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Sur le concept de politique internationale chez Kant. Contre le scepticisme réaliste

On the Notion of International Politics in Kant: Against Realist Skepticism

Abstract: In this article I propose some objections to arguments that some realist scholars of international relations made against Kant's theory of international politics. Nardin, for example, denies that there can be an international law constituted according to the Kantian concept of justice as it appears in the *Metaphysics of Morals*. The problem with Kantian international law which is supposed to ensure peace, Nardin says, is not some conflict between idea and reality – it is “conceptually impossible”. I retake the question and I show, by means of a dynamic exegesis (as opposed to a static one), that the crucial point of Kant's international politics is the determination of international law by cosmopolitan law. Kant's distinction between the social contract and civil contract seems essential to me, since there cannot be a public law before there is a society. If we transfer this perspective to the international level, we realize that the content of international public law cannot be determined before there is cosmopolitan civil society. This point is confirmed by a passage in the “Doctrine of Law” (§43) where Kant discusses the unity of the three types of law: political, international and cosmopolitan.

Keywords: Kant, international politics, perpetual peace, justice, republicanism, international law, cosmopolitanism