BOOK REVIEW

**Cosmopolitanism and Place**, edited by Jessica Wahman, José M Medina, and John J. Stuhr, Series: American Philosophy, Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University Press, 2017, 319 pp., US$40.00 (paperback), ISBN: 978-0-253-03032-0

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Studies of cosmopolitanism are increasingly moving away from abstract and universalist cosmopolitan ideals to focus instead on situated and ‘rooted’ forms of cosmopolitan identities, performances and practices. Here questions of place, difference and particularities become central. *Cosmopolitanism and Place*, an edited volume of 17 philosophical essays, critically explores these questions. Together the essays form a broad-ranging volume that challenges classical notions of moral cosmopolitanism and reimagines it as an anti-universalistic orientation for a world of plural places. While the authors are not the first to focus on the reality of place and critique cosmopolitan universalism, these essays represent a welcome contribution to the philosophy of cosmopolitanism, which aims to go beyond Anthony Appiah’s notion of ‘rooted cosmopolitanism’.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part, introduced by Wahman, consists of five essays concerned with the reconstruction of cosmopolitan ideals, although some treat cosmopolitanism only as an implicit theme. Nevertheless, these essays are an interesting read and raise important points. Lysaker in his critique of classical cosmopolitanism highlights its disregard for social theory and empirical findings on ‘the full range of forces that shape human social relations’ (p. 17). McAfee argues that a cosmopolitan imaginary that is historically contingent, and both particular and universal at the same time, is possible in the context of increasing global interconnectedness. Kegley along similar lines argues that nationalism cannot be allowed to circumscribe place – ‘place gives identity but it also transcends identities’ (p. 51).

The second part of the book, introduced by Medina, contains six essays on the importance of place conceptualized as an evolving set of practices and processes. The essays address experiences of being placed and displaced, although not always explicitly in relation to cosmopolitanism. Significant is Colapietro’s plea for a shift away from abstract cosmopolitan ideals to embodied human beings and the ‘concrete preoccupation with the actual planet on which life in its staggering proliferation and innumerable forms, as we know it, has evolved’ (p. 85). Medina for his part makes the important point that processes of placement and displacement are interrelated in ways that traditional conceptions of cosmopolitanism ignore. Edmonds argues that we are all itinerants living ‘in a world of rapid change, war, economic instability, hyperbolic media and wide-ranging social interaction’ (p. 136), and that it is this nomadic, fractured and displaced cosmopolitan experience that should be the starting point for developing a shared ethic.

The third part, introduced by Stuhr, includes six essays that reflect on cosmopolitanism in terms of homelessness, hope, and radical pluralism. Wahman advocates the idea of cosmopolitanism as an ethical orientation and state of mind characterised by pluralism, humility and a striving to make oneself homeless, rootless and open to the destabilising aspects of that experience. This is an argument for a cosmopolitanism that maintains and acknowledges difference and recognises the impossibility of escaping one’s own perspective and place. Similar ideas run through the other essays in this last part of the book. Stuhr in his concluding essay explores cosmopolitanism as a relation of power and exclusion with reference to its Enlightenment heritage of invasion, colonialism and domination in the name of universalism. He asks whether the dream of a different kind of cosmopolitanism is possible – one that rejects universalism and is humble, homeless, hopeful, pluralistic, difference-attuned as well as place- and history-situated. Stuhr makes no pretence to offer a definitive answer, but suggests that one should aim be become – not a citizen of the world – but *less* at home anywhere and ‘a more loving member and hopeful citizen of a different world, a different world of different places’ (p. 292).

In summary, this is an ambitious and eclectic collection of essays aimed at reimagining cosmopolitanism as anti-universalist and pluralist. The ideas and arguments offered on situatedness, emplacement and displacement are not new to cosmopolitanism studies as such. The strength of the collection lies in its philosophical critique of moral cosmopolitanism and its diverse, tentative explorations of how it might be reimagined in terms of multiple places and differences that cannot be universalised. That said, like many multi-authored volumes, the book lacks coherence at times and some essays are more effective than others in this attempt at reconstruction. Furthermore, some of the more innovative ideas are not developed in much depth, either theoretically or empirically, pointing perhaps to the need for engagement with empirically grounded social theory, as Lysaker highlights. Overall, the book will be of particular interest to philosophers, but its focus on the importance of place and its agenda of pluralism and anti-universalism means that it will also be a rich source of ideas for social geographers, sociologists and anthropologists studying lived and practiced cosmopolitanism*s*.