

**Review of Katrin Flikschuh's *Kant and Modern Political Philosophy*.
Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008. Pp. 226. ISBN 0521073022. \$32.99.**

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In her recent book, Katrin Flikschuh's primary goal is to untangle Kant's political philosophy from Rawls. Post-Rawlsian interpretations of Kant have been plagued, she claims, by an aversion to Kantian metaphysics, and the result has been readings of Kant's political philosophy divorced from the rest of the Kantian system. Flikschuh notes that the Kantian influence on Rawls's political theory is derived primarily from the categorical imperative rather than Kant's main political work, the *Rechtslehre*. Thus what much of the philosophical and political worlds have viewed as "Kant's political theory" is actually something else. While her intended audience consists of Kant scholars on one hand, and political theorists and philosophers in general on the other, the book does require the reader to be somewhat versed in Rawls's theory of justice. Flikschuh's main thesis is that Kant's practical philosophy cannot be divorced from his metaphysics without significant loss. She seeks to do what she claims others have failed to do successfully in the past: to reconcile external and internal freedom in Kant's practical philosophy. She also offers a possible resolution of the neglected Antinomy of Right in the *Rechtslehre*. Her proposed solution involves seeing the various ideas of reason involved in the *Rechtslehre* (*lex permissiva*, the general will, possession in common) as arising in stages. Flikschuh disagrees with the common contractarian reading of Kantian cosmopolitanism, and the primary tool she uses to ground her new reading of the *Rechtslehre* is her treatment of Kant's comments concerning the spatial implications of a spherical Earth as an idea of reason that grounds his theory of international justice.

Flikschuh's book is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is concerned with different conceptions of what exactly Kantian metaphysics is and what role it does and should play in his political philosophy, including a thorough review of the debate between Habermas and Henrich concerning whether metaphysics should play a role in modern political philosophy at all. She criticizes Rawls's view of metaphysics as a set of private beliefs that can somehow be set aside in the formation of a liberal society, and instead she opts for Stephan Körner's definition of metaphysics as a categorical framework that is essentially public. She also revisits the distinction between an immanent and a transcendent metaphysics which figures prominently into one of her primary arguments later in the book. Chapter Two is primarily a discussion of the Third Antinomy in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which highlights the tension between free will and determinism, and Flikschuh

draws a connection between this antinomy and the political notion of freedom. The most important section of this chapter discusses the Kantian notion that reason has both architectonic and practical interests and that confusing one for the other can stand in the way of clear interpretations of Kant's practical philosophy. The third chapter is concerned with the difficulties involved in reconciling Kant's claims about internal freedom and autonomy with his arguments about external freedom. Chapter Four offers a quite thorough presentation and analysis of the Antinomy of Right in the *Rechtslehre*. Flikschuh also introduces here her notion of preliminary ideas of reason as a potential solution to the antinomy. The fifth chapter contains a discussion of how the general united will, the social contract, and original possession fit into Kant's overall cosmopolitan project. Finally, Chapter Six lays out Flikschuh's primary arguments concerning the role of an immanent metaphysics of the kind Körner describes in a revised interpretation of Kant's political philosophy, untangled from Rawls of course.

Flikschuh's book has the following drawbacks. (1) Her discussion of the nature of freedom as an idea of reason in Kant does not figure into the book to the degree that the opening pages suggest it will. While she does engage the tensions between freedom and determinism and between internal and external freedom early in the book, she only directly discusses the nature of freedom itself in the last part. (2) Her rejection of a contractarian reading of Kant's cosmopolitanism is probably overstated, given the fact that in the *Rechtslehre* and *Toward Perpetual Peace* Kant clearly frames his theory of global justice as an extension of the Hobbesian contract to the international sphere. Kant's political theory is probably better understood as a synthesis of contractarian themes and the non-contractarian principles emphasized by Flikschuh. (3) Interpreting Kant's conception of global justice as a metaphysical move based on the spatial limitations produced by the earth's spherical shape, an interesting idea that Flikschuh proposes and that figures prominently into her primary argument in the book, might work in Kant's own historical context. But given our access to observation of the earth's spherical shape today, this would have to become just another empirical consideration that figures into our thoughts about the feasibility of a global justice. Flikschuh seems to be thinking of this idea as an example of immanent metaphysics since it deals with the limitations of the sensible world. This does raise interesting questions concerning the exact nature of an immanent metaphysics that is likely to be intimately connected to Kant's use of the distinction between the archetypal and ectypal.

The book's strengths involve Flikschuh's thorough treatment of the neglected Antinomy of Right, her attempt to distance Kant from Rawls (a challenge all Kant scholars face), and her treatment of the "interests of reason" as both architectonic and practical. Overall the book is effective at giving the reader a good idea of the direction Kant scholarship, especially concerning his political philosophy, will take in the future.