

Western Models of Intercultural Philosophy

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Introduction: The Moral Universalism of Liberal Cosmopolitanism

There are at least two ways of proceeding to investigate intercultural philosophy in the Western tradition: one is to provide the genealogy of intercultural philosophy as dialogue and to chart the different forms of dialogue that scholars have developed and applied; the other is to focus on the notion of interculturalism itself examining the main forms of intercultural philosophy as it has recently emerged as a reaction against and response to Eurocentrism and the moral universalism of liberalism. We pursued the first option in the Introduction to this book. In this chapter I will follow the second course by providing an outline of the main forms of intercultural philosophy that have emerged in the modern era. For reasons of space first I will focus on what is called *intercultural philosophy*; second, I will explore the “politics of difference” inspired by Friedrich Nietzsche and developed by various poststructuralist accounts of semiotic analyses of culture and self; and finally, I will comment upon Richard Rorty’s pragmatist notion of “cultural politics of conversation”.¹

This approach is not to overlook other approaches within the Western tradition beginning with the significance of Kant’s cosmopolitanism as the standard liberal moral universalism or recent developments like Kwame Anthony Appiah’s (2007) “ethics of identity” that returns to Mill’s essay “On Liberty” to revive the traditions of tolerance, pluralism and respect for both individual and group rights in a conception of “rooted cosmopolitanism” that attempts to save Kant from his Eurocentric universalism

The root stock of the word first used in 1614 to mean “citizen of the world” derives from the Greek *kosmopolites* (*kosmos* ‘world’, *polites*, meaning ‘citizen’, and *polis* meaning ‘city’). “Cosmopolitanism” with first recorded use in 1828 registers the idea that there is a *single moral community* based on the idea of freedom and thus in the early twenty-first century is also seen as a major theoretical buttress to the concept of universal human rights that transcend all national, cultural and State boundaries. While the Greeks had a concept of “cosmopolitanism” that issued from the Sophists against the form of political culture advocated by Plato and Aristotle which was wedded to the city and its citizens, and later took a Stoic form that was popular with early Christianity, its modern form emerged with the Enlightenment and was associated first with Erasmus’ humanism and with the development of natural law doctrine. Pauline Kleingeld (2006) argues

The historical context of the philosophical resurgence of cosmopolitanism during the Enlightenment is made up of many factors: The increasing rise of capitalism and world-wide trade and its theoretical reflections; the reality of ever expanding empires whose reach extended across the globe; the voyages around the world and the anthropological

¹ This paper draws on work from Peters (2006, 2011).

so-called 'discoveries' facilitated through these; the renewed interest in Hellenistic philosophy; and the emergence of a notion of human rights and a philosophical focus on human reason.

She goes to document that way in which the impulse of cosmopolitanism was strongest in the late eighteenth century both feeding and growing out of the 1789 declaration of human rights. While Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, Addison, Hume, and Jefferson, all saw themselves as cosmopolitans, it was Kant who defended and popularized the idea that human beings belong to a single moral community sharing the characteristics of freedom, equality and autonomy that grounded the concept and legitimacy of law. Philosophical cosmopolitanism therefore had a parallel in political based on a concept of law that applied to all States. Thus, famously, Kant in *Perpetual Peace* (1795) argues for a concept of moral cosmopolitanism based on universal law to which States would observe even though he rejected a strong notion of world government in favor of a loose federation. In Section II of *Perpetual Peace* he adumbrates the principles—“three definitive articles”—that are required to establish peace (against the natural state of war) beginning with the republican civic constitution, a federation of free States, and the law of world citizenship is said to be limited to conditions of “universal hospitality” where “Hospitality means the right of a stranger not to be treated as an enemy when he arrives in the land of another.”

Besides moral and political (or legal) cosmopolitanism there is also a form of economic cosmopolitanism associated with the work of Adam Smith who sought to diminish the role of the politics in the economic realm. Said to date from Quesnay the notion of economic cosmopolitanism has been promoted strongly in the twentieth century by Friedrich Hayek and Martin Friedman, and taken up in a particular form of neo-liberalism that now characterizes the World Trade Organization. In contemporary discourse cosmopolitanism is often referred to under the term globalization and includes economic (neoliberal) cosmopolitanism, political cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitan law, based on moral universalism. For all three accounts as Thomas Pogge (1992, 2008) notes, there is, first, an assumption of *individualism*—the unit of analysis is the individual rather than the State or some other entity; second, the assumption of *universality*; third, *generality*, as this special status has global force. We can therefore distinguish three forms of contemporary cosmopolitanism: Kantian moral cosmopolitanism represented by the discourse of human rights and, perhaps, institutionally by the United Nations and might be further extended by certain cosmopolitan institutions such as the International Criminal Court that seeks to develop a concept of the individual in international law that is not absolutely subject to the State; Kantian political cosmopolitanism represented by the likes of Habermas, Rawls, Beitz, Pogge and cosmopolitan democracy, argued for by David Held (1995); and economic cosmopolitanism currently best exemplified by a form of neo-liberal “free-trade”.

A comprehensive account of Western models of intercultural philosophy also would need to take account of the Hegelian “politics of recognition” as developed by Charles Taylor (1992, 1994) that he explicitly develops in the context of Quebec. Taylor examines two changes that

together, he argues, “have made the modern reoccupation with identity and recognition inevitable (Taylor, 1994: 26). The first change took place when the notion of dignity was substituted for that of honor, ushering in a politics of recognition; the second emerges at the end of the eighteenth century with the “subjective turn” of modern culture and the development of the notion of authenticity which he traces to the influence of Rousseau and Herder. The second change modifies and intensifies recognition as the universalist and egalitarian basis for democracy through individualizing identity according moral significance to our own inner natures. Together these changes have displaced social hierarchies and socially derived identification as the basis of traditional society. In this context he asserts : “We define our identity always in dialogue” (p. 33). Faced with a conflict between apparently competing universalisms developed through the case of Quebec Taylor forsakes procedural liberalism for an communitarian liberalism based on the presumption of the value of all cultures (Peters, 1995, 1996).²

While a sociological rather than a philosophical approach it is also necessary in any comprehensive account to mention the revival of “civilizational analysis” that has reoriented sociology in response to the conservative “clash of civilizations” interpretation by Samuel Huntington (1998). Of these the first two represent forms of liberal universalism and still harbor implicit forms of Eurocentrism and are thus inimical to the aims of intercultural philosophy while the third provides a sociological reaction against it. Johann Arnason and Shmuel Eisenstadt have developed a version of the civilization paradigm and evaluated against the historical experiences of American civilizations.³ Jeremy Smith (2009) writes:

Contemporary civilisations analysis has emerged in recent decades between postmodernist, late world systems theoretical and post-colonial perspectives to present a viable explanatory alternative to the globalisation paradigm in approaching questions of culture. Civilisations analysis traces its origins through historical and comparative sociology to growing interest in the 1980s in the so-called Axial Age. During the 1990s a conceptual re-composition of sociological theory variously emerged from the work of scholars in this field, including representative figures such as Said Arjomand, Johann Arnason, Randall Collins, Shmuel Eisenstadt, Bruce Mazlish, Edward Tiryakian and Bjorn Wittrock. The research showed fresh concern for intercultural sensibilities. At the same time, it preserved the contentious notion of civilisation, which threatened to compromise the newfound interculturalism (p. 233-4).

² See the Bouchard-Taylor Report (2008), The Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences (CCAPRC), *Building the Future: A Time for Reconciliation* which is a report to the Quebec Premier that reviewed interculturalism, immigration, secularism and the theme of Québec identity. The full report is available at <http://www.accommodements.gc.ca/documentation/rapports/rapport-final-integral-en.pdf>. In this context “interculturalism seeks to reconcile ethnocultural diversity with the continuity of the French-speaking core and the preservation of the social link. It thus affords security to Quebecers of French-Canadian origin and to ethnocultural minorities and protects the rights of all in keeping with the liberal tradition. By instituting French as the common public language, it establishes a framework in society for communication and exchanges. It has the virtue of being flexible and receptive to negotiation, adaptation and innovation (pp. 19-20).

³ See works by Arnason (1988, 2003), Arnason et al (2005) and Eisenstadt (1986, 1987, 2002, 2006).

As Smith comments this work represents “post-phenomenological hermeneutics of multi-societal configurations, which offers great potential for scholars of the intercultural” (p. 234). I do not have the space to explore this new paradigm of intercultural analysis that aims at genuine interculturalism here suffice to say that this program of research bears many similarities to intercultural philosophy and provides an important empirical and historical link to the study of American modernities.

Intercultural Philosophy

The approach that takes the name of “intercultural philosophy” is largely of German inspiration established in the 1990s. The Society of Intercultural Philosophy (SIP) was founded in 1992⁴ with the aim of to opening up “the strict [sic] limitations of the own cultural conditioning through philosophizing and to exchange with other philosophical approaches of cultures, which seem alien at first, in a historical and systematical dispute.” Claudia Bickmann from Cologne University as President writes that the Society aims to go beyond “centrism” and holds that that the *philosophia perennis* is not the possession of any one culture and also that cultures, philosophies and religions are commensurable. Bickmann indicates intercultural philosophy is neither a representation of any one culture nor a syncretism. Further, it is not merely a response to the de facto pluralistic situation in the world today and there is no privileged conceptual or terminological system: “A vital requirement for a hermeneutic of intercultural philosophy is a theory which neither conceives of the world nor of categories, methods, concepts or view points as a priori universally valid, unchanging entities”.⁵ Such a hermeneutic seeks cultural universals in the “overlappings” among cultures and the task of intercultural philosophy is to cultivate insight into one’s own philosophical approach as it informs a regulative ideal. The Society includes Ram Adhar Mall (2000) one of the founders of intercultural philosophy as Honorary Advisor and sports a publications series by Rodopi called “Studien zur Interkulturellen Philosophie” established in 1993 with some 18 volumes published on various themes.

In her 2010 “President’s Letter” Bickmann points to the notional inclusion of non-Western philosophical traditions that have been marginalized and excluded from the Western tradition as a reason for occidental philosophy to reexamine its own dominance. The Society also provides links to three other similar organizations: Wiener Gesellschaft für interkulturelle Philosophie (WiGiP); Polylog - Zeitschrift für Interkulturelles Philosophieren; and, Kulturwissenschaften und Europa oder die Realität der Virtualität (both based on Franz Martin Wimmer, 2004).⁶ We can also add Chakana, Intercultural Forum of Theology and Philosophy which folded in 2005⁷ and the publication called *Intercultural Philosophy* (Dawson and Iwasawa, 2000) as Volume XII, the last volume of the Proceedings of the Twentieth World Congress of

⁴ See <http://www.int-gip.de/englisch/index.html>.

⁵ See http://www.int-gip.de/englisch/informationen_englisch.html.

⁶ See the websites respectively: <http://www.wigip.org/>; <http://www.polylog.net/>; <http://www.inst.at/ausstellung/enzy/polylog/wimmer.htm>.

⁷ See http://www.mwi-aachen.org/en/publikationen/institut/chakana/chakanaAbschied2005_6.asp#0.

Philosophy. In their Introduction to the volume the editors Stephen Dawson and Tomoko Iwasawa provide useful background on the origins of intercultural philosophy in comparative study of religions⁸:

One truly significant development in scholarship in recent decades has been the maturing of intercultural studies. Intercultural studies in philosophy have their origins in the comparative study of religions that emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Pioneering practitioners include Max Müller, E. B. Tylor, and James Frazer among others. By the second half of the twentieth century, these traditions were further refined and extended by such notable figures as Gerardus van der Leeuw and Mircea Eliade. However, acceptance of what is now called “intercultural philosophy” was not immediately forthcoming. In 1962, Edward Conze observed that the “rapid growth of communications has brought Eastern and Western cultures face to face. So far European, and particularly British, philosophers have reacted by becoming more provincial than ever before.” Although Conze believed philosophers could not remain provincial forever, he allowed that in his day the omens were “most unpropitious.” His point was not that Western philosophy should simply include non-Western philosophers in the conversion (i.e., by merely determining where non-Western philosophers fit on the Western philosophical grid) but, rather, that non-Western philosophies, beyond their own intrinsic worth, would provide a valuable service to Western philosophy by exposing its “latent presuppositions” to sustained examination and questioning. Put differently, if the activity of philosophy is understood as public discourse in a community of inquiry, then the philosophical conversation of mankind could only be enriched by inclusion of other voices.

The editors indicate that a threshold was crossed at the Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy held in Boston in 2000: “No longer would it be possible for philosophers from one part of the world to claim that their tradition represents philosophy, while the work done by others is dismissed as some other kind of activity.... the forces of *globalization* ... have now breached the citadel of Western philosophy.” They infer two consequences of globalization for philosophy: “that intercultural philosophy... is uniquely positioned to shed new light on perennial philosophical problems” through the expansion of the philosophical community, and “globalization itself presents new problems for philosophy to address, especially in the areas of social and political philosophy.”

Ram Adhar Mall (2000) a professor of philosophy at Bremen/Munich was one of the first to clarify the new concept as one that implies a philosophical perspective that grants no conceptual or methodological privilege that rests on the “emancipation of non-Western

⁸ The editors refer to Mircea Eliade’s 1961 seminal essay “History of Religions and a New Humanism” that proposes “thick descriptions” (Geertz) of religion to understand their inner meaning and deeper structure. Such an approach may help to account for the fact that problems, concepts and categories peculiar to one tradition may be a reflection of different stages of development or language and linguistic structures that pattern logical features. See Eliade (1961; 1978; 2004).

philosophy from Eurocentrism” and “a historiography of philosophy to be written in the spirit of intercultural orientation” (p. 10). This moves viewing *logos* as the human capacity to reason and understand and the ability to communicate with others. He classifies intercultural philosophy following Wittgenstein’s terminology, not as a particular language game but rather the class of all language games (p. 41). Intercultural philosophy, he argues, is strongly supported by the spirit of postmodernity to question the unity in face of diversity: “ Intercultural and postmodern orientations in philosophy prepare the very ground on which comparative philosophy can be fruitfully done if the latter is not going to be a juxtaposition and tagging-on theories and –isms” (p.41-2). Intercultural philosophy in the comparative mode must cut across the East-West dichotomy with “comprehensiveness, creativity and openness” (p. 42) to defeat monolithic and monopolizing tendencies. Historically speaking, genuine intercultural philosophy failed to occur during Western modernity in its contact with non-Western cultures largely because of unjustified claims of “superiority, rationality, and universality” (p. 42). Both intercultural and postmodern philosophy “start from the facticity of the plurality of cultures, denies the myth of total identity and the fiction of radical difference, takes difference (Derrida) seriously, sees the sedimented character of all cultures and traditions, and thus overcomes the narrow limits of the hermeneutical circle without transforming themselves into others or being untrue to their own cultures.

Heinz Kimmerle, professor emeritus at the Erasmus-university in Rotterdam, also strongly influenced by contemporary hermeneutics, is strongly critical of Western philosophy’s tendency to use universalizing and totalizing concepts, and to attempt to enclose the unity and totality of being. His early work resisted Hegel’s closure of world-history and the history of philosophy in one all-embracing, rational system. In his later work, like Mall he also draws on postmodern philosophy or “the philosophy of difference” to unseat totalizing approach to the other that is personified in the stranger as a motif especially in his attempt to engage with African philosophy. He has written many books including studies of Hegel, Schleiermacher, and Derrida.

It is a specific aspect of intercultural dialogues that it is guided by a methodology of listening (a). A second basic aspect is equality and difference at the same time (b). Thirdly, there has to be an openness with regard to possible results of these dialogues (c). Fourthly, we have to consider that not only rational and linguistic means, but also emotional ones or means, which are related to the bodies, are used to reach common understanding (d). Finally, it may help clarify this approach to a dialogical philosophy, if we investigate how it differs from the theory of discourses, which expects only contributions from the dialogue-partners that can also be found in general human rationality (e).

The Politics of Difference

The Hegelian dialectic is the logical machinery that underlies the development of the Marxist understanding of imperialism and much of the work of early postcolonial thinkers such as Frantz Fanon. While an enormous theoretical advance and effective political strategy, it suffers from a number of theoretical difficulties. By dividing up cultures into two separate, discrete

classes (oppressed and oppressor) it implies a false homogeneity of both parts, reifying them, and thus tends to downplay the interconnections, the links, the fluid boundaries and exchanges. This homogeneity of cultures can also portray a pureness, as though the culture is an organic whole protected from pollution or contamination in coming into contact with other cultures and social formations. A Hegelian definition of culture as a notion that defines itself only through the power of negation is essentially *reactive*, asserting that both cultures are locked in a life-and-death struggle and only one of them can win in the end. This oppositional logic tends to obscure relational processes between cultures – such as migration, borrowings, hybridizations and other social formation and processes. The Hegelian theoretical opposition tends to underestimate both the importance of subcultures and contemporary social movements that have the power to redefine cultures, and also fails to conceptualize the relationship between cultures and individuals in order to take account of dissent and disagreement within cultures.

The Hegelian model of consciousness, of self and identity, inaugurates a new way of thinking that helped to define these concepts for leftist thinkers of modernity: not only Marx, but also Kojève, Sartre, Lacan and Fanon. Hegel's model of the dialectic of self and Other, governed by the logic of negation, informs versions of Marxism (particularly notions of "alienation" and imperialism), phenomenology (Kojève's interpretation of "unhappy consciousness"), existentialism, psychoanalysis, and philosophies of decolonisation and cultural liberation. Hegel's account provides the most comprehensive account of the dualistic or oppositional logic characterizing modernity – not only self/other, labor/capital, capitalism/socialism, but also coloniser/colonised, man/woman – yet it is also a product of its age. There are philosophical resources and an understanding of 'difference' that tend to characterize the present historical phase – what we might provocatively call "postmodernity" or "postcoloniality" – better than Hegel's dualistic logic of alterity. This is one of the main lessons that so called postcolonial theorists such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha have learned from the French poststructuralists.

In the postcolonial age, an age where many peoples have won their political independence or recognition – "difference" provides a better ground for understanding identity claims and struggles.

The movement we call "poststructuralism" can be interpreted, at least in part, as a philosophical attack on the *scientific* pretensions of structuralism by means of Nietzsche, whose work in the French context is used to provide a re-evaluation of Hegel's dialectic (see Peters, 1996). Drawing upon Nietzsche's critique of "truth" and on his analysis of the differential relations of power and knowledge, poststructuralists have challenged the assumptions that give rise to binary and oppositional thinking while also questioning the humanistic human subject. Poststructuralists have located the subject in all its cultural and historical complexity at the complex intersection of discursive, libidinal and social forces. This historicization of the self is a product of recognizing both the temporality and finitude of the self. The Self is seen to be discursively reproduced and positioned. It is a communicative practice of diverse language games and multiple self-defined narratives that draw on literary and expressive forms. Post-

colonial theorists, using these insights, have sought also to critique forms of Eurocentrism as based on the myth of a universalist, stable, transparent humanist self by posing an alternative radical alterity based on postcolonial experiences, and thus exposing and opening up the European Enlightenment experience of oneness and unity to non-Western cultural codes and interpretations.

In the field of cultural studies the structuralist notion of culture based upon the model of semiotics replaced the older humanism championed by leading figures of British cultural studies based on the early Marx. In the structuralist account identity is relationally defined and is purely a function of *differences* within the system. The relationship of signified to signifier is entirely arbitrary. One of the distinguishing features of Saussure's linguistics and an advance over the comparative grammar of the time is his emphasis on the autonomous form of the system as a whole which comprises and organizes phonic and semantic elements not directly accessible in sensory experience. Jonathon Culler (1976: 49) explains the *structuralist* view of language informed by Saussure that came to define "culture".

[It is] not simply that a language is a system of elements which are wholly defined by their relations to one another within the system, though it is that, but that the linguistic system consists of different levels of structure; at each level one can identify elements which contrast with one another and combine with other elements to form higher-level units, and the principles of structure at each level are fundamentally the same.

Raymond William's anthropological notion of culture as "a whole way of life" is critiqued on the basis of its organicist character and the way it assumed "a humanist notion of social and symbolic practices" (Hall, 1997). Structuralism placed the emphasis on signifying practices to embrace a notion of culture as a system of positive differences. The "linguisticity" of culture came to provide a method for structural anthropology. Jakobson introduced Claude Lévi-Strauss to structural linguistics at the New School for Social Science Research in New York in the early 1940s. Lévi-Strauss (1968) suggested that we apprehend the unconscious structure through the employment of the *structural method* developed by structural linguistics and suggests that social science is able to formulate necessary relationships, "new perspectives ... open up" where the anthropologist can study kinship systems in the way the linguist studies phonemes.

The movement we can call "poststructuralism" can be interpreted, at least in part as an philosophical attack on the *scientific* pretensions of structuralism by means of a Nietzsche, whose work in the French context is used to provide a re-evaluation of Hegel's dialectic. The real turning point came with the French reading of Nietzsche. Poststructuralist thinkers, drawing upon Nietzsche's critique of "truth" and on his analysis of the differential relations of power and knowledge, challenged the assumptions of binary thinking and inverting positions of subordination within the system and questioning the figure of the humanistic human subject adopted by liberal theory. By challenging the assumptions of autonomy and transparent self-consciousness these thinkers, favoring difference and fragmentation over universality and

unity, situated the subject as a complex intersection of discursive, libidinal, and social formations and practices.

By the early 1970s Nietzsche had served as a basis for an attack on the Hegelian dialectic and for alternative formulations of difference as a positive theoretical principle. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy* Deleuze (1983, orig. 1962) emphasized difference not only as a constant in linguistic and symbolic systems but also as a necessary element in the process of creating social and cultural identity. Derrida (1981, pp. 8-9) had come to a definitive concept of *différance* over the ten years beginning in 1959. *Différance*, Derrida's neologised concept, refers to "the movement that consists in deferring by means of delay, delegation, reprieve, referral, detour, postponement, reserving"; the movement of *différance* is the "common root of all the positional concepts that mark our language" and the production of those differences that is the condition for any signification. Finally, it is "the unfolding of difference", of the ontico-ontological difference, which Heidegger named as the difference between Being and beings.

Lyotard also arrives at a concept of difference with his formulation of the *differend* which had its origins in his intellectual break with radical Marxism. For Lyotard dialectical logic as "the machinery for overcoming alterity by negating and conserving it" had broken down (Lyotard, 1988: 61). He develops a notion of the *differend* which he defines as "a case of conflict, between (at least) two parties, that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgement applicable to both arguments" (p. xi). He states "a universal rule of judgement between heterogenous genres is lacking in general", or that "there is no genre whose hegemony over others would be just" (p. xi) and argues that the aim of philosophy in this situation, Lyotard argues, is to detect *differends* (a cognitive task) and to bear witness to them (an ethical obligation).

Postcolonial studies is based squarely on "the desire to speak to the Western paradigm of knowledge in the voice of otherness" (Goldberg & Quayson, 2002). This fundamental premise recognizes how interaction with subjected Others constituted the very experience of Western modernity and today conditions the processes of globalization. Bhabha & Comaroff (2002) acknowledge that the novel recastings of Hegelian causality by the likes of Lukács, Althusser and others provided "only limited intellectual and ideological space for evaluating or validating cultural translation, metissage, creolization, hybridization" (p. 20). Structural Marxism robbed 'the agency of the culturally endowed colonized peoples' (p. 22) and stressed the need for more nuanced and differentiated colonized subjects as subjects of resistance. Indeed, Comaroff's question to Bhabha focuses our attention on the intellectual work postcolonial theory is expected to do: "What does a postcolonial optic bring to the discourse about the nature of neoliberal capitalism, of globalization, of the world post-1989?" (p. 23). Bhabha's answer in terms of a 'vernacular cosmopolitanism' as a mark of the postcolonial experience reaffirms how necessary it is to question the history of liberalism, its civilizing mission and its assumed individualism as a basis for any notion of rights and citizenship. Bhabha indicates that postcoloniality draws upon a notion of identity that is both more disseminatory and iterative than the homogenizing notion underlying liberalism.

This critique highlights the increasing significance of issues of self and identity, particularly in relation to Enlightenment notions of a universal, stable, unchanging and essentialist Self that has served as the core of European conceptions of the citizen-subject. I have argued previously that with a post-Nietzschean conception of cultural studies we might also talk of a deepening of democracy and a political critique of Enlightenment values based upon criticism of the ways that modern liberal democracies construct political identity. The major problem is that both liberal and Marxist theory construct identity in terms of a series of binary oppositions (e.g. we/them, citizen/alien, responsible/irresponsible, legitimate/illegitimate), which has the effect of excluding or “Othering” some groups of people. Western countries grant rights to citizens – rights that are dependent upon citizenship – and regard non-citizens, that is immigrants, those seeking asylum and refugees, as “aliens”.

At the heart of the politics of difference is a critique of the Enlightenment demands that we examine how these boundaries are socially constructed, and how they are maintained and policed. It suggests that we must learn how these boundaries are manipulated and represented in the service of political end. In particular, the deconstruction of political hierarchies of value comprising binary oppositions and philosophies of difference is highly significant for current debates on multiculturalism and feminism in education. The exclusion of groups from citizen status equally also can take place within the nation state, where a set of historic ‘we/they’ oppositions is used legally and politically to exclude, deny or downgrade the “rights” of minorities based on ethnicity, sexual orientation, age or disability. What poststructuralism allows is a better understanding of the mechanisms by which traditional exclusions have occurred and a better understanding of the centrality of questions of identity at the level of the personal and individual, the community and state. Poststructuralism promotes an understanding of the *negotiated* character of identity, especially in relation to the notion of the citizen and the changing constellation of the nation state – both, after all, relatively recent historical phenomena. It does this in a way that is *not* antagonistic to the privileging of either the individual bourgeois Self that stands at the heart of liberalism and provides the analytical power for liberal political economy or the ‘classed’ subject – the party or the proletariat as revolutionary vanguard – that motivated the profound changes accompanying the birth of socialism. If there is one notion that distinguishes poststructuralism it is the notion of difference, which various thinkers use, develop and apply in different ways. The notion of difference comes from Nietzsche, from Saussure, and from Heidegger. For Derrida, *différance* is seen as plotting the linguistic limits of the subject. These notions of difference, pointing to an anti-essentialism, have been subsequently developed in relation to both gender and ethnicity studies (e.g. Young, 1991; West, 1992).

Standing in line with Nietzsche and Heidegger, Derrida agrees that the most important philosophical task is to break free from the ‘logocentrism’ of Western philosophy – the self-presence, immediacy and univocity – that clouds our view and manifests its nihilistic impulses in Western culture. And yet, for Derrida, ‘breaking free’ does not mean overcoming metaphysics. Deconstruction substitutes a critical practice focused upon texts for the ineffable

or the inexpressible. It does so, not by trying to escape the metaphysical character of language, but by exposing and undermining it. In an interview with Richard Beardsworth, Derrida talks in Nietzschean terms of '*democracy to come*'. As Beardsworth observes, the promise of democracy is not the same as either the *fact* of democracy or the regulative *idea* (in the Kantian sense) of democracy. On Derrida's account of *différance* we might expect deconstruction to challenge, perhaps, heavily centralist and 'structured' representationalist models of democracy and to favour a greater recognition of difference and the Other; possibly even, in conjunction with these emphases, an emphasis on the promotion of local autonomy and greater global world democracy.

Elsewhere and most recently, Derrida (2001, 2005) explores the tasks of the new humanities in historically unpicking the powerful judicial performatives that have regulated the modern history and concept of man, and, in particular, the genealogy of the 'rights of man' (and women) and the emergence of the concept 'crimes against humanity' since the Second World War (Derrida, 2001). He argues that the new humanities would not only treat the history of man and its impact upon the geopolitical field of international law, but also the history of democracy and of sovereignty, bringing into scrutiny an examination of the limits of the nation state, its supposed sovereignty and the way in which this family of concepts is used to regulate relations between men and women, and among different groups (see Peters, 2001a, b, 2004; Trifonas & Peters, 2004).

One of the most promising approaches to understanding the ethical issues at stake in current notions and practices of cultural exchange that inform globalization, cosmopolitanism, immigration, internationalization, and study abroad is that provided by Derrida's Paris seminar on the theme of hospitality at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales where he develops a set of related concepts tying hospitality to "friendship," "forgiveness," and "the gift." His seminar, now a kind of pedagogical institution in itself, also maps the development of his thought in a series of related texts. At the same time, the seminar on hospitality provides a context for raising a range of related questions concerning national and ethnic identity, citizenship, and immigration, all in close proximity to the ethics and politics of Other.

Derrida's network of concepts produces a novel ethical space in which to revisit the Kantian liberal notion of cosmopolitanism within the context of globalization and to raise fresh questions about "our" openness to the Other—also about segregation, separation, and exclusion as social and policy instruments of "othering."⁹ Derrida's late philosophy of hospitality, although not easy to read or understand, promises an approach suited to understanding the discourse of the Other and many of the underlying ethical issues that trouble existing practices and justifications of cosmopolitanism, globalization, internationalization, world citizenship, and immigration.

⁹ I use the term "our" openness here to mean the West and in particular the European (and American) encounters as colonizers of the "new world" with first nations peoples and with the colonized. I realize this is a very broad approach but it does have the advantage of at least registering the ethnocentrism of my "our."

Influenced by Levinas and the priority he accords to ethics and to an absolute form of hospitality that exists prior to politics, Derrida forges an ethics as responsibility to the Other based on a series of possible and impossible aporias—hospitality, the gift, forgiveness, mourning—that in themselves transcend and avoid the common assumption in liberal accounts “that responsibility is to be associated with behavior that accords with general principles capable of justification in the public realm” (Reynolds, 2006). In “Hostipitality,” Derrida (2000) investigates a reading of Kant’s cosmopolitanism given in the third article of *Perpetual Peace* that stipulates “Cosmopolitan Right shall be limited to Conditions of Universal Hospitality.” Yet this liberal cosmopolitan right will not suffice. In order to truly resolve all conflict and otherness, I have to welcome the Other unconditionally, that is, without prior knowledge of the Other or without a name, indeed, without documents such as a passport. This unconditionality implies a total *openness*—of house, of being, of culture—to the Other, an ethical relation that is transgressive in its overcoming of conditions either religious as in the Judeo-Christian understanding of hospitality, or political as in Kant’s reference to citizenship and the state.

Iris Marion Young, building on post-structuralist resources, was among the first in the period of the early 1990s to critique the standard liberal reduction of social justice to a Rawlsian model of distributive justice with its demand for unitary moral subjectivity. Young critiques the assumption of a homogenous public (modeled on white European norms of reason) as one that signally fails to account for the culturally differentiated and plural network of contemporary urban life. Indeed, her vision of the good society is one that starts from the recognition of a culturally differentiated and group-based politics, and she strongly elaborates an emancipatory postmodern theory of democracy. Liberal theorists predicted that with the rise of modernized democratic states the sources of ethnic and national identity as a basis for political action would diminish, but seemingly the contemporary scene is experiencing a revitalization of ethnonationalism, often violent and genocidal. Often this form of identity politics, which accepts ethnic group self-identification as the most appropriate vehicle for social action, ends up by legitimising the very conditions of inequality that gave rise to them in the first place (Wilmsen & McAllister, 1996). In the imperial past many societies were divided into autonomous ethnic elements and rules paid no attention to identity so long as taxes were paid. With modernity, liberal nation states demanded national integration based on a ‘one-nation, one-language’ model that involved the suppression of difference and forced assimilation and integration. More recently, with the passage of modernity, the process of decolonization and the renaissance of indigenous cultures, ethnic equality has been forced on the statute books and there has been a grudging acceptance of cultural differences and a social experimentation with forms of multiculturalism and biculturalism.

The negative spin on postmodernity emphasizes a kind of cultural pessimism, fragmentation and dissolution, given different expression by counter-Enlightenment thinkers, and different versions of dystopia, emphasizing the ravages of industrialism on the environment and, by contrast, a nostalgia for the rural community. It recalls the dislocation and fragmentation of traditional societies, indigenous cultures and the extended family. It describes the consequences of instrumental rationality, which has great efficacy but no power of self-

criticism. And it draws our historical attention to the movements of great colonizing forces associated with forms of imperialism and the endless commoditization of values.

Postmodernity considered as a future-oriented project, by contrast, describes the possibility for a reconstitution of utopian thought, involving, on one influential account, a post-scarcity order, multilayered democratic participation, world demilitarization and a humanization of technology. (Giddens, 1990: 164).

This more positive, though not always celebratory, project also envisages the possibility of a new global order based upon a universally accepted human rights culture and the institution of the global market. Yet this project also fractures around a triumphal neo-liberal free-trade, free-finance global version embraced by the likes of Francis Fukuyama, who thinks we have reached the 'end of history' and models globalization on the self-regulating individual, and an internationalist third way version (Fukuyama, 1992). Both dystopian and utopian versions tend to highlight the Eurocentrism at the heart of conceptions of modernity that, if left unexamined, can distort conceptualizations of cultural postmodernity. Enrique Dussel (1998), adopting this line of thinking, suggests that there are two opposing paradigms which characterize modernity, the Eurocentric and the planetary. The first, he suggests, describes modernity as *exclusively* European, developing in the Middle Ages and, over time, spreading to the rest of the world; the second, as he argues, 'conceptualises modernity as the culture of the *center* of the "world-system", of the first world-system, through the incorporation of Amerindia, and as a result of the *management* of this "centrality"'. As Dussel goes on to explain: 'In other words, European modernity is not an *independent*, autopoietic, self-referential system, but instead is *part* of a world-system: in fact, its center' (Dussel, 1998, p. 4).

To illustrate the first formulation – the Eurocentric paradigm of modernity – Dussel refers to Weber's classic formulation of modernity, quoting from the introduction to *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* that extraordinary passage pointing to the West's cultural specificity: to what combination of circumstances should the fact be attributed that in Western civilization, and in Western civilization only, cultural phenomena have appeared which (as we like to think) lie in a line of development having universal significance and value. (Cited in Dussel, 1998, p. 3) This line of thinking suggests Europe had the unique cultural ingredients that combined in a single comprehensive unified ethos, designated by Weber as 'rationalization', to allow it to supersede all other cultures. The thought is given its ultimate philosophical expression, as Dussel notes, in Hegel's *The Philosophy of History*, where he suggests that the spirit of the New World is the German spirit, which aims to realize absolute truth as unlimited self-determination.

Rorty and the Cultural Politics of Conversation

In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979, 5), Richard Rorty suggests that philosophy must become 'therapeutic rather than constructive, edifying rather than systematic' and adopts a conversational model based on Oakeshott's liberal learning and Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics as a means, both, to release us from the cognitive paradigm of philosophy-as-epistemology, and its foundational, analytical and representational impediments that have held us captive. He embraces a non representationalist notion of dialogue to encourage closer links

between philosophy and the rest of culture. Ultimately, he adopts a view of philosophy as cultural politics as a form of intervention.

Philosophy as cultural politics is designed to change our sense of who we are and what matters to us by changing the terms of vocabulary of moral and political discourse. Rorty (1979) proposes a hybrid notion of conversation based on a combination of Oakeshott and Gadamer as a means of 'saving' philosophy from obscurity and irrelevance in a postphilosophical culture. There is no mistaking his purpose when he writes in the closing sentence of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, 'the only point on which I would insist is that philosophers' moral concern should be with continuing the conversation of the West'.

For Rorty, there is no final vocabulary and therefore no foolproof way of capturing the meaning of existence besides continuing the conversation. Embracing a radical historical contingency, Rorty advises us that there are no necessary truths or essences to be discovered or analyzed. There is only conversation that rests on our preparedness to listen and to learn from others, and in this conversation, so long as we can manage to keep it going, we may come to understand what it means to be a citizen of the *polis* and how the relationship between the citizen and *polis* might be enhanced through education. 'Conversation', in the deft hands of Rorty, is neither truth-oriented nor goal-directed but rather a moral practice of 'civility' based on mutual respect and recognition. In this he follows Oakeshott and Gadamer who develop conversation in order to resist what Fred Dallmayr (2001, 331) has called the "'single character" imposed on speech' in the West that 'has tended to be that of Rorty and the philosophy of dialogue rational argumentative discourse, a discourse closely patterned on the model of scientific inquiry' . . . [a] 'model [that] has been seconded and closely accompanied by the voice of practical utility, that is, by a mode of instrumental reasoning geared toward practical efficiency and success'.

Rorty supplements his conception of 'philosophy as conversation' by examining it from the viewpoint of 'cultural politics', a concept Rorty invokes in the last volume of his philosophical papers. In Rorty's hands 'cultural politics', like conversation, is left vague and undefined . This is not to say that it doesn't have any advantages. Embracing Brandom's (1983, 389–390) doctrine of the priority of the social where 'all matters of authority or privilege, in particular epistemic authority, are matters of social practice, and not objective matters of fact' Rorty (2007, 5) argues that 'cultural politics should replace ontology'.

Rorty's model of conversation also differs from both the deliberative conversational model of Habermas aimed at a rational consensus through the redemption of validity claims² and the classical models, not only of Socrates (even though Rorty often invokes Socrates) but also of Cicero and, later, the Renaissance humanists who employed deliberative oratory rather than reasoned conversation as best suited to political speech (Remer, 2008). As the 'last humanist', the one who has given up on metaphysics and entered the realm of postphilosophical culture, what role can conversation continue to play? To what extent is it a stable form or speech genre that is immune to vicissitudes of history and changes introduced by the new technologies of

communication? In a postphilosophical world, does conversation still hold its promise as the educational vehicle for civility and citizenship? Was it ever inclusive and in particular can it accommodate the other—feminists traditionally excluded by male talk, Afro-Americans who won the right to talk through their own struggle, and the cultural other located outside the charmed circle of civility that graces the ‘postmodern bourgeois liberalism’ of the rich Atlantic democracies?

Rorty’s ‘we liberals’ define the context of conversation outside of which we cannot go—we cannot engage with ‘fundamentalists’ on their own ground. We cannot alert them to the way the power of their own metanarratives ride on the back of dubious religious metaphors. All we can do is to make their beliefs look silly from the perspective of ours. I suspect the tradition is really much narrower than Rorty pretends—not just ‘we liberals’, that is the liberal tradition, perhaps even the Western philosophical tradition, but American liberalism (in the old pre-neoconservative sense before it became a ‘dirty’ word). So we can have a conversation with John Dewey, but it gets difficult to have genuine cross-cultural conversations—conversations with Muslims, Confucians, Hindus—indeed any religiously based tradition that must also make room for the variety of indigenous cultures.

As secularization is a driving force of the liberal tradition, ‘we-liberals’ have difficulty holding conversation with Christians and Jews also. The circle gets even more narrow. We are good, it seems, at talking to ourselves or simply continuing the conversation. How adequate is this as an educational vision? I simply raise the question at this juncture. It seems a little creaky in the age of the global citizen, globalization, and increasingly linguistic dominance of Mandarin and Hindi. The ‘we-liberals’ response just seems a little limited and Rorty is making more than the Wittgensteinian point that the limits of our language are the limits of our world. This seems to echo Rorty’s recognition of ‘postmodern bourgeois liberalism’ and also his stated ethnocentrism as an anthropological fact about the limits of his conversational tradition and its resources for bridging or hybrid conversations.

The test case here is Rorty’s analysis of globalization and the possibility of widening the conversation outside the West—a topic he comes to rather late in his career (see Skof, 2008). In *Philosophy and the Hybridization of Culture*, Rorty (2008) raises some doubts about philosophical dialogue and its capacity to improve relations between cultures suggesting that ‘the notion of “cultural difference” may soon be obsolete’ (p. 41) and that in a hundred years from now, it may have outlived its usefulness (p. 42) because in the global cosmopolitan culture of liberalism, diversity will be more a matter of differentiating individuals than cultures. When we contemplate the comparative philosophical question of whether Asian and Western thinkers are addressing the same issues, he suggests that ‘we would do better to think of philosophy as a genre of cultural politics than as the search for wisdom’ (p. 42). Rather than describing world history as a process of Europeanization or Asianization, he claims ‘it would be better to say that both West and East are in the process of creating a hybrid culture, one that will transcend and replace all of its predecessors’. Rorty predicts and hopes for a hybrid global culture brought on by ‘superior information technologies’ and he argues:

We should stop thinking of globalization as producing cultural impoverishment and sterility. There is no reason to anticipate a decrease in human curiosity or creativity as a result of the ubiquity and pace of technological change. The global culture that will be produced . . . may allow more room for individual diversity than is presently provided by the cultures of Western and Asian countries (p. 43).

I must confess, I like Rorty's characterization of philosophy as cultural politics (rather than the search for wisdom), but he does not take it seriously enough. Or better still, we might say that he restyles philosophy as cultural politics at a time when cultural politics has established itself in other disciplines as one of its natural successors or branch of cultural studies, and Rorty, well aware of this literature, seemingly ignores it. What is troubling about Rorty's characterization of globalization is his own Orientalism and his propensity to talk of Asia and Asianization in the same breath as Europe and Europeanization. Is there really an entity we can sensibly refer to as 'Asia', and if there is something more to this conception than geography contiguity, does it hang together in the same way as 'Europe'? Surely a philosopher as astute as Rorty must be open to the revision of these terms on historical and geopolitical grounds. The use of these terms requires detailed understanding of political economy of the differences among the countries and cultures comprising 'Asia' and 'Europe'. Conversation is not a free floating ahistorical and acultural vehicle for talk or civility, it is an evolving institution grounded in time and place, open to change with no guarantees for its future viability. Rorty's Orientalism seems, to me, a massive conversational impediment and obstacle to any form of genuine intercultural fora.

Conclusion

Intercultural philosophy has effectively shifted the discourse away from notions of culture which is difficult to define to notions of hybridization, institution of cultural exchange and a critique of liberal cosmopolitanism. This new conception not only requires an inherent openness but also a new emphasis on the cultural "other". Intercultural philosophy assumes in general that exposure to and engagement with a different cultures will encourage a greater understanding of the world's people in all their ethnic and cultural diversity and thereby also provide the basis for intercultural understanding and the appropriate conditions for dialogue. With this increased understanding will come also the decline in all forms of xenophobia, racism, cultural stereotyping. In other words, intercultural philosophy is seen as a means by which to promote better cultural relations and understandings as the basis for world civilization.

Yet intercultural philosophy is also a political ideology that places a priori all cultures on the same level of intrinsic value and makes an assumption about the value of cultural diversity that should be protected and maintained. In its institutional forms adopted by the UN, UNESCO and the European Union it aims to develop a common civic culture based on the values of freedom and liberty, and of human rights derived from the European Enlightenment as the basis for Western civilization. Further, as ideology interculturalism is wedded to a concept of emerging democracy which is based upon the respect for universal human rights. In this respect some

have argued that interculturalization is a form of Westernization promoting a Western-oriented intercultural fusion.

Postmodernism is an exploration of the margins, the borders and limits of the culture of modernity. It is, above all, a central questioning of all forms of foundationalism, representationalism and the absolutist and ahistorical categories and values, sustained and propagated through the symbolic unifying power of the grand narratives, by which 'man', 'reason', 'history' and 'culture' were first projected in universalist European terms. Yet postmodernism is more than an internal deconstruction of modernism and its interpretation of classical reason. Not only does it challenge the overly rationalist and elitist pretensions of modernism and modernity by exposing the gender, ethnic, class and sexual biases written into its founding, legitimating 'myths' or metanarratives, but it also seeks an entirely new problematic for understanding the social construction and self-constitution of individuals as social and cultural subjects.

In Wittgenstein's notion of culture we have a concept that challenges modern constitutionalism by criticizing the underlying concept of a single unified culture (or nation) as internally uniform and geographically separate. Wittgenstein's aspectual rather than essential notion emphasizes a view of cultures "as overlapping, interactive and internally differentiated" (Tully, 1995, p. 9). Cultures overlap geographically; they are mutually defined through complex historical patterns of historical interaction, and they are continuously transformed in interaction with other cultures.

Wittgenstein provides us with a pragmatically based concept of culture (and nation), free from forms of ethnic solidarity as a basis for governance and social action, and no longer controlled by unreasonable political demands for cultural and national homogeneity. When we talk about the Other to whom or to what are we really referring? How is Otherness presented? To what extent does Western-styled education whitewash, exoticise, naturalise or sexualise the Other? What is the basis of differences between self and other? Are all examples of coming to terms with and theorizing the Other even those accounts that harbor political intentions of emancipation and empowerment, condemned to repeat the mistakes of cultural imperialism? Are there ways by which the binary opposition of Self and Other – especially as they have been historically invested in colonial experiences– can be overcome or deconstructed or redrawn so as to avoid the deep conceptual differences and prejudgements between 'us' and 'them', between the 'civilized' and the 'primitive', between those inside the gates and those outside the gates? With neoliberal globalization we must be careful that contemporary form of westernization that does not reconstitutes difference in the commodity form. Intercultural philosophy is the attempt long overdue to begin the process of responding to these questions.

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