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What is This?

Not All Is Lost in Translation: World Varieties of Cosmopolitanism

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Abstract

Of the many challenging issues facing cosmopolitan thought today, a major one is the problem of conceptual and cultural translation, since it is often the case that cosmopolitanism is highly relevant to Indian and Chinese thought, even though the term itself is not used in the sources or in the interpretations. Three problems are addressed, namely universalist versus contextualist positions, Eurocentrism, and the problem of conceptual and cultural translations between western and non-western thought. The central argument is that cosmopolitanism thought needs to expand beyond its western genealogy to include other world traditions. However, the solution is not simply to identify alternative cultural traditions to western ones which might be the carriers of different kinds of cosmopolitan values, but of identifying in these different cultural traditions resources for cosmopolitics. In this way critical cosmopolitanism seeks to find an alternative both to strong contextualist as well as strong universalist positions.

Introduction

The concept of cosmopolitanism has had a paradoxical fate.[1] A product of classical European thought, it has increasingly been seen as relevant to the historical experiences of non-European cultures and reflects a certain self-questioning of Eurocentrism. In that sense cosmopolitanism has become 'cosmopolitanized', but its western genealogy has been privileged, thus setting limits to its global relevance. In view of the global importance of Asian countries it is important that cosmopolitanism embraces those countries, in particular India and China, which have respectively more than 17 and 19 per cent of

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the world's population. The prospects of a more cosmopolitan world will depend very much on what happens in these countries. Both countries, which are more than countries but civilizational complexes, have themselves rich cosmopolitan heritages that are rarely drawn into the field of cosmopolitan thought. Until now cosmopolitanism has mostly been discussed within the confines of western thought or else is regarded as a convenient term to refer to global normative culture.[2] The time has come to move beyond the latent Eurocentrism that persists in cosmopolitan thought. Is it possible to do this without moving from one contextualist position into another, and to do so without something getting lost in translation?

Of the many challenging issues one is the problem of conceptual and cultural translation, since it is often the case that cosmopolitanism may be highly relevant to developments in Indian and Chinese thought, even though the term itself is not used in the sources or in the interpretations. Indeed, the actual use of the term may itself disguise more relevant applications if acceptable forms of conceptual and cultural translation can be found. However, there is also the danger lurking in such endeavours of a loss of meaning, with different concepts translating quite different experiences. There is also the challenging question of which register of meaning should be privileged – western explanatory concepts or non-western concepts – or whether it is possible to find an alternative language. This methodological challenge is central to the concerns of this paper.

Cosmopolitanism is primarily a normative idea about the world that takes a variety of cultural forms in which that idea is expressed. This means that there is some tension between the idea and its manifest forms, for ideas are not entirely abstract, and due to the multiplicity of possible forms, there is some difficulty in specifying the defining aspects of cosmopolitanism. However, it is not helpful to begin an inquiry without something at least tentatively firm, so I shall attempt to offer a minimal definition of cosmopolitanism before considering the implications of its pluralization and extension beyond its western historical and conceptual assumptions.

As a normative idea, in the most general sense cosmopolitanism is about the value of taking into account the perspective of the other and placing oneself within a wider whole, which can generally be taken to be the world, as indicated by the Greek term 'cosmos', meaning the world community as opposed to a more narrow definition of community. The original term *kosmopolitês* thus meant 'citizen of the world'. Beyond that general sense the concept has had a diverse history and in the present day it is once again undergoing a shift in meaning as the European heritage[3] of the term no longer exclusively defines its meaning. This brings with it risks of getting 'lost in translation' – for instance, with regard to its normative significance and to its cognitive presuppositions – as well as new opportunities for conceptual innovation. However, the central idea of cosmopolitanism remains, namely the claim that individuals and the groups to which they belong have obligations to others beyond their immediate context (Brock, 2009).

This normative principle – which Kant associated with the principle of hospitality – has tied cosmopolitanism to the liberal tradition of thought, which asserts certain universal principles of justice that all societies must embody. While historically these principles have been mostly associated with western societies, they have increasingly provided the basis of most understandings of rights and rights claim-making throughout the world. This gives to cosmopolitanism a certain universalism, but one which should not be

mistaken for western dominance, despite the fact that Europe may have claimed that heritage as its own or the fact that it has been used to justify imperialistic ventures.

Cosmopolitanism is today more likely to be a source of resistance against western dominance. Its universalistic ethos has been predominantly deployed in the service of particularistic applications, as in subaltern or postcolonial appropriations. In this paper I defend the possibility of successful cultural and conceptual translations of cosmopolitanism which can be related to non-western traditions of inquiry. What is needed is a more intercultural understanding of cosmopolitanism as a relevant intellectual and political tradition in all world cultures. While this will not necessarily deliver a cosmopolitical project, it will offer an essential step in cosmopolitanizing global dialogue and overcoming vestiges of Eurocentrism.

The dominant approaches to cosmopolitanism in political theory accept too easily the western underpinnings of the term without considering problems in cultural translation. The specific contribution of this paper is to open up the question of cultural translation for cosmopolitanism and to explore the possibility that non-western traditions may contain cosmopolitan values different from the western ones. This approach goes beyond a view of cosmopolitanism as a universal condition or one that merely consists of intercultural dialogue. In invoking the critical dimension of cosmopolitanism a claim is also being made, following Walter Benjamin (1970) in his 1923 essay 'The Task of the Translator', about the logic of translation as a mode of radical transformation and that cosmopolitanism may itself be a form of cultural translation that creates new modes of world disclosure.

Problems of Universalism

Universalism today does not mean that there are universally valid beliefs or an objective order of truths, but that there are minimal conditions that all societies have to meet and acknowledge and that certain assumptions can be made about the moral value of the person and the nature of justice. The demands of universalism vary from strong to weak expectations depending on whether the issues are cultural, moral, or scientific. The latter provides the strongest demands, but it also reminds us that while the domains of science, aesthetic taste, and law and morality are very different, as Kant recognized, the nature of universalism is today largely, as Benhabib (2011: 62–5) has argued, justificatory: claims have to be justified and established by procedures of inquiry, evidence, self-reflexivity, and questioning. In this sense, neither total relativism nor a universalism of an objective order of truths can be upheld. Cosmopolitan universalism does not specify specific values that societies should believe in or practice, but demands the recognition of ways of solving problems and institutionalizing justice. So it is more a universalism of principles than of values, and is procedural in substance rather than foundational: cosmopolitan norms do not simply exist as timeless truths embodied in texts or the minds of thinkers that need to be discovered but instead are created. That notion of universalism has been long buried.

Against those[4] who argue for a more historically contextualized notion of truth, the justificatory position, which I am defending, emphasizes not the relativity of a historical context or cultural milieu for normative validity, but the procedures and assumptions that

are integral to all societies in the modern world. Following Habermas, we can say that certain assumptions can be made about the nature of the individual and of political community while leaving open the specific solutions that will be found to the problems with which they are faced, for many of these are context-bound. I would add to this the dimension of cognitive capabilities, since these are not just abstract principles of problem resolution but acquired skills, learning abilities and competences. The difficulty is in separating justificatory practices – which can be taken to be universal – from cultural assumptions (for instance is it a cultural assumption that people are reasonable and capable of self-problematization or that all individuals have a moral right to respect?). This is a very difficult question and not easy to answer on a general level as a historically defensible claim. In fact, there are examples of when it might not be a valid assumption. However, I think it can be said that in modern societies such assumptions can be made and that consequentially both extreme relativists/contextualists and universalists are wrong.

I see cosmopolitanism as offering a mid-way position: it defends certain universal capacities in human societies as to how they seek answers to certain questions, while recognizing that the ways in which they pose the questions and find solutions will be influenced, but not determined by, cultural context, as contextualists would argue, and nor, as universalists would require, with the same outcome, as different justifications and outcomes are possible. For these reasons, then, cosmopolitanism is both a pluralizing phenomenon as well as one that preserves a relation to unity. The relation between cultural context – which might be termed the context of justification – and the cognitive capacities and normative principles by which individuals solve problems is open-ended and highly contingent, making possible diversity. The empirical existence of cosmopolitanism, which is what makes it sociologically interesting, resides in such diversity of possible forms. The challenge for sociological cosmopolitanism is to understand the process by which cosmopolitanism emerges (see for example Beck, 2006; Rendall et al., 2009; Skrbis and Woodward, 2013). In other words, it is about how a normative idea emerges and becomes embodied in social forms. We might choose not to term this cosmopolitanism, but I am using it for now as there is not an alternative term available in the lexicon of social science. It cannot be substituted by globalization, which is itself not a normative concept. Indeed, the widespread appeal of cosmopolitanism is not unconnected with a critique of globalization.

Cosmopolitanism has become an unavoidable part of the composition of modern societies and exemplifies the spirit of modernity in articulating norms of critique, reflexivity and self-problematization. The cosmopolitan ethic comes into play in the encounter of one society or culture with another, and especially in light of the need to solve common problems. In this paper it is not my intention to explore further the theoretical content of cosmopolitanism.[5] The aim of the present paper is to consider the implications of world varieties of cosmopolitanism and if there is a way of translating between these. In doing so, two related problems need to be addressed, namely Eurocentrism and the problem of conceptual and cultural translations. Eurocentrism and its critique is addressed in the first two sections. The third section offers a brief consideration of what I call critical cosmopolitanism, which goes beyond the critique of Eurocentrism to identifying through acts of cultural translation alternative scenarios.

Questioning Eurocentrism

Most versions of cosmopolitanism nowadays reject strong universalism and approach to varying degrees contextualist positions. This is a reflection of the trend towards cultural conceptions of cosmopolitanism and a new interest in the topic within the social sciences where there are now many interesting attempts to approach empirically what had been a rather normative concept in political philosophy. Informing much of this have been two related developments. First is the application of cosmopolitanism to the wider non-western world, as reflected in especially the popularity of the concept within anthropology (see Werbner, 2008). Second is the general movement against Eurocentrism. The application of cosmopolitanism to non-western societies offers promising opportunities for non-Eurocentric social science. Indeed, in many accounts it would appear that cosmopolitanism is precisely the production of non-Eurocentric interpretations of the world (Mignolo, 2000a). On closer inspection, it is possible to identify at least four positions as to what non-Eurocentric cosmopolitanism entails in terms of its theoretical and methodological assumptions. These will be outlined in the next section, but first I will give a brief consideration of what Eurocentrism is supposed to be, since the problem of Eurocentrism is what gives rise in the first instance to the need to offer alternatives. There are also four possible meanings of this much confused and maligned term, though the first can be discounted as of less relevance today.[6]

Civilizational universalism: the claim that Europe or the West is in its civilizational foundations superior either intellectually, morally or politically to the rest of the world. This is a normative claim to exemplarity that is rarely if ever defended today in social science, but was common in the colonial period and has come to define what, since Edward Said, is more generally regarded as 'orientalism', which is the claim that the west can know the non-west in terms defined by the west and that since those terms are essentially power relations there is no Other as such, for the Other is a construction of the dominant. Since c. 1945 orientalism in this sense has been largely replaced by what I term 'analytical universalism'.

Analytical universalism: the lesser claim that European patterns of societal development provide the basic model for understanding the rest of the world is a rather more common residual orientalism and was the assumption of most modernization theories. It was in part implicit in classical sociology, such as Weber's. It differs from orientalism in not making normative assumptions about what are empirical categories. Where it was wrong about the non-European world can be attributed to poor research rather than a belief in the moral superiority of Europe. This is one of the most pervasive forms of Eurocentrism, which generally involves the privileging of European or western forms of knowledge, viewing non-western knowledge as unscientific and in need of translation into western discourse. It can also be considered as part of a wider process of 'westernization'. It should be noted that it is not always western-driven, for it has often been driven by intellectuals in cultural traditions vastly different from the west. Many mid-19th-century Chinese intellectuals in the 'Western Learning' movement favoured western ideas over Confucian ones (see Jenco, 2012). Another pertinent example is that of the Kemalist project of the westernization of Turkey in the 20th century.

European exceptionalism: the more moderate claim of exceptionality as opposed to exemplarity claims that the rise of Europe can be explained more or less exclusively by reference to endogenous processes of development without any consideration of the positive contribution of the non-European world or without regard to imperialism where that is relevant. This is a position that has been widely adopted and the subject of much debate, especially since Pomerantz (2000) and others who – writing from the perspective of global history – have demonstrated the importance of taking into account the world as an integrated system. Conrad (2013) has thus shown how the Enlightenment needs to be placed in a global context and is a not a uniquely European phenomenon.

Conceptual Europeanism: the application of concepts, categories and theories of European origin to the non-European world. This is a weaker form of Eurocentrism and the target of Chakrabarty's (2000) critique of the Eurocentric presuppositions of historical scholarship (see also for sociological versions Alatas, 2006; Connell, 2006; Sitas, 2006). In this case the problem is not the explicit privileging of European society, as in analytical universalism, but the use of concepts derived from European history in contexts where they do not apply. The result is the cognitive and epistemological privileging of western modes of thought.

In terms of the use of the term, which is entirely pejorative, there is a possible fifth, namely European-focused research. However, to term research that is only focused on Europe as Eurocentric is an empty claim, even if such research is of little interest to cosmopolitans.

Of these positions, in my view, only the fourth one is a significant problem for cosmopolitanism, which is a term derived from European thought and presents challenges of cultural and conceptual translation. There are major problems in conceptual translation in any attempt to take cosmopolitanism beyond Eurocentrism. Indeed, the Greek word itself is an indication of the problem. It may be necessary to find examples of cosmopolitanism that may not necessarily correspond to some of its uses within the western tradition. The problem, then, that this paper is specifically addressed to is whether cosmopolitanism can escape this latter kind of Eurocentrism.

Any claims of Eurocentrism – and it follows any accusations of anti-Eurocentrism – need to make clear exactly what version they are in opposition to in order to avoid 'straw man' arguments of a continuous discourse of orientalism from the early 19th century to the present day. Four trends in post-Eurocentric cosmopolitanism are discussed in what follows.

Post-Eurocentric Cosmopolitanism

While much of cosmopolitan theory is not addressed to issues of Eurocentrism, being largely concerned with normative problems of global justice, the problem of Eurocentrism has become acute due to the reception of cosmopolitanism in many parts of the world and especially in Asia. The historical and cultural exploration of cosmopolitanism has also highlighted the need for cosmopolitanism to address incipient Eurocentrism. The following are the main varieties of cosmopolitanism which involve attempts to address the cosmopolitan cultures of the non-western world.

Cosmopolitan liberalism

This is simply the extension of liberal thought, including European cosmopolitanism, to include the contributions of other parts of the world. The assumptions remain those of European thought, but ameliorated to include voices from other traditions. It can be seen as a continuation of multiculturalism on a global level. This is largely an attempt to represent non-European cultural traditions within a system of thought created by Europe. There can be little doubt that most conceptions of cosmopolitanism take this form, which can be seen as a corrective rather than an alternative to classical cosmopolitanism. As an anti-Eurocentric approach, it is an attempt to overcome the 'analytical Eurocentrism' of mainstream scholarship. The objections to it are that it does not take sufficiently seriously non-western thought as offering knowledge in its own terms, for western modes of thought have prior legitimacy and, moreover, dictate the sources that might be taken as examples of relevant non-western knowledge. The assumption is always that the intellectual resources of the West are of universal relevance and that they cannot be known in their own terms, as Godrej (2011) argues of political philosophy. Thus non-western thought as represented by Gandhi, Confucius and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) is given value because these thinkers address questions that are considered important to western thought. The result, following Godrej (2011), is the neglect of other sources that are not seen as translatable into western categories. There is thus a methodological problem in what sources should be selected as embodying cosmopolitanism. An additional consideration is whether the broad aim is cultural understanding or the commensurability of traditions (see Jenco, 2007, 2012). Generally, the liberal tradition stops short of commensurability and any possibility of innovation beyond a broadly-based attempt to understand the Other on terms dictated by western liberal discourse.

Cultural universalism

A variation of the former position is a more humanistic endeavour to identify common values across cultures, without necessarily presupposing one culture as the reference point. The assumptions are liberal in the aspiration to identify universal values. Such accounts generally take as the sources for common values the major religions of the world, such as the Muslim notion of *umna*, the Hindu concept of *dharma*, or the African Bantu notion of *ubuntu*. The notion of a 'dialogue of civilizations' can be related to this understanding of cosmopolitanism.[7] Any such universalistic approach will have to settle for the identification of a minimal set of values that all cultures share, for instance the notion of 'common humanity'. These approaches, while important correctives to most kinds of Eurocentrism, are limited in being confined to dialogic models of cosmopolitanism based largely on interpretations of pre-modern traditions and frequently have a religious objective, as in Pope John Paul's call in 2001 for a dialogue of civilizations. They may also be limited in terms of the kind of problems that are posited as ones of universal interest, neglecting topics that may be of less universal relevance but of major importance within a world region. This relates to the problem of how cosmopolitan discourse is identified in the first instance and whether it is possible to translate ancient concepts into modern terms and in turn translate them into the registers of meaning in other

cultural traditions where the terms may be unrecognizable due to different historical experiences relating to, for example, social structures and patterns of state formation. For instance, Gray (2010) argues that in the case of the Brahmanical and Vedic traditions in ancient India there have been many incorrect interpretations due to reliance on European historical assumptions and explanatory categories, an example being concepts within the social contract tradition of western liberalism, such as the state of nature. Another major problem with such approaches is the lack of critical engagement with the cultural and religious traditions in question, which are generally accepted as containing the seeds of universal values for the present day. While in Asia it is arguably the case that religion is still an important source of cultural and political identity, this is generally not true of Europe. European cosmopolitanism has very little to do with Christianity. This is also true of Latin American expressions of cosmopolitanism (see Mota, 2012). However, as Fred Dallmayr (1994: xviii) has argued, following Heidegger and Gadamer, dialogue does not necessarily mean the enactment of an already existing consensus, but can involve a hermeneutic orientation towards a deeper understanding of difference. But this would require a step beyond the identification of cosmopolitanism with the cultures of the axial age religions and a stronger engagement with modernity.

Alternative cosmopolitanism

Less universalistic in scope, this position involves the attempt to find within non-European traditions an indigenous non-western cosmopolitanism. In this case the concern is with the particular rather than with the universal. Rather than seek commensurability or the translation of the local into the universal, the aim is the particularization of the universal. Examples of alternative cosmopolitanisms lie in pre-colonial traditions or in cultures that were not primarily shaped by the influence of European civilization, such as China, Japan, Iran, and the Ottoman world before 1918, or in the case of those that were, such as India, where the influence did not erase the older traditions. Euben (2008), for instance, has demonstrated the existence of an Islamic cosmopolitanism rooted in travel and in mobile cultural worlds (see also Meijer, 1999). Pollack (2006) has argued for the existence of a Sanskrit cosmopolitan tradition different from but comparable to the European heritage based on the Latin language. He has argued against the traditional association of cosmopolitanism with western universalism confronting Asian particularism. International socialism can be seen as a particular kind of cosmopolitanism that had considerable appeal for China, linking it for much of the previous century to Russia (see Rofel, 2012). Earlier in the 20th century there were rival forms of cosmopolitanism, one influenced by the West and another more internal and nationalist Chinese one (Cheah, 2006; Rofel, 2012). There is a wide literature on comparative approaches to European, Chinese and Indian philosophy that is relevant in this context (see Angle, 2012; Burik, 2009).[8] Such approaches can be described as post-liberal in that they entail a certain relativism and recognition of the limits of commensurability in translation and in cultural comparison. Important examples of alternative cosmopolitanism are, for instance, Chinese debates on Confucianism as a basis for a different kind of democracy, as in the work of Daniel Bell (2000, 2006). The writing of the Confucian philosopher Mencius, who espoused a notion of common humanity, or the debate about the Chinese concept of

ren, for instance, is another pertinent example of a concept – meaning roughly humanness but which could also be translated as 'love of others' – with universal significance that can be approached from a different civilizational context without presupposing western thought, as Ackerly (2005) argues. However, such approaches may fall short of cosmopolitanism in that they simply identify alternative paths towards democracy whose presuppositions are different from those of western liberal democracy.

Under this heading we can also include subaltern and post-colonial conceptions of cosmopolitanism (Go, 2013a, 2013b; Mignolo, 2000a). The post-colonial critique of Eurcentrism has been important in opening up new questions and avenues of inquiry, in particular concerning hybridity. However, it suffers from one-sided views of the European heritage that overstate colonialism in the making of Europe and reduce non-western histories too much to the impact of Europe. The result is an overestimation of non-western tradition as 'alternatives'. Post-colonialism is also highly limiting when it comes to many world regions which were not shaped by western imperialism and were themselves imperial powers (for instance China, Japan, Iran and Turkey) or where imperialism was partial and incomplete or where the colonized country (e.g. Brazil) became itself an imperial power overtaking its European master.

A third strategy is to find alternative geographies that question the presuppositions of the received view of history as organized into separate civilizations and continents. From the perspective of global history, as opposed to a nation-centric view of history or one rooted in supposedly authentic civilizational traditions, an emphasis on cultural encounters and trans-border regions has developed. This has led to an emerging literature on alternative geographies and civilizational encounters, much of which draws on cosmopolitanism as a framework.[9] Thus the Indian Ocean is increasingly seen as a transnational space in which East Africa and South East Asia were linked. Getz (2013: 40) comments on the cosmopolitan nature of Swahili-speaking society; built on the Bantu-speaking populations of East Africa, it integrated Somalis, Arabs and South Asians, and Swahili speakers travelled to India and Arabia (see also Sheriff, 2010; Hawley, 2008). Similar arguments can be made of other world regions, for instance Central Asia (Liu, 2011) or the Caribbean (Wardle, 2007). While much of this is based on a model of early processes of globalization – variously termed 'proto-globalization', 'archaic globalization' or 'first globalization' – it is relevant to cosmopolitan in shifting the terms of historical and geographical analysis, for example in questioning the categories centre and periphery, universalism and difference, local and global (see also Hopkins, 2006). It has had a significant impact in historical thinking in China as an alternative to Eurocentric conceptions of history (Liu, 2011).

However, where cosmopolitanism is invoked it is largely a loose category to refer to transcultural exchanges in mostly pre-modern contexts and does not have a clear normative significance. Exchange and cultural mobility in itself should not be equated with the condition of cosmopolitanism. They are, rather, important preconditions and can of course also produce non-cosmopolitan outcomes (see Delanty, 2011). For this reason, there are limits to what the global history turn can offer cosmopolitanism in so far as the latter entails normative claims. Recent developments in global intellectual history demonstrate that it is difficult to downplay the overwhelming significance of the global diffusion of western thought, however much non-western traditions have

played in offering either alternatives or reinterpretations (see for example Moyn and Sartori, 2013).

Cognitive universalism

There is no reason for universalistic approaches to be confined to the world religions or to indigenous or pre-colonial traditions. Arguments that modernity offers an overarching framework for the world is also a way in which to see how commonality is possible. This can be termed 'cognitive universalism' so as to indicate that the universalistic content concerns principles of reason that are not specific to any single culture but rather reside in the structures of consciousness associated with modernity, such as the idea of human autonomy, freedom, equality, and the moral worth of the individual. It should be distinguished from moral universalism, which simply holds that there are moral values or principles that transcend culture and which could be the basis of a cosmopolitan order of values.[10] Cognitive universalism would see such values embedded in all cultures to varying degrees, but would not see it as feasible for individuals to simply transcend their cultures. While different cultures have variously interpreted these 'ideas of reason' they are not the products of any single country or civilization. Cognitive universalism is thus a minimal kind of cosmopolitanism – though not as minimal as moral universalism – and potentially a basis for overcoming not only Eurocentrism but all ethnocentric approaches. In this view, which is closer to the justificatory position, there are core ideas that are constitutive of all cultures, even if some cultures have realized them more fully than others. It would follow from this that what are often referred to as European values – democracy, freedom, autonomy, etc. – are not specific to Europe but were simply developed there first. Possibly depending on how such values could be conceptually and cultural translated, the problem of Eurocentrism might disappear as a result of global contextualization.

An illustration of the cognitive dimension with respect to cosmopolitanism is to replace the term with another term that may be more easily translatable into different cultural contexts. Such a candidate, for instance, could be the notion of 'unity in diversity', a term that has resonances in both European, Indian and Chinese thought. Hans-Georg Gadamer (1992) in 'The Diversity of Europe' argued that unity in diversity is the heritage of Europe: 'Such unity has to be extended to the whole world – to include Japan, China, India and also Muslim cultures. Every culture, every people has something distinctive to offer for the solidarity and welfare of humanity' (cited in Dallmayr, 1994: xiii). While Gadamer's theoretical model was closer to the notion of a dialogue of civilizations, the idea of a wider principle that is reflected in different civilizations could be seen as a transcultural cognitive principle. Dialogue is an important basis of cosmopolitanism, as noted earlier, but it also frequently requires translation to be intelligible. The notion of unity in diversity to an extent has a trans-cultural function and translates much of the idea of cosmopolitanism. It could be seen, for instance, to translate more closely the Chinese notion of *tianxia*, generally translated to mean 'all under heaven' (see He and Brown, 2012; Rofel, 2012). This is probably the nearest equivalent to cosmopolitanism in contemporary Chinese political discourse.[11] Cosmopolitanism defined as unity in diversity can easily be related to Indian thought (see Padmanabhan, 2012). It is a concept that is ingrained in the constitution of India and part of the identity of the European

Union (Oommen, 2004). The Japanese notion of *Kyosei* also translates cosmopolitanism to include the idea of participation in a global community, the overcoming of prejudice, and the recognition of difference (Sugimoto, 2012).

However, I would argue that a translatable concept is not in itself sufficient, for something must be done with the translated concept, which must be adequate to the task of addressing contemporary global issues. The notion of unity in diversity is perhaps a resource, but is not necessarily in itself sufficient. What is needed is a stronger normative and critical impetus. For these reasons cultural translation is insufficient for a developed cosmopolitan framework of analysis, unless it is accompanied by a stronger normative and critical impetus. This brings me to critical cosmopolitanism.

Critical Cosmopolitanism

Within this broad category, as used here, the problem of Eurocentrism is only one focus and not the defining concern. Critical cosmopolitanism differs from the first three previously mentioned approaches in its more critical attitude towards cultural traditions, both European and non-European, and the retention of a normative stance that does not jettison the possibility of cultural transcendence. It is also in this respect that it somewhat differs from other uses of the term, which are more concerned with the problem of cultural difference (see Mignolo, 2000b; see also Rabinow, 1986). Cosmopolitanism is by its nature critical in its basic self-understanding, but this is not always pronounced in most mainstream accounts, such as those discussed earlier or in normative political theory. Critical cosmopolitanism emphasizes the open nature of encounters between cultures and that cultures learn from each other, and not simply the fact that encounters take place (see Delanty, 2009, 2013). The point is not then simply to find within the cultures of the world common values or instances of exchange and plurality, but to identify sources of critical dialogue and the cultivation of critical thought. It builds on the idea of cognitive universalism, but goes beyond it in embedding instances of cosmopolitanism in specific contexts of justification. From the perspective of critical cosmopolitanism, the key factor is the development of critical powers that challenge a narrow view of the world. However, unlike strong universalist approaches, the cosmopolitan subject is always rooted in a given cultural context. The cosmopolitan imagination is the capacity to think beyond that context in light of universalistic principles. In order to develop this further, three possible methodological strategies illustrate a broad critical cosmopolitan approach to social science.

While mainstream European cosmopolitanism was almost entirely concerned with the internal European context, an alternative and more critical approach would seek to identify within European culture, including the cosmopolitan tradition, the positive influence of non-European ideas. Contrary to the orientalist critique of Europe, many Enlightenment thinkers (such as Schlegel and Leibnitz) were very much aware of the positive contribution of other parts of the world, especially of Asia. Alexander von Humboldt, for instance, had an encompassing sense of the world animated by a strong critique of slavery. Influenced by romanticism, he developed a mode of engagement that went beyond the liberal assumptions of many Enlightenment thinkers. This, then, is one strategy for a post-Eurocentric critical cosmopolitanism: the decentring of Europe

through the discovery of the non-European within Europe. Such an approach, which could be described as Europe discovering its own otherness within, would include the analysis of the critical dimensions of European thought that opposed a narrow Eurocentric view of the world and sought to cultivate a world consciousness in which other cultures would stand on equal footing. The question is to find out how change in one part of the world has an impact on other parts, producing greater levels of reflexivity, for instance to account for how the European Enlightenment was influenced by encounters with the non-western world in ways that cannot be explained by the orientalist or post-colonial critique (see Clarke, 1997; Dallmayr, 1996).

A second avenue of inquiry is the analysis of how non-western cultures appropriated western culture without accepting it in its entirety. Mainstream approaches take for granted the global significance of western thought without considering the ways western thought has been appropriated in creative ways, leading in many cases to hybrid out-comes. This can take quite varied forms by which, for instance, western ideologies such as socialism or positivism were transplanted in very different environments from their original European context, for instance socialism and positivism in China and Brazil respectively. In other cases – of which a pertinent example is Japan – western ideas were imported piecemeal through borrowing and reinterpretation and absorption into native traditions (Delanty, 2003). This would also entail looking at how concepts such as civil society, democracy or the public sphere are relevant to, for instance, Islamic history (see Browers, 2006; see also Chambers and Kymlicka, 2002) or seeing Confucianism as con-taining within it a distinctive democratic tradition that grows out of it though immanent critique as opposed to simply adopting western forms (Ackerly, 2005). From the per-spective of a critical cosmopolitanism, as opposed to counter-civilizational or alternative cosmopolitanism, as discussed above, the aim would not necessarily be the identification of a native alternative to western categories, but rather an approach that seeks to identify transformative potentials within both western and eastern cultures. Part of that critical task is to see how the past can be re-interpreted in non-Eurocentric categories. For instance, the discovery of the 13th-century Manden Charter in the Upper Niger basin challenges our received notions of African history with the demonstration that there was a pre-western constitutional tradition in Africa.[12] It can be demonstrated that the oriental-ist construction of citizenship as an exclusively western practice is artificial, as Isin and Lefebvre (2005) show with respect to gift giving in the institutions of Greek euergetism and Ottoman *waqf*.

A third strategy would include the exploration of the global significance of non-Euro-pean concepts, such as 'face' and *guanxi*, as Xiaoying Qi has argued (Qi, 2011, 2012, 2013). Although not normally considered from the perspective of cosmopolitanism, this is relevant to the task of overcoming the Eurocentric privileging of western concepts.

All these strategies involve to varying degrees not just conceptual translation but also cultural translation, and in a direction that captures the normative and critical moment of self-transformation and learning in light of the encounter with the other. They demon-strate that cultures, despite their differences, are not entirely incommensurable. This is not due to common values as such, but can be attributed to common cognitive resources which can lead to the immanent critique of culture. This may then be an answer to the problem of how to decide which traditions are relevant to cosmopolitanism, for not all

are, and they can be mutually contradictory as well as internally diverse, as for example in the mixture within Indian civilization of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, and in China of Daoism and Confucianism. Islam and Christianity also demonstrate numerous schisms. Western cosmopolitanism has itself been composed of many different currents (the Cynics versus the Stoics, the Kantian tradition, Marx's cosmopolitanism and the von Humboldtian dispositions (Walls, 2009)).

The notion of diatopic hermeneutics, as proposed variously by Raimon Panikkar and Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007), is relevant in demonstrating what Santos has referred to as the 'incompleteness' of all cultural perspectives and thus goes some way towards solving this problem. Such a view suggests that an adequate cosmopolitan hermeneutics requires a capacity to see the world from a variety of different perspectives rather than from one. However, this does not answer the question of what kind of a cosmopolitics will follow, for a key issue remains: whether achieving multi-perspectivism is sufficient to solve major global problems. This may rather be seen as an essential step in the direction of cosmopolitics, but it cannot be the final result. Moreover, the critical cosmopolitan position I have put forward places a strong emphasis on the possibility of the critical evaluation of cultural standpoints.

So what is being proposed is a more normative kind of critical cosmopolitanism that overcomes, without necessarily transcending the particularity of cultural traditions. Cosmopolitanism is also a political project aimed at overcoming divisive differences and not only a condition of intercultural understanding derived from world-views or the cultural legacies of the axial age religions. As a cosmopolitical project, it goes beyond the problem of Eurocentrism, which often figures too much in new approaches to cosmopolitanism, to the exploration of alternative possibilities within the present. One of the important features of cosmopolitanism today is the alternative vision it offers to globalization and to nationalism. Cosmopolitanism is a critique both of a vision of the world based on self-enclosed nations, and a vision of the world homogenized by globalization. So the recognition of world varieties of cosmopolitanism should not lead to the conclusion of incommensurability. Different civilizations may indeed have different cosmopolitan traditions, the understanding of which is surely important for cosmopolitan politics, and it is possible to translate between these simply because they have all been mutually influenced. It is not the case that there is a tradition that is defined by an original meaning that has remained constant. In the case of the European tradition of cosmopolitanism, as I have argued, it has undergone several shifts in meaning, to an extent that it is difficult to speak of a continuous tradition. I believe the same is true of other traditions and that all of these have been influenced by centuries of cross-fertilization.

Conclusion

In the final analysis one of the most promising candidates for a successful cultural translation of the spirit of cosmopolitanism is the notion of 'hospitality', which Kant advocated in his political writings[13] but which would appear to have a strong contemporary resonance in all cultures of the world and is not specific to the context of its origin. This principle calls for the recognition that human beings should not be treated with hostility but with hospitality wherever they happen to be. That cultural ideas, values and

principles can transcend the context of their origin is evident in numerous examples, such as the more or less universal diffusion of the notion of the nation and more recently human rights. The principle of hospitality, more than notions of unity and diversity, common humanity or a dialogue of civilizations, captures the substantive core of cosmopolitanism and in ways that more easily facilitate cultural translation in all civilizational contexts. I do not think that this is a primarily European idea, and even if it was first articulated in Europe it has since lost its European specificity.

To conclude, the field of cosmopolitanism is very broad and when extended to encompass non-western traditions the potential range of topics becomes wider still. I have tried to stress some key normative and methodological issues that are relevant to overcoming Eurocentric prejudices, which I have also cautioned against exaggerating, without falling into either extreme contextualist or universalist positions. In my view, cosmopolitanism offers a focus for comparative research in addressing what societies have in common. However, this will require going beyond the presuppositions of merely comparative analysis of separate societies, in that we now have to assume the interconnected nature of societies. Recognition of such interconnectedness makes possible a degree of cultural translation.

Debates in comparative philosophy and global history, as I have argued, are very important in opening up new questions, but cosmopolitan theory needs to go beyond these approaches, which are generally confined to historical analysis, to the identification of alternative possibilities within the present. So it is not merely a case of seeking to identify alternative cultural traditions to western ones that might be the carriers of different kinds of cosmopolitan values, but rather of identifying in these different cultural traditions resources for cosmopolitics. This suggests, then, that what we need to look for is not merely Chinese cosmopolitanism, or Japanese or Indian cosmopolitanism, for instance, as alternatives to European cosmopolitanism, but to see how such traditions, which in themselves are all incomplete, could offer resources for the present. However, the recognition of world varieties of cosmopolitanism is an essential step in the development of a cosmopolitical project.

The analysis in this paper has revealed that the mainstream approaches do not adequate engage with non-western cultures and their cosmopolitan traditions, or that where they do they tend to fall within the liberal or post-colonial positions. The former tend to be too minimal and the latter too all-embracing in locating cosmopolitanism in counter-discourses. From the vantage point of critical cosmopolitanism, all these approaches lack both the hermeneutical aim of cultural translation and the critical task of broadening the moral and political horizons of society.

Funding

Notes

1. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at Barcelona University and as a keynote lecture at the Hong Kong Annual Sociological Association conference, 7–8 December 2013. I am

grateful to comments from three referees for *Cultural Sociology* and to many others who attended the venues at which the paper was presented.

2. There have been some attempts to move beyond western cosmopolitanism, but the literature is limited and often takes the form of polemical positions around non-western alternative cosmopolitanism (see Breckenridge et al., 2002, for an important contribution; see also Mignolo, 2000b).
3. There was not one western cosmopolitanism but several, and the concept evolved considerably in its history – for instance, Kant, Marx and Alexander von Humboldt represent different conceptions of cosmopolitanism. See also Kleingeld (1999).
4. While 20th-century philosophy is mostly, if not entirely, post-universalist, social science has often lagged behind in terms of normative or cognitive claims, with either strong contextualist or more universalistic assumptions frequently presupposed, if not made explicit. For a recent discussion see Lukes (2000).
5. I have done this elsewhere (Delanty, 2009, 2013; see also the contributions in Delanty, 2012). See also Beck (2006), Cheah (2006) and Holton (2009).
6. See Wallerstein (1997) for a different classification of types of Eurocentrism in social science.
7. In 1999 the former president of Iran, Mohmmad Khatani, used the term as an alternative to the clash of civilizations thesis.
8. See the journal *Philosophy East and West* for numerous illustrations.
9. See, for instance, the *Journal of World History* for many historical examples of cosmopolitan cultures. Volume 21, no. 3, is a special issue on historical approaches to cosmopolitanism.
10. I am drawing on Strydom (2011, 2012) on the concept of the cognitive.
11. It may be objected that *tianxia* was generally confined to the Middle Kingdom. This may be true, but one could also say the original Greek term, *kosmopolitês*, was confined to the Alexandrian empire, and Kant's cosmopolitan order was confined to the European state system.
12. See http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/RL/00290.
13. In *Perpetual Peace* in 1795 and in *The Metaphysics of Morals* in 1797.

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