast, a long peace tends to make the mere spirit of trade dominant and with it base self-interest, cowardice and weakness, and thus [a long peace] tends to debase the manner of thinking of a people. (*KU*, 5:263)

However, by the time Kant introduces the new notion of ‘cosmopolitan right’ in *Toward Perpetual Peace* (1795), his assessment has changed radically. In light of the importance Kant here attributes to mutual understanding, community and peace, it is clear that he is now unambiguously positive about the effects of trade. He writes that it was trade which ‘first brought [peoples] into *peaceful relations* with one another, even with those at a great distance, and thereby into relationships based on mutual understanding, community, and peace’ (*ZeF*, 8:364). In *Toward Perpetual Peace* the ‘spirit of trade’ is the answer to the question of what can ‘guarantee’ that the principles of cosmopolitan right will be respected. He now calls the peace resulting from trade ‘noble’ rather than debasing and writes that the spirit of trade leads to a situation that functionally resembles a league of states (the establishment of which Kant also advocates in *Toward Perpetual Peace*, as discussed above). He writes:

It is the *spirit of trade*, which cannot coexist with war, and which will, sooner or later, take hold of every people. Since among all of the powers (means) subordinate to state authority, the *power of money* is likely the most reliable, states find themselves forced (although not exactly by incentives of morality) to promote the noble peace and, wherever in the world war threatens to break out, to avert it by means of negotiations, just as if they were members of a permanent league. (*ZeF*, 8:368)

Kant argues here that trade unites different states (and their populations) through reciprocal interest and mutual benefit and that in cases where tensions emerge between states, the spirit of trade pushes them to pursue negotiation and mediation (as quoted, ‘just as if they were members of a permanent league’). In this way, international trade enables further steps on the way toward a global realm of peaceful interaction.

4. Continuity: the final end of human history as a moral world

Although Kant rethought a number of problems that were connected with his early views, some significant elements of his conception of cosmopolitanism remain the same. Throughout the 1780s and 1790s, Kant remains committed to the view, found in the ‘Idea for a Universal History’, that the final end of history is

the complete development of the predispositions for the use of reason and that this complete development will culminate in humans using their reason to determine their will, i.e. to act morally.¹⁴ Although this 'moralisation' cannot be reached completely, it can be approximated.

The final end of history according to the 'Idea for a Universal History' seems to be identical to the 'moral world' discussed in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In the first *Critique*, this is the ideal of 'the world as it would be if it were in conformity with all moral laws' (*KrV*, A808/B836). This is the world in which all agents act morally and in which, as a consequence of their virtuous actions, all are happy (*KrV*, A809/B837). The virtuous agents in the moral world are 'themselves, under the guidance of [moral] principles, the authors both of their own enduring well-being and of that of others' (*KrV*, A809/B837). Kant argues that our actions should aim at bringing the sensible world into conformity with such a moral world (*KrV*, A808/B836). Kant's theory in the 'Idea for a Universal History' seems to be an elaboration of the way in which this moral world is to be approximated in the sensible world. After all, according to the 'second proposition' that Kant formulates in the article, the goal of history is the full development of the human predispositions for the use of reason which is to culminate in moral agency; and according to the 'third proposition', humans should be the source of their own perfection and of the general happiness (*IaG*, 8:18–20).

In the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant again discusses the ideal of a moral world composed of general virtue and general happiness (*KU*, 5:445, 448, 453); here he explicitly connects this ideal with historical progress. He discusses the way nature is teleologically oriented toward the development of the predispositions for the use of reason ('culture'), and he argues that culture is itself subservient to the final end of creation, namely to humans as moral beings (*KU*, 5:434–6).

Another element that remains the same throughout Kant's writings of the 1780s and 1790s is his view that the development of legal institutions (especially the state and the international federation) plays an important role in the teleological historical process. Although he changed his view as to whether a good will was necessary for forming a just state in the first place, Kant always held that the establishment of a just state would be conducive to

further development of the predispositions for the use of reason in humans. For example, a particularly salient passage is found in the *Vorarbeiten* to the *Metaphysics of Morals*, where Kant thematises the relationship between legal and moral progress:

[W]hen the laws secure freedom externally, the maxims to also govern oneself internally in accordance with laws can live up; and conversely, the latter in turn make it easier through their dispositions for lawful coercion to have an influence, so that peaceable behaviour [*friedliches Verhalten*] under public laws and pacific dispositions [*friedfertige Gesinnungen*] (to also end the inner war between principles and inclinations), i.e. legality and morality find in the concept of peace the point of support for the transition from the Doctrine of Right to the Doctrine of Virtue. (*VAMS*, 23:354–5)

5. Conclusion

In short, Kant remains committed to the view that morality is the final end, but other details of his cosmopolitan theory change over time. In the mid-1790s, Kant changes his view concerning both the content and the conditions for the approximate realisation of the ideal international federation. In addition, he drops his earlier defence of a racial hierarchy, develops the category of cosmopolitan right, becomes critical of the exploitative colonialist practices of Europeans on other continents, changes his view of the relation between the development of the just state and the formation of an international federation (adding the new crucial role of republics) and develops a positive assessment of the role of international trade in the process toward peace.

Notes

¹ This chapter draws heavily on material from Pauline Kleingeld, 'Kant's Changing Cosmopolitanism', in A. O. Rorty and J. Schmidt (eds), *Kant's 'Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim': A Critical Guide*, 2009, © Cambridge University Press 2009, reproduced with permission. I have revised the parts that are taken from that essay and included additional materials here. Translations are my own, although I have benefited from many already available translations by others.

- ² Kant often uses the term 'people' (*Volk*) in the political sense of a group of individuals who are united under common laws, hence who form a state (cf. *MS*, 6:344). Accordingly, Kant indicates at the beginning of his discussion of international right in *Toward Perpetual Peace* that he is discussing 'peoples as states' (*Völker als Staaten*) (*ZeF*, 8:354), and in the subsequent discussion he refers to a league 'of states' and a league 'of peoples' interchangeably. In the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant notes that the term 'right of peoples' (*Völkerrecht*, international law) is strictly speaking a misnomer and that the appropriate term would be 'right of states' (*Staatenrecht*) (*MS*, 6:343). Therefore, '*Völkerbund*' can be translated both as 'federation of peoples' and as 'federation of states'.
- ³ For recent discussions of related aspects of Kant's 1784 essay, see Rorty and Schmidt (2009) and Höffe (2011).
- ⁴ On Kant's philosophy of history, see Anderson-Gold (2001), Loudon (2000, pp. 140–64), Wood (1999, part 2) and Kleingeld (1995). On the justification and epistemic status of Kant's claims regarding historical progress in the 'Idea for a Universal History', see Kleingeld (1995, ch. 1).
- ⁵ On this issue, see also Guyer (2009, pp. 129–49).
- ⁶ See, for example, Hedrick (2008, p. 262).
- ⁷ It is well known that Kant held racist views during the pre-critical period. Notorious is his remark, in *Observations on the Beautiful and the Sublime* (1764), that the fact that a negro carpenter was black from head to toe clearly proved that what he said was stupid (*GSE*, 2:255). Furthermore, Kant cited Hume's comment that no negro has ever shown any talent and concludes that the differences between blacks and whites are 'essential' and seem to be 'as large with regard to mental powers as they are in colour' (*GSE*, 2:253). Kant's racist remarks are not confined to the pre-critical works, however.
- ⁸ The as yet unpublished Doenhoff notes of Kant's 'Lectures on Physical Geography' (abbreviated here as *V-PG Doenhoff*) have been obtained from transcripts made available by Werner Stark at <http://kant.bbaw.de>.
- ⁹ For a fuller treatment of Kant's views on race, and for more literature on Kant and race, see Kleingeld (2007).
- ¹⁰ For further discussion of Kant's attitude toward colonialism, see Ypi and Flikschuh (forthcoming).
- ¹¹ This idea is an obvious reference to events in France, cf. *MS*, 6:341 and *TP*, 8:311.
- ¹² For the full argument for the claims in this section, see Kleingeld (2004) and Kleingeld (2012).
- ¹³ For further discussion, see Kleingeld (2007).

- ¹⁴ The one possible exception here is a comment in the second part of the *Contest of the Faculties* (*SF*, 7:91) which, however, contradicts other statements in that work which do mention moral progress (*SF*, 7:85–9).

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