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The relevance of cosmopolitanism for moral education

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In this article we defend a moral conception of cosmopolitanism and its relevance for moral education. Our moral conception of cosmopolitanism presumes that persons possess an inherent dignity in the Kantian sense and therefore they should be recognised as ends-in-themselves. We argue that cosmopolitan ideals can inspire moral educators to awaken and cultivate in their pupils an orientation and inclination to struggle against injustice. Moral cosmopolitanism, in other words, should more explicitly inform the work that moral educators do. Real-world constraints on moral action and the need to prioritise one's sometimes conflicting responsibilities will often qualify cosmopolitan justice as supererogatory. This fact does not absolve persons from aspiring to see themselves as having the moral obligation to help others in need, while recognising that their factual obligations are more modest in being bound by what they are actually able to do.

Distrust those cosmopolitans who search out remote duties in their books and neglect those that lie nearest. Such philosophers will love the Tartars to avoid loving their neighbour. (Rousseau, 1979, p. 39)

In today's globalised world, more persons than ever before reflect upon their place in our world and on the moral obligations they may or may not have to (distant) others. Cosmopolitanism is commonly used to describe this condition, though its precise meaning continues to instigate a lively philosophical debate. For some, cosmopolitanism represents an attractive moral ideal, while for others it simply suggests images of imperialism and cultural arrogance. Disguised by the tropes of 'progress' or 'enlightenment', cosmopolitanism is seen as simply more mischievous and paternalistic demagoguery that imposes its own culturally and historically specific worldview on others.

Our aim is to bring some clarity to this subject matter. In the first half of the article we will both clarify and defend a moral conception of cosmopolitanism; in the second half we explore the implications of this conception for secondary education. This

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exploration also elucidates the consequence of a moral conception of cosmopolitanism: we argue that a moral conception of cosmopolitanism *should inform what moral educators do*.

Though we expound the details more fully later, we will argue that our conception of moral cosmopolitanism presumes that persons possess an intrinsic value in the Kantian sense, and hence that they be recognised as ends-in-themselves. Moral cosmopolitanism also describes an orientation and inclination to *act* upon that truth; for our purposes this means a willingness to struggle against injustice. At a minimum the struggle against injustice entails that one reduce the suffering of others, so far as one is able, irrespective of pre-existing desires or relationships, but also geographical proximity, of those in need of help. In other words, the cosmopolitan scope of moral responsibility is in principle universal. Accordingly, the moral significance of distance is slight. Moral responsibility of the cosmopolitan view maps onto Kant's categorical imperative *to the extent that some*¹ maxims of morality are universalisable. However, acknowledging real world constraints of moral action and the need to prioritise one's responsibilities, we acknowledge that our conception of cosmopolitan morality qualifies as supererogatory.² That is, in the absence of important background conditions³ 'justice for all' demands too much of us, but this does not absolve us from certain moral obligations.

Within our moral conception of cosmopolitanism we will defend a morally qualified regard for pluralism, as well as a fallibilist disposition. Pluralism here means the recognition that there are multiple ways in which persons organise their lives, but also that cross-cultural dialogue is possible. With regard to the moral qualities of a cosmopolitan, this requires not only that persons recognise the possibility that people around the world lead lives that are different but good—and from which they may learn as well—but also that they believe they have a moral responsibility toward those whose lives are *not* good, because they are oppressed by unjust treatment or suffer from miserable conditions in which they have to live. Meanwhile, fallibilism logically denotes the acknowledgement that one may be wrong. When put in a moral perspective, this means that one is willing to correct one's mistakes and to ask for forgiveness if one's views have been harmful or unjust to others. Of course, cosmopolitans need not be able to *name* all of these traits, nor does the concept cosmopolitanism apply exclusively to well-educated academic élites.

As there are non-moral conceptions of cosmopolitanism, so it is also possible to envisage education for cosmopolitanism as a non-moral subject. One could teach children all kinds of (historical) facts, views and insights about cultures and societies around the world, as well as the relations between them, without having the intention that children develop moral attitudes toward those about whom they learn. Moreover, if attitudes and capacities are among the characteristics of cosmopolitanism, they are not necessarily moral in character. They, like knowledge, could be primarily taught with the aim of enriching the pupils themselves or to enable children to thrive in our globalised world. Yet while cosmopolitanism does not *logically* imply moral education, we will argue that it should.

But, one may ask, does not moral education necessarily have a cosmopolitan character, i.e., is cosmopolitan moral education a pleonasm? Many suppose that moral education, particularly a liberal moral education, is already attentive to the principles implied by cosmopolitanism, regardless of whether it assumes that name. They may feel that it is redundant to argue for cosmopolitanism given a liberal moral educator's *a priori* commitments to virtues such as respect, equality and justice. While it is true that cosmopolitanism and liberal moral education have much in common, we will show that a moral conception of cosmopolitanism broadens the compass of liberal moral education. In many versions of liberalism the moral underpinnings of legitimacy commonly refer to the nation state and to notions like consent and democratic decision-making which do not apply in the same way in a transnational context (Miller, 1995; Rawls, 1999). Cosmopolitanism extends the moral virtues familiar to liberal moral educators by expanding the scope of moral requirement.

Of course, it is no advance in moral philosophy to say that one incurs a moral obligation to others by simply invoking a fashionable label, but there is a compelling sense in which moral, social and political philosophy seize upon something importantly different with the term 'cosmopolitan'. Cosmopolitanism, in its morally relevant sense, has come to embody a set of dispositions, responsibilities and behaviours, which in their attention to the needs of others, are not confined to one's compatriots or intimate relations. Consequently, cosmopolitanism raises the stakes not by denying the importance of intimacy or 'borders' but by showing that moral responsibility renders them contingent and oftentimes irrelevant. Though further specification will only be possible in relation to real cases, we will illustrate the scope of cosmopolitan moral requirement by focusing on the will to struggle against injustice. We then argue that the virtues of moral cosmopolitanism must more explicitly inform the work that moral educators⁴ do.

Moral educators whose work is informed by the principles of cosmopolitanism will need to take upon themselves the challenge not only of cultivating crucially important moral dispositions. This is indeed what it means to be a moral educator in the first place. Yet they also have the additional charge of helping pupils to widen their scope of moral requirement, and of critically examining the most responsible ways in which a cosmopolitan can act. Our argument accordingly entails an activist stance, and in the final section we will specifically elucidate how moral educators can contribute to its development. We focus on the importance of an activist stance because we find that most philosophical writings on cosmopolitanism, including those attentive to educational concerns, typically reflect on the *intellectual* moral qualities—or epistemic virtues—cosmopolitans ought to have (Dobson, 2006). Our argument is an attempt to build upon these important foundations by connecting those qualities to the dispositions and actions of moral educators and their pupils.

Moral education informed by cosmopolitanism is not for the faint of heart. Its demands will seem unrelenting. To help prevent moral educators and their pupils from feeling overwhelmed, they will need to acknowledge that moral cosmopolitanism is an *ideal*. This means that educators and pupils have to realise that they are

pursuing a vision of a perfect or excellent situation that can never be fully achieved. However, moral educators must teach that cosmopolitan morality *obliges* one to do what one is *able* to do. What this is, as we will show, will depend on several variables including background conditions (including access to reliable information and resources), one's abilities and one's other moral obligations. Second, moral educators should begin with the moral narratives pupils have, as well as the immediate surroundings in which they live. With this foundation, the circle of moral concern can expand outward with the age and maturity of pupils. Third, the struggle against injustice does not foreclose the need to prioritise moral demands, and not only when circumstances prevent one from doing more; we will argue that the scope of cosmopolitan concern is paradoxically both limitless yet inevitably restricted. Finally, on the practical side of struggling for justice, many personal and political compromises will be unavoidable—such is the reality of struggles for justice in our world. Even political machinery used to address injustice may actually obstruct moral action or may contribute to injustice; therefore it will be necessary to assess the most effective means of struggle.

Before we elucidate the features of moral cosmopolitanism, we first dismiss familiar caricatures. A cursory knowledge of colonial history will reveal but a few of the actual harms that have been carried out in the name of 'cosmopolitanism', i.e., as the expression of universal—and typically Western—ideals of the good life. Cultural oppression, physical and psychological barbarism and senseless plunder aptly describe much, though not all, of this history. Recent incarnations describe neo-liberal globalisation, which prizes 'free trade', consumer choice, production efficiency and cost reduction, often resulting in the privatisation of public services, fewer worker protections and profit-driven motives that too often lead to environmental irresponsibility and massive wage disparity between corporate leaders and labourers. But neo-liberalism is amoral (though many of its effects may be immoral) and is therefore incompatible with moral cosmopolitanism.

Nor does moral cosmopolitanism describe the traveller, i.e., the person merely open to cultural difference. Many kinds of diversity can deepen our perception and appreciation of others as well as ourselves, and this is increasingly made possible for persons irrespective of their location, given how overlapping cultures actually operate. But the mere enthrallment with difference, though arguably harmless for its dilettantism, falls far short of moral cosmopolitanism. Indeed, the enlargement of one's cultural understanding and experience, though perhaps innocent both in intent and actual harm, fails to provide us with the moral resources necessary for combating injustice.

Moral cosmopolitanism

Moral cosmopolitanism describes an orientation toward others that is informed by a *sense of moral responsibility* and an *aspiration* to move beyond what is required, whose scope in principle is universal, to act for the good of others. In this sense, cosmopolitanism entails moral responsibilities to others as ends-in-themselves irrespective of our feelings, pre-existing relationships, or shared political space.⁵

There are many ways to speak of moral responsibility. Some, for example, speak of our moral obligations to others because we share membership in the global human community (Pogge, 1989); others claim that we have ‘natural’ duties to others simply because they are people who could be helped or harmed by our actions (Rachels, 1986). We find no fault in these orientations, though we think it better to argue straightforwardly that the foundation of cosmopolitan morality is Kantian and rests on our common humanity. A more specific articulation of common humanity rests on the idea of human dignity, the notion of intrinsic worth fellow persons have which in the *Groundwork of the metaphysics of morals* (1998) Kant refers to as ‘unconditional’ and ‘incomparable’. Human dignity describes the basic value persons have irrespective of their individual characteristics.

Kant’s idea of human dignity is captured best in the second formulation of the categorical imperative: ‘act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never merely as a means but always at the same time as an end’. This maxim operates on the assumption that whatever action is undertaken on behalf of others, it should be expected that one’s act does not abuse the other—through deception, coercion or violence—for one’s own sake. Importantly, the link between respect for persons as ends-in-themselves and autonomy is also unmistakable. Recognising the basic dignity of persons, to the extent that struggling for justice contributes to a reduction in suffering and dependence on others, means that in seeking the good one will aim to produce autonomy-enhancing outcomes that are consistent with what it means for persons to have intrinsic worth.

It is commonplace to read mischaracterisations of Kant, in particular among virtue ethicists and care theorists (MacIntyre, 1981; Noddings & Slote, 2003), who claim that Kant prizes impartial duty *to the exclusion* of the need to develop virtuous character or *to the exclusion* of responsiveness to the needs of others through empathic and caring relationships. But this is needlessly overstated. While there is no point in denying the Kantian emphasis on moral duty, to set this in opposition to empathy and concern is to distort the importance of feeling, attitudes and character in Kant’s moral philosophy.⁶ Indeed, as most leading Kantian scholars conclusively show, Kant’s moral philosophy involves the *duty* to cultivate the appropriate feelings and inclinations (Baron, 1985; Korsgaard, 1996; Sherman, 1997; Herman, 2007). So, moral impartiality must not be conflated with detachment or indifference.

Like these authors, we do not deny that emotions—or for that matter, relationships—possess crucial motivational, but also moral, significance. Yet while virtuous dispositions guided by the appropriate emotions, feelings and empathy certainly aid moral responsiveness toward others, they must *ultimately* be informed by the moral responsibility to aid others in need. Put another way: important though affect and empathy are, we argue that they cannot supply the justification required to combat injustice.

It should also be said that while cosmopolitanism’s provenance by our lights is Kantian, human dignity cannot be dismissed as a mere provincial Western construction. Though articulated differently by persons in different times and places, it carries persuasive force in a variety of cross-cultural contexts. Indeed, the moral substance

of human dignity in the struggle for justice is now widely invoked around the world, including by members of remote indigenous groups, and especially by those suffering oppression (Rentlen, 1990; Schouls, 2003; Kymlicka, 2007).

While activism suggests many things, to simplify we will focus on the moral will to struggle against injustice. When there is clear injustice—such as the infringement of basic human rights by leaders of nations (e.g., violent repression of political freedoms, spying on one's own citizens, detainment without recourse to a legal defence) or within some communities (e.g., honour killings)—cosmopolitan morality will induce one to act—within one's means—to ensure that persons may exercise their basic rights. At a minimum it will mean struggling for basic protections from harm.

Describing the exact processes of this struggle is no easy matter. Given both the inevitable limitations of individual moral responsibility and the complexity of problems that require attention, struggles against injustice will inevitably assume different forms. Some moral educators, for instance, will think it best to address and critique in print the macroeconomic problem of inequities in wealth concentration between the industrialised and non-industrialised world. Others will possibly encourage volunteer work in a pregnancy crisis centre or donate funds to Oxfam.

Cosmopolitan ideals require that one struggle—to offer only a few examples—against human trafficking, discriminatory immigration laws and the crippling effects of structural adjustment policies, but also for fairer trading practices, basic prenatal care and a free quality education for all children (and not only boys). But cosmopolitan morality also entails conscious vigilance in one's day-to-day decisions. For example, persons will at least try to buy produce that was not harvested by slaves and clothes not manufactured in sweat shops. (For now we need not be too prescriptive about how moral educators pursue this; we return to this later.) In sum, while there are different types of injustice around the world, those motivated by moral cosmopolitanism characteristically will aspire to have both the moral will to speak out and the resolve to take action. Whatever form of action this struggle takes, it is the recognition that justice impels persons to act for the good of others, and specifically to reduce suffering (Caney, 2005; Brock, 2006). Of course, appeals to justice are not unproblematic. All efforts to construct and defend moral standards—such as codified human rights—represent a transnational work-in-progress at consensus building. Accordingly, the process is ongoing and highly imperfect, but the standards entailed by this process incorporate the very criteria by which they can be criticised and reformed (Lukes, 2008).

Given the universal scope of moral cosmopolitanism, moral educators need to bear in mind three important qualifications. First, appeals to cosmopolitan justice are not simply rooted in abstract general principles bearing no relation to our relationships or conventional narratives. It is both necessary and appropriate that principles of justice are first encountered within living traditions of moral discourse (Fullinwider, 1989). It is within our respective traditions that all of us first learn moral behaviour by mastering its moral concepts and practices. Then, through imaginative application and extension of well-known precepts or

paradigmatic cases, cosmopolitan ideals can assist in expanding the scope of moral requirement.

Second, as we argued earlier, the moral ideals of cosmopolitanism entail more than what one person alone can do, and therefore should be pursued with a good sense of realism. Without a sense of realism there will likely be paralysis because it is unrealistic to assume that persons will always have access to information they need to make informed decisions, but also because it is naive to assume that individuals on their own can have the desired impact. Again, background conditions are important. For example, a society with strict environmental regulations will arguably better facilitate cosmopolitan justice than those without. Related to this, the scope of cosmopolitan moral requirement is also restricted because responsibility to others will always and inevitably require some kind of prioritisation (Herman, 2007). It is simply humanly impossible to be responsive to the needs of everyone. Since no one left to himself can realistically do all—or even most—that moral cosmopolitanism demands, moral educators need to investigate what may reasonably be expected while still keeping the ideal in mind.

Of course, there are different views on how moral persons should prioritise their responsibilities. If we want to propose a psychologically realistic expectation in the light of cosmopolitanism's demands, it seems fair to assume that moral requirements may be even more restrictive for those who must assume onerous responsibilities close to home. Family members who need constant care (e.g., young children, the elderly or the severely disabled) require moral priority from those closest to them, even at the unavoidable expense of more remote others. The failure to see the need for restrictiveness by emphasising, for example, assisting the greatest number (or only the worst off), exposes a critical weakness of some forms of consequentialism. Samuel Scheffler makes this very point:

[Consequentialism] requires individuals always to act in such a way as to produce the optimal state of the world from an impersonal standpoint. In so doing, however, it seems to many people to make wildly excessive demands on the capacity of agents to amass information about the global impact of the different courses of action available to them. (2001, p. 43)

Quite apart from the unduly burdensome task of obtaining and evaluating vast quantities of causal knowledge, the concern with the maximisation of happiness, as well as the utilitarian habit of quantifying and ranking moral actions and outcomes, is ultimately unsatisfactory, for it does not escape the outright infringement of justice when the 'greatest happiness' principle demands it (O'Neill, 1980). Further, as J. L. Mackie notes, actions and character 'have a merit of their own not wholly derived from what they bring about' (1977, p. 149). For his part, Kant does not of course specify a set of precise rules concerning *how*, *when*, or *to what extent* one ought to act upon one's moral obligations to others. Rather, the strength of Kantian ethics is the guiding principles which, as Onora O'Neill observes, 'can be used as the starting points for moral reasoning in actual contexts of action' (1980, p. 258). While the moral cosmopolitan recognises with the consequentialist the need to

prioritise moral responsibilities—especially where these are supererogatory—she does not lose sight of the fundamental Kantian insight that all persons possess an inviolable moral dignity.

Moral cosmopolitanism will not always require that one's moral concerns and actions stray far from home. This is because the scope of moral requirement is paradoxically limitless *and* restricted. Given the scope of moral requirement, cosmopolitans undoubtedly face manifold and intimidating challenges, and these are not always within one's sphere of influence. Indeed, most crises operate on a scale far beyond the capacity of any one person or group of people to remedy, no matter how well intentioned they may be. For example, there may be a cholera epidemic precipitated by a lack of clean drinking water in a country that refuses foreign aid; there may be a famine-ravaged land populated by a dispossessed people with woefully inadequate food resources, only compromising further their absence of political freedoms. And, of course, many crises also involve violence, including, too frequently, war and genocide. It is therefore not hyperbole to note that the challenges morally concerned persons contemplate, and to which they are called upon to respond, can at times feel overwhelming. The *scale* of the problems that any society faces is one of the main reasons why institutions are called upon to assume the primary responsibility for addressing conflict and mitigating global injustice. Yet much of the time the ground rules upon which institutions operate run afoul of the cosmopolitan ideal. Hence if institutions are to assist in helping to alleviate suffering and facilitate political compromises in a morally responsible way, they clearly require persons motivated by cosmopolitan morality to exhibit the will to struggle for justice. (We return to specific challenges vis-à-vis institutions later.)

It should also be said that many forms of injustice are dauntingly complex, because it is not always clear if one's interpretation of human rights is culturally biased or whether, in particular cases, there is sufficient evidence of injustice. For instance, in the case of genocide it may be clear that appalling harms are being done and intervention is required. However, the right way to intervene may not be obvious; intervention may even exacerbate the suffering of others. Further, reasons for the genocide will require a rather sophisticated knowledge and understanding of the historical and political context. In cases involving religiously or culturally sanctioned behaviours that the cosmopolitan considers unjust, she needs not only to reflect on the meanings attached to said behaviours within specific cultural practices, but also on whether or not intervention will worsen the condition of those whose welfare may already be threatened.

Thus, in struggling for justice, one must take care not to cause harm in the name of goodness. This often happens when demagoguery is advanced under another name such as 'freedom' or 'democracy'. Sadly, there is no shortage of universalist pronouncements and unilateralist action *imposed* by those claiming to protect the (psychological or physical) welfare of others while in fact understanding little of the conditions or practices under which they live. To see whether one's interpretation of injustice is correct, viz., that one's envisaged way of action is diminishing harm

instead of increasing it, moral educators will need a qualified sense of pluralism and fallibilism.

Pluralism and fallibilism

The moral educator influenced by cosmopolitan ideals will need to develop a sense of pluralism and fallibilism in pupils. Taking pluralism first, being a cosmopolitan in the moral sense means having a *qualified* regard for difference; cosmopolitans have to recognise the many valuable ways in which persons organise their lives that may contribute to their flourishing and acknowledge their own cultural and historical contingency. They must also recognise that pluralism, rightly understood, facilitates greater possibilities for shared and collaborative understandings that can result, with enough careful listening and empathy, in finding solutions to real problems that persons face. While barriers to effective communication exist, distinct historical, cultural and ethical vernaculars are not so irreducibly other that transnational—or, translocal—communication, understanding and consensus is impossible or undesirable.

Moral educators will want to teach children that while our understandings undoubtedly will be refracted through different cultural lenses and religious and national subjectivities, persons may nevertheless share important traits, habits, preferences, yearnings, convictions, etc. with others who do not possess the same experiences, cultural or political spaces, languages and perspectives. Therefore, coming to know something about others different from ourselves typically occurs whenever translation is possible; language, culture and belief need not be permanent barriers. Of course, cultural barriers are not easily overcome. Persons remain culturally situated, however hybrid and complex that situatedness is. But if the motivations are focused on the needs of others, barriers need not be insurmountable. The point here is that, with time, effort and an emphasis on human dignity, one can come to know, understand, and even *identify with* manifestly different points of view, allowing one to enter into dialogue with the other.

However, the cosmopolitan regard for pluralism is *qualified*; that is, moral educators should not believe that children should embrace cultural difference for its own sake. Indeed, some kinds of cultural difference militate against human dignity and should therefore be challenged or resisted (e.g., slavery). Moral educators must then aspire to have their pupils embrace pluralism in such a way that there is also a capacity for self-reflection, agency and choice. That is, moral educators must teach that there are both voluntary and involuntary aspects to one's cultural identity, and it will therefore be a worthwhile exercise to try and disentangle these.

Note what this does not mean. It does not mean that individual rights and cultural integrity are *ipso facto* mutually exclusive, or that one must abandon one's attachment to a valued group identity in order to express self-reflection and choice. Before any such determination can be made, and certainly before anyone deems a cultural practice unacceptable by some cosmopolitan standard, much careful listening and dialogue must take place. Self-reflection, agency and choice express themselves in all

sorts of ways and to varying degrees. Thus it is critical that moral educators allow themselves to be *transformed by dialogic interactions that potentially expand possibilities for mutual recognition, ethical responsibility, and reciprocity*. By proceeding in this way, the moral demands of cosmopolitanism lose none of their strength. To the contrary, they show themselves capable of revision.

And here is the link with fallibilism: moral educators informed by cosmopolitan ideals must leave room for epistemological doubt and teach their pupils to do the same. Because their moral dispositions will entail the recognition that they are likely to err, moral educators must be motivated to listen, think and act out of respect for the dignity of others and a concern for their well-being and believe this to be an important aim of their moral education. Thus, moral cosmopolitanism is a repudiation of moral relativism, which entails that no one is mistaken and nothing is condemnable. Indeed, moral relativism trivialises substantive and profound disagreement: it ignores conventions necessary for intelligible discussion, it undermines the possibility of being wrong and finally it precludes the possibility of addressing suffering and injustice. Meanwhile, fallibilism entails a willingness to admit wrong, whether error or harm is committed by oneself or those with whom one may unwittingly be allied (see Sher, 2001). For instance, though it is not her intention, an aid worker who earnestly seeks to shelter and feed flood victims may nevertheless represent, by her very appearance, affiliation and religious or national identity, complicity with forces of exploitation or neglect. The unintended result may be that she causes harm. Fallibilism, then, necessitates the recognition that there may be guilt by association. Yet fallibilism is not only an intellectual capacity: wedded to the right moral-emotional responses there also arises a capacity for compunction and a willingness to ask for forgiveness. The moral disposition to ask for forgiveness, based on the moral emotion of feeling guilty or ashamed, also requires an ability to correct one's thinking about what one thought to be the matter at hand, and thus it demonstrates *par excellence* how fallibilism works.

Educational implications

In the light of what we have argued so far, there can be no doubt that moral educators inspired by cosmopolitan ideals assume formidable responsibilities. This is perhaps especially true because moral cosmopolitanism involves the moral will to struggle against injustice; hence specific actions are implied. In the following paragraphs we will briefly outline what this means.

First, the pursuit of justice does not have to conflict with eliciting feelings of sympathy. Indeed, it may be feelings of pity or sorrow that first awaken sentiments capable of recognising injustice in the first place. Further, as we argued earlier, for Kant the cultivation of appropriate feeling, inclination and character is not, as some suggest, necessarily in opposition to what it means to respond to moral duty or to pursue justice. Yet moral educators influenced by the tenets of cosmopolitanism should teach pupils to respond to injustice irrespective of whether one may have

emotional ties, or pre-existing relationships, to the person(s) in need. Let us be clear: emotional responses are often crucial to the effective execution of moral responsibility. However, they are not essential to fulfilling cosmopolitan obligations. This means that moral educators should assist pupils in understanding that cosmopolitan moral responsibilities, while they initially may be inspired by our feelings and sympathies, in fact entail moral obligations that follow from the recognition that all persons have human dignity.⁷ Moreover, pupils should also learn that the dignity of all human beings is a sufficient justification for pursuing the moral aspirations of cosmopolitanism.

Second, at the same time, moral educators and their pupils must learn that in pursuing cosmopolitan aims, and in cultivating the corresponding moral virtues, they are pursuing ideal traits of character with a view to improving the lives of others. It might seem as if there is a tension here, for while moral educators are inspired by cosmopolitan ideals to strive for justice, they also have an obligation to be realistic about what they and their pupils can do. However, moral educators and their pupils need to understand that precisely because cosmopolitan aims are ideals their pursuit should be complemented by a sense of realism. Knowing that one is pursuing an ideal will help to minimise—though perhaps not eliminate—frustration or despair.

Pupils who learn to take cosmopolitanism seriously will assiduously aspire to struggle against injustice, but not feel utterly defeated if their efforts do not bear fruit in the manner they had hoped, or even if they do not see results within their lifetime. Indeed, systemic change, leading to the improvement of background conditions, often takes generations. Moreover, they need to recognise that these are regulative ideals, which means not only that their acts should be informed and influenced by the ideals, but also that they understand that this ideal does not provide them with a blueprint of an ideal world or ideal society, one that they can *impose* on others (Emmet, 1994). In other words, they need to understand that they should not only be vigilant concerning what they pursue, but also *how* they pursue it and therefore it will require the moral dispositions we described earlier. Furthermore, pupils need to know that while the outcome towards which they aspire is possibly the best imaginable, its actualisation may involve many personal and political compromises. Thus, in developing the will to struggle against injustice, educators also need to be fallibly attentive to what is feasible and realistic. Being motivated to act on behalf of others is a daunting undertaking and involves many hazards.

Third, cosmopolitanism requires that moral educators and their pupils expand the scope of moral commitment beyond their intimate relations or those with whom they share similar characteristics, such as membership within a community or nation. The basis for this moral responsibility, as we previously argued, is our shared human dignity. While it certainly is difficult to feel responsible for distant cultural others, the tremendous relief efforts following the 2010 Haitian earthquake or the 2004 Asian tsunami show that it is possible to arouse such feelings for people whom one has never met. Of course, public response to human tragedy is sometimes related to the circulation of graphic images—often involving children—in the press. While the

scope of cosmopolitan moral education should not be confined to situations covered by mainstream media, sensationalist disaster coverage doubtless provides a starting point for moral educators in the classroom.

Fourth, in their appeals to cosmopolitanism, moral educators need to help pupils appreciate struggles for justice as more than simply an occasional willingness to share or to help others in extreme situations. Rather, moral education informed by cosmopolitanism will entail countless thoughtful decisions and actions—which moral educators should aim to reinforce as habits—concerning choices over tangible resources such as clothing, food, etc. as well as the complex situations in which people live. So, for example, when it comes to donations to relief agencies, the aim is to assist pupils in scrutinising what others need, but also what they or their families are able to give in the light of their own needs. But the fact must be emphasised that financial aid is not sufficient; the will to struggle against injustice is paramount. Cosmopolitan justice requires that one protest against unfair trading practices, sweatshop labour, human rights abuses, etc. by struggling for more equitable background conditions. Many of these struggles should begin in the wealthy democracies, where economic policies and practices—even with generous financial aid—assist in maintaining gross inequities.

Fifth, moral educators and their pupils will need to scrutinise not only the objectives pursued by others but also what they pursue themselves. For this, they will need help in cultivating the relevant moral dispositions we have described and defended. When addressing humanitarian crises, they need not only to be fallibilists and to possess a qualified regard for pluralism, but they must also know that dialogic understanding, consultation and local participation are *sine qua non*. Moral education should aim to clarify that in pursuing justice, no decisive action that aims to mitigate suffering can claim to have moral authority without meaningful consultation and participation of all groups affected by such action. Intervention cannot simply be paternalistic in the ‘top down’ sense; it must be motivated by the desire to enhance the autonomy of others whose capacities to help themselves may at present be compromised by hunger, violence, corruption or disease. This obviously has implications for the way in which teachers engage pupils in the classroom.

Remember, too, that the ideal of cosmopolitan justice needs to be balanced by a sense of realism. Institutional supports are necessary, reliable information may be scarce, and it will rarely be logistically possible to consult all relevant parties. Moral educators must stress the principle of subsidiarity, i.e., local responsibility and leadership is best, although one must also acknowledge that hard cases may warrant *imposing* corrective action when abuses against human dignity are widespread and systemic.⁸ This may be a difficult web to untangle, especially when many local problems have been created and aggravated by global economic interventions. However, the intricacy of the problems to be confronted does not diminish the moral responsibility to side with the oppressed or neglected.

To illustrate this, suppose that following a natural calamity, such as the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, a moral educator were to have her pupils investigate the best

possible means to administer disaster relief. With attention to the right sorts of details, this teacher would help pupils figure out how to allocate emergency aid, including efficient uses of emergency services, coordinating the most effective means of communication—such as local radio—necessary to distribute food and clothing, and possibly massive state investment believed necessary to stabilise the local or national economy. In other words, a moral educator motivated by cosmopolitan ideals will teach pupils to be critical not only about *what* should be done, but also *how* and *when* it should be done. (And note that this will look different depending on whether someone is a resident of Port-au-Prince, the nation of Haiti, an inhabitant of neighbouring country such as the Dominican Republic, or someone living in Japan.)

In pursuing justice, moral educators will need to help pupils understand that no dialogue or action can be carried out in an impartial and apolitical manner. Indeed, national interests frequently compromise moral imperatives, and even humanitarian agencies are often deeply implicated in the self-serving agendas of nation states. However, in most cases, and for the foreseeable future, global aid has to be filtered through national mechanisms of organisation and distribution and sometimes one may have no choice but to collude with lending institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) whose aim is to jumpstart economies by encouraging foreign investment and privatising state-run utilities, thus (un)intentionally reducing the autonomy of local business leaders and restricting access to important public services.

Effective moral educators can show how matters become increasingly complicated when we know that:

- (1) corporate-consolidated and controlled mass media usually determines what is deserving of our attention (Moeller, 2006), and
- (2) that non-government organisations (NGOs) and humanitarian organisations not only compete for resources, but also that their actions may take a short-term view of things, throwing money at a problem with little understanding of the ethnic or political rivalries on the ground.

Consequently, research projects can help pupils understand how aid given for those most in need may simply end up in the wrong hands, namely those perpetrating crimes against humanity (Barnett, 2003; Calhoun, 2004).⁹ Moreover, pupils will need help understanding that interventions more often than not come in the form of *targeted—and thus provisional—emergency aid* rather than long-term infrastructural development. To the donor of funds to relief agencies and NGOs, Christine Sypnowich reminds us not to be naive:

[We] should attend to the perspective of the global donor with some caution. The decision to make charitable donations can be determined by the sympathies of the moment; made conditional on paternalistic proselytizing; skewed by the distractions of other causes and the temptations of self-interest. Thus the perspective of the global donor can be no more than a supplementary consideration in matters of international obligations to remedy inequality. (2005, p. 68)

For these reasons, moral educators need to help pupils to reflect upon the results their efforts against injustice may or may not produce. For instance, they may assist their pupils in understanding that even generous aid may yield at least two undesirable results:

- (1) by simply channelling money to relief agencies, one may indulge in the fantasy of having made a difference without *any* supporting evidence; also,
- (2) by seeing ethical obligation in terms of unilateral charitable giving rather than meaningful cooperation and assisted self-determination, one may contribute to the problem of dependency and oppression and thereby not reduce injustice.¹⁰

As the foregoing discussion shows, the challenges for a moral educator are immensely complex, but we can add three ameliorating remarks. First, it is important to remember that ours is an argument concerning the types of dispositions and concerns moral educators informed by moral cosmopolitanism ought to have, and as such is no substitute for geopolitical analysis or strategic planning. Second, there will always be conflicting interests and obligations. Moreover, local concerns ordinarily command our attention given how familiar [networks and] relations work. This does not make more remote problems less of a concern, but possibly more difficult to address. Further, principles that govern private relationships may differ from those institutions must respect in governing individuals. Teachers can assist pupils in thinking about the delicate balance that must be found between domestic or local obligations and the competing needs in the international sphere. Saladin Meckled-Garcia adds:

[If] one considers the internal aims and values served by educational institutions, such as schools or universities, the horizontal impact of these agents might be considerable. But to expect a school to take on, as its primary goal, the task of adjusting for life chances, whether among all its pupils or among all persons affected, is to give it a burden that would squeeze out the other values that define the point and purpose of a school. Excellence in education and scholarship would be swamped by requiring it to focus on the potentially limitless task of producing and maintaining a fair distribution of life prospects. (2008, pp. 254–255)

Finally, as we stressed earlier, moral educators and their pupils need to remember that they are pursuing a regulative ideal that governs not only what they aspire towards but also their current behaviour (and their evaluation of the needs of others). It goes without saying that this is easier said than done.

In any case, moral educators whose teaching is informed by cosmopolitanism will be called upon to underscore the immense practical and ethical difficulties associated with political struggle in order to illustrate ‘the paradox of humanitarian actions’ (Barnett, 2003, p. 405) associated with the moral obligations one has toward others, and to acknowledge the quandary all of us are faced with when contemplating how best to assist, or work alongside, others in need. Whatever course of action is pursued, moral educators informed by cosmopolitan ideals will endeavour to be as ethically responsible as possible while acknowledging that they cannot, nor do they want, to control everything.

Conclusions

In this article we have argued that cosmopolitanism places significant moral demands on persons. These moral demands, which we have articulated as the will to struggle against injustice, are grounded in Kant's moral philosophy, which holds that persons have intrinsic worth and are, morally speaking, ends-in-themselves. The struggle against injustice that arises from this conviction will assume different forms, but this ideal should be pursued with a sense of realism circumscribed by fallibilism and a qualified regard for pluralism.

While we have stressed a Kantian basis of cosmopolitan morality, we have also argued that this must be complemented by efforts of moral educators to stress the importance of empathic and dialogic engagement across cultural difference and to cultivate in their pupils the dispositions necessary to struggle against injustice, both near and abroad. Moral responsibilities arising from Kantian ethics do not work at cross purposes with cultivating the appropriate emotional responses (e.g., feelings, attitudes) toward others. To the contrary, they frequently work in concert.

To prevent pupils from feeling overwhelmed by cosmopolitan demands, moral educators informed by moral cosmopolitanism can begin at the local level. For example, teachers can begin to develop moral sensitivities and obligations by examining prejudice and moral indifference within the classroom or in the local community. Yet from these modest beginnings of thinking about justice and offering compelling reasons to act, the goal is to link the local to the global in widening the moral sympathies and moral expectations toward pupils now aware of their own abilities to make a difference, no matter how small that difference may seem. Justice should also be pursued with caution and humility, consciously avoiding deception, coercion and violence. Indeed, the vulnerability of those suffering injustice should offer a word of caution to individuals or institutions whose eagerness to do good may unwittingly bring great harm.

As we have argued throughout, there is not one way to respond to the dictates of cosmopolitan morality. Moral educators can remind pupils that they can begin by doing what they are able to do. For a few this means direct intervention—say, working for *Médicins sans Frontières* or Amnesty International—but for most, this will entail making donations to relief agencies, writing to members of Parliament or Congress, protesting in the streets against state inaction or raising awareness in the press. Taken together, these are not insignificant efforts. And let us not forget that efforts to address injustice around the world—from Darfur to Guantanamo to Burma—have often begun with grass roots organising from ordinary persons with the moral will to speak truth to power, be those powers the media, the UN, or one's own government. Though we have stressed the importance of the Kantian maxim to view others as ends-in-themselves, it must be emphasised that the details in knowing how best to act, or whether to act at all, will need to be worked out by gathering and assessing information relevant to each case, but also by weighing priorities to help remote others relative to obligations one has nearer to home.

In pursuing cosmopolitan ideals in moral education, we have highlighted a number of hazards. Certainly there will be mixed motives. Though one's conscious motives may be to aid others, they may equally be influenced by a desire to advance one's own interests. Pure motives, like cosmopolitan ideals themselves, are likely unattainable, though we may continue to scrutinise the information available to us and to question whether our considered judgements about reducing injustice are still in need of revision. What is *not* an option, however, is to see cosmopolitan morality as a set of nice recommendations for which there is nearly always a reason (or rather, excuse) to avoid acting upon its demands. Though we have argued that cosmopolitan morality allows a distinction between inviolable duties and supererogatory acts, as well as a need to prioritise between competing responsibilities, we stress again that in taking cosmopolitan morality seriously, one takes the struggle against injustice to heart.

In seeking justice, cultural and/or political differences on a cosmopolitan view of things do not place immovable obstacles in the path of dialogue, nor do they have to obstruct moral action necessary to alleviate suffering. Rather, those differences compel persons from different starting points to exhibit a willingness to work toward mutual understanding through dialogic consensus, offering reasons for their different convictions, so that justifiable moral action to assuage suffering can occur. Importantly, the moral consensus towards which cosmopolitans aim is continually being tested and examined in a variety of contexts but also in light of new and developing circumstances. And here we can see clearly how both Kantian duty and virtuous character come together: the cosmopolitan position rests upon the moral consensus¹¹ achieved through empathic dialogue between persons striving to understand the human condition and the responsibilities owed to one another across cultural divides because we share a common humanity. Taking this approach is far more likely to yield the shared understandings that are so vital to combating ecological, economic and political forces that dehumanise.

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Notes

1. There is no reason to posit the universalisability of *all* moral judgements.
2. Here one can recall the familiar distinction between actions that justice requires (perfect duties) and those that arise from beneficence (imperfect duties).
3. Favourable background conditions will describe institutional structures that inform, facilitate and perhaps even coerce responsible behaviour. Laws prohibiting racial discrimination or sweatshop labour are certainly one tactic, but incentives can also be used. Equitable background conditions are more likely to habituate persons to more responsible and effective *collective* action, thus making it easier to do what is right.
4. We define a moral educator as anyone whose task it is to instruct others in how to live.
5. By emphasising responsibility, we do not neglect the importance of dispositions, affects and inclinations. Nor do we say that cosmopolitan morality *cannot* or even *ought not* to be

- motivated or inspired by how one *feels* about injustice, or even that one ought not to be concerned with outcomes. But moral education predicated on cosmopolitanism cannot be *dependent* on mere feelings or allegedly derivative egoistic benefit.
6. For Kant, an act is morally worthy if and only if it is done from duty, but he also argues that ‘the ends of a subject who is an end in itself must as far as possible be also *my* ends, if that representation is to have its *full* effect in me’ (1998, p. 39).
 7. In this article we focus on the responsibilities towards other human beings, but we want to emphasise that the *objects* of moral requirement are in our view not limited to human beings. Moral obligations also extend to animal life and the environment.
 8. See Englebert (2010) for a bold and controversial proposal in which he argues that incorrigibly corrupt states should be stripped of their sovereignty, forcing them to adopt reforms conducive to the creation of legitimate participatory institutions.
 9. Judith Lichtenberg (2010, p. 565) adds: ‘Aid programs can disrupt traditional institutions, undermine incentives to work, erode recipients’ self-respect, and encourage corruption by local governments. Organisations can also fail in more obvious ways: their goods may simply not reach those they are designed to help; they may spend excessively on administrative costs.’
 10. But also see Gomberg (2002) for a powerful argument against philanthropic approaches to justice.
 11. Moral consensus should not be confused with situational ethics, in which right and wrong are merely provisional, or entirely dependent upon time, place and circumstance. Though it obviously requires some basic definitional parameters, *torture*, for example, does not cease to be immoral simply because members of a cultural context or political entity deem it otherwise.

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