

INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION IN THE COSMOPOLIS

SOME CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON COSMOPOLITANISM

An essay by Anil K. Jain

»Distrust those cosmopolitans who search out remote duties in their books and neglect those that lie nearest. Such philosophers will love the Tartars to avoid loving their neighbour.«

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Émile: Book I)

Cosmopolitanism is often associated with a general open-mindedness, a sense of universal equality and unity and the »global« awareness of the world as a whole. In fact, it cannot be denied that we live in a global world. There are (still) nation-states and borders, there is the division between periphery and centre, there are local bonds, but there is the vision and the reality of the globe: the shape of our world. Today, networks of finance and power, communication and transportation penetrate the whole planet. And even those who (for good reasons) deny the benefits of globalisation cannot ignore the dimension of truly global threats: global warming, global diseases, global war ... The consciousness of the (imminent) global catastrophe could thus provide a sense of unity: in the age of globalisation humanity finally became a community of fate.

It does not appear to happen though: there is no sign of global solidarity and there is sufficient reason to lament about a tremendous lack of experience of community in the global village – except, maybe, when it comes to the celebration of the communion of consumption. Hence, the cosmopolitan »nowhere man« is a rare, more than ever endangered species, and the Cosmopolis, cosmopolitan (political) space, is an Utopia: nowhere land. Cosmopolitanism, however, is the ideology of the day, as it seems: the »global class« (Jain 2002 [1999]) excavated the concept of cosmopolitanism from the rumble of occidental philosophical body and put it at the forefront of globalist rhetoric. Here, what is claimed to be a general openness and concern for »the other« and other cultures is actually rather fuelled by the interest to exploit the potential surplus which difference represents in a globalised world (see also *ibid.*: 2004). Therefore, it is not by chance that the acclamation of difference is at the core of many current cosmopolitan concepts. To the contrary, this tendency reflects a common trend and is very much in accordance with the new (economic) world order: praise difference – as long as it is useful and exploitable – and hype hybridity – since identity could provide anchors of resistance against flexible capitalism (see *ibid.*: 2007). Accordingly, we are told to appreciate the otherness of the other (see Beck 2006 [2004]: ch. 2). But at the same time we are made to fight that other for the sake of humanity: war is peace in the cosmopolitan age (see *ibid.*: ch. 5).

In the light of these obvious contradictions, the question of difference appears to be indeed central to any cosmopolitan concept, but in the sense of a basic problem (see also Raulet 2005). Important questions need to be answered: Which forms of difference can be »tolerated« in

the Cosmopolis and how to deal with fundamental, oppositional differences? Further: How is it justified to make differences, i.e. how to distribute goods and rights? And, like any society, but with a much increased level of sensitivity, cosmopolitan world society would have to address the related question of inclusion and exclusion, because an exclusion from the Cosmopolis would, in fact, mean an exclusion from humanity.

In order to approach these questions, I will start with an exploration of the literal and latent meaning(s) of cosmopolitanism: delving into the term and mapping its metaphorical »cosmos«. This (re)search at the bottom of the term is important since imaginative inclusions and exclusions are crucial for possible practical translations, and a serious investigation of the metaphorical content and a history of the »terminological objects« may provide in addition new directions for both practical and theoretical orientation (see also Jain 2002).

1. THE COSMOS, THE POLIS AND THE GLOBE

In the term »cosmopolitanism«, the cosmos, the endless totality of space, and the polis, the concrete place of living, are combined within the same semantic space. According to ancient Greek thought, the cosmos embraces all matter and all being, and it is also a structured universe. In fact, the term »cosmos« originally means nothing else but »order«. It is, however, not so much an order built on violence and – suppressive – power (like it is usually the case with social orders), but an order based on harmony: everything fits together and is well arranged. There was even the belief of the Pythagoreans that this cosmic harmony is expressed in an eternal musical harmony: the celestial sound of the cosmos, not perceivable by our limited senses, but indeed present and substantial: the world is sound. In most cases – like with the Pythagoreans, too – the assumption of cosmic harmony can be traced to the imagination of a divine creator. In these »theological« cosmologies, god is the origin(ator) of the cosmos, and the perfect cosmic harmony is a reflection of the omniscience of a higher power. (See in an overview e.g. Wright 1995)

In the centre of the harmonic cosmic system, there was – depending on the respective model – either the earth: our planet, or, fire: the sun. The sun and its light is mostly associated with knowledge and truth (and, again, god). Plato's allegory of the cave in his »*Republic*« (book 7) is a fine example of this metaphoric use. Thus, it is no wonder that heliocentric cosmologies are not an invention of modern times, but were already present in antiquity. Even before the Pythagoreans (based on their general hierarchy of the four elements) and, later on, Aristarchus of Samos (based on astronomical observation) put the element fire, respectively, the sun in the centre of the universe, Indian texts of the Vedic era show traces of a heliocentric conception (see Verma 1996: ch. 2). And the astronomer Aryabhata, who lived in the 5th century, explained the movements of the stars by a rotation of the earth (see Clark 1930), so that one has to list him as well as one of the antique predecessors of the creators of the modern heliocentric world view: Copernicus and Galileo.

The existence of heliocentric cosmologies, however, did not mean that they were dominant. In most cultures, the earth was held to be the centre of the universe and Aristotle, who was the most influential thinker not only of his age but also of the times to come, explicitly criticised the Pythagorean cosmology and favoured a more traditional geocentric model where the earth was surrounded by a hemisphere of ether and 55 spheres of planets and stars (see *Metaphysics*: XII-8). During the middle ages, for European astronomers, it was even dangerous to challenge the conventional geocentric view, while Islamic astronomers were encouraged to observe the sky and were not forced to ignore that which was obvious to the accurate observer. It took a long time until the whole humanity was ready to accept that its home planet is not the centre of the universe.

The heliocentric era was, however, short. Although today's astronomy would definitely prefer a heliocentric over a geocentric model, with current cosmologies the »enlightenment« of heliocentrism is finished: the new cosmological standard model claims that the centre is complete emptiness, and that the »nature« of the universe is rather chaos than order and harmony. It is not stable, but dynamic, and neither in respect of time nor of space it is eternal: it is ever expanding, but it may collapse; there is a beginning and its end has been calculated. But not even the end is sure, and, maybe, there are many universes. Uncertainty is everywhere. Uncertainty seems to be the nature of the (post-)modern universe. (See e.g. Coles 2006 and the contributions in Leslie 1998)

Yet, trying to escape the field of uncertainty, let us now move to the second, more concrete part in the term »cosmopolitanism« – the polis: The ancient Greek city state resembles in some respects the antique imaginations of the cosmos. It is, as it is portrayed, also an ordered space, where everybody has a certain place, and, ideally, it is a political community which is characterised by a common ethos and a spirit of unity and harmony. But while the cosmos is eternal, infinite and filled with only few objects (the stars and the planets), the polis is a crowded and distinct place. It covers a clearly defined and usually rather small area inhabited by a rather large number of (different) people(s) (see Morgan/Coulton 1996).

This crowded antique polis can be held as the birthplace of cosmopolitanism (as a term). Cosmopolitanism was, however, not a mainstream ideology then, but a world-view of »outsiders« like the cynic Diogenes: It is said that when he was asked where he belonged to, he replied that he was a »kosmopolitês« – a citizen of the world, not bound to a specific place. Yet, the regular citizen would proudly have committed to his place of origin, since the citizenship was not only a source of patriotic pride, but meant to be right of political participation. Accordingly, the Greek polis, namely Athens, is generally said to also be the birthplace of democracy (see e.g. Kagan 1991). And the polis agora, the (market-)place where not only people gathered, but where political decisions were taken, was indeed the public sphere of free and equal men – that is: *not* women, *not* children, *not* foreigners and *not* slaves.

Equality in the polis was strictly limited. As Aristotle outlined in the »*Nicomachean Ethics*«: »whenever equals receive unequal shares, or unequals equal shares, in a distribution, that is the source of quarrels and accusations.« The same only applies for equals. Along the lines of this argument, he

remarks in his »*Politics*« (III-12): »[...] the noble, or free-born, or rich, may with good reason claim office; for holders of offices must be freemen and taxpayers: a state can be no more composed entirely of poor men than entirely of slaves.« »Democracy« in the polis was hence built on a fundament of inequality: the patriarchal rule of men over women, the paternal rule of the father over his children – and the rule of the master over the slaves. Slavery was, in fact, an important factor in the polis economy. Usually, the slaves were not of Greek origin. And not being Greek meant to be inferior, meant to be »Barbarian«, that is: not be able speak and thus to think. Accordingly, the slave in the polis somehow was in a middle position between the free men and domesticated animals (see also Rosivach 1999). In regard of these facts, the Greek polis as a democratic urban centre appears to be a mere fiction of political philosophers, and the »glorious« era of the classical polis did, anyway, not last long: the rise of the Alexandrian empire meant the end of the free polis states.

Jumping further in time: the megapolises of today are of a quite different kind than the ancient Greek polises. It is a similar case as with the cosmos: order is destroyed. (And, again, Athens could well serve as an example for modern urban disorder.) The growth factor prohibits a planned city development. Their mere size makes them incalculable. The megapolises are chaotic urban spaces, in which different life-worlds and (sub-)cultures clash against each other, mix and/or coexist. A common ethos is not even envisioned, and public »agoral« space becomes more and more limited: there are ghetto and no-go areas, and there are more and more privatised spaces and gated communities. Here, a globalised elite is served by the localised »proletariat«. At least in this respect of profound inequality modern megapolises, like Tokyo, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Mumbai or Los Angeles, resemble the Greek polis.

These »global cities« (Sassen 1991) are the urban centres, the spatial nodes of the global network. Yet, not only its nodal points, but the entire globe is the spatial field of the cosmopolitan Cosmopolis. Thus, the term »globe« also needs to be focussed in order to map the (semantic) space of cosmopolitanism. The word globe signifies both: the planet earth itself and a (three-dimensional) model of the earth. But there are also celestial globes. Hence, the globe as a model does not seem to be limited to the earth, but has a broader field of (spatiographic) application. However, it is the only »map« of the earth which does not introduce significant distortion. The reduction from three- to two-dimensional space cannot be done without loss and deformation. Two-dimensional maps thus always reflect a specific view or angle. The globe seems therefore the perfect solution for a non-distortive earth-mapping, since it is just a shrunk copy, keeping (by and large) the original shape and proportions.

The first globe model of the earth of which we know (but which is lost) dates back to the second century (BCE). Crates of Mallus, a Greek scholar, is said to have created it. Still existing is the so-called »Farnese Atlas«, a Roman copy of a Hellenistic sculpture of Atlas carrying the globe-shaped sky on his shoulders. The »global« tradition of the Roman empire, however, perished with its political decline, and during the Middle Ages the manufacturing of globes was a privilege of the Muslim World. The oldest preserved globe of the Renaissance era, which reconnected Europe to its lost antique traditions of scientific knowledge, was constructed by the German

geographer Martin Behaim in the year 1492 – not knowing of the »discovery« of the Americas by Christopher Columbus in the same year. But, of course, also in other respects it was not quite an accurate geographical earth model – for the lack of geographical knowledge and for reasons of self-centrism. (See in an overview Muris/Saarmann 1961)

Anyway, the first real impression of the real globe, the planet earth, was only possible through space flight. It is often claimed that it was the most important side-effect of 20th century space programmes to enable humanity through the images of the earth taken from space to get a new sense of the beauty and the unity of the whole planet (see e.g. Cosgrove 2001). Viewed from outside and from distance, the (spatial and political) divisions dissolve and a vision of the totality of the object emerges. Did that mean planting the seed for the era of cosmopolitanism?

2. CRITICAL RE-TRANSFER AND RE-CONNECTION TO COSMOPOLITAN DISCOURSE

In order to answer that question – in a more general sense, the question: what stops society in the age of globalisation to become cosmopolitan? – it is necessary to discuss what the exploration of the metaphoric and historic field of the cosmos, the polis and the globe have possibly revealed about the cosmopolitan visions of the Cosmopolis (and its contradictions). Let us start the re-transfer from ground: the globe. The globe is, as we learnt, the spatial field of the Cosmopolis. But the nature of the globe is two-fold: the term signifies a real object, our planet, and a model of this planet. And we can argue that the same applies for cosmopolitanism: it is – for a specific group of people, the globalised elite, and as a powerful »ideological« concept – a reality. But it is also a model: a vision for emancipatory action and the overcoming of social divisions. We cannot be sure in which respect it is more powerful, as a reality and ideology or as a visionary force of the transformation of reality.

There is, however, an important aspect implied in the representation and perception of the globe which points us to a basic problem of cosmopolitanism: cosmopolitanism has to be grounded, it has to build a true Cosmopolis, especially as soon as it seeks to overcome the state of being a mere ideology for the globalised elite. But the whole, which the Cosmopolis represents (as the globe does), can only be seen from above, from distance. Accordingly, Amanda Anderson (2001) points clearly to the co-evolution of cosmopolitan attitudes and the cultivation of detachment. Only: how is it possible to touch the ground from distance? How to be both engaged in cosmopolitics and to be grounded?

The problem of perspective and its related exclusions becomes even more pronounced when considering the peculiarity of the globe: The great advantage of the globe model, a non-distortive mapping, gets confuted by the fact that, actually, any globe model prohibits seeing the whole object at a time. While a »flat« mapping cannot avoid spherical projection (and thus necessarily introduces distortion), it can very well supply a full image. In the case of the globe, in order to get the full image of the mapped object, the globe needs to rotate or one has to move around the globe. Thus, the globe may very well create a sense of the unity of the object, but never

ever, it is possible to have the full picture at once. The perspective of the (human) beholder introduces a fundamental division of the globe into the part which can be perceived and accessed, and the part which is invisible. If the globe is not rotating itself, movement is required in order to perceive and study the »whole« object. What does this mean for the global Cosmopolis? Were it possible that it is necessary to be in permanent movement in order to get a full sense of the Cosmopolis? Does the analysis of the restrictions of the globe model point us to the fact that cosmopolitanism only works when the inhabitants of the Cosmopolis take an active part in keeping it a unity? Does it tell us that there will always be a »dark side« of the Cosmopolis, an antithesis, which is not perceivable, not present and only understandable if we leave our point of view?

Howsoever, the Cosmopolis is a polis. As we learnt from the study of the Greek polis, the polis is, ideally, characterised by a common ethos. That poses the question which common ethos the inhabitants of the Cosmopolis would like to share and how to deal with conflicts, since any political community – if not kept together by mere violence – needs a »civic« sense of belonging together and shared common values. Kantian hospitality is not a sufficient base. The foreigner thus always stays a stranger. A true Cosmopolis, like any political community, requires a sense of positive unity. This does not mean that dissent is per se to be held negative. To the contrary, a basic sense of unity of a political community exactly enables it to deal with difference: the bonds are strong enough to sustain integrity even in the state of dissent – difference does not need to be eliminated.

The Cosmopolis is, however, in a very special position in this regard. It has to create a very strong sense of unity from itself, whereas, in actual politics, closure is often achieved by excluding others. For Carl Schmitt (1996 [1928]), a proto-fascist German thinker, the distinction between friend and enemy is even at the core of the political. But when the political community spans over the whole globe, as it is the case with the Cosmopolis, there is no outside. The enemy, if it exists, has to be inside. Hence, the Cosmopolis is continuously endangered that friends become enemies, and that unity thus breaks apart – which is its death: per definition, the Cosmopolis is finished if even one citizen is excluded or formulates that he/she wishes to depart. This, again, could easily provoke violent efforts to keep cosmopolitical unity or to eliminate the (disturbing) other (see also Dabag 2000). Where exclusion is impossible in order to keep unity, inclusion tends to take the form of confinement or extermination. Even those advocates of cosmopolitanism who are aware of the reality of difference and demand a respect for the other put clear that cosmopolitanism does not tolerate intolerance, but, at some point, there is an obligation of intervention (see e.g. Appiah 2006: ch. 9). However, what does that mean? The problem of conflicting orders stays unsolved and the necessity of intervention is a matter of interpretation. Whoever is not willing to accept cosmopolitical pluralism is not accepted and will be fought: the cosmopolitans against the counter-cosmopolitans. The Cosmopolis is therefore always endangered to become a monster that eats its children.

But, anyway, isn't unity always illusory? The case of the Greek polis showed that the unity of the polis was an ideology, and that the true condition of social unity – equality – was very

limited. The social and economic system was built on patriarchal rule and slavery. The solution to sustain the fiction of unity and equality was to draw a sharp line between those who were considered as capable of being full citizens (the native and wealthy males) and the rest. The polis was thus a civil society of a special kind: everybody who was not a bourgeois was not part of the political community – the sphere of equality. And, looking at »who speaks« in the discourse of cosmopolitanism, one is provoked to conclude: also the Cosmopolis seems to be a mere bourgeois vision that (structurally) serves the interests of the global elite. The reality of the Cosmopolis is a simultaneity of the world society of the global class and the local societies of the excluded service and working classes.

Extending the re-vision to the modern megapolises and their problems, it does not even seem to be a good idea to create a Cosmopolis which embraces everybody and really covers the whole globe. It could not only be felt as an (unwanted) absorption, but the mere size of such a political and social conglomeration makes it, for sure, difficult to manage it and to keep order (see e.g. the contributions in Aguilar/Escamilla 1999). But is order necessarily the structural principle of the Cosmopolis? The »cosmic« part in the Cosmopolis seems to point there. The cosmos of antiquity was order. Is thus the Cosmopolis a signifier of the new world order? But what about those differences which cannot be integrated into the cosmopolitical system, which, as a cosmos, has to cover the whole and – as a concept, not as a reality – cannot be limited?

In order to get potential answers to these questions we should have a look at the changed current view of the cosmos: order became chaos, instead of a master plan there is self-organisation, and instead of the blinding light of eternal truth, there is forgiving darkness. Accordingly, we, maybe, should provide the Cosmopolis an experimental space so that it can organise and shape itself. If we want to create this space (as an open space which gives room to other possibilities), it is probably not sufficient to plea for a cosmopolitan constitution or to call for a cosmopolitan federalism (as in the line of cosmopolitan argument from Kant 1795 [1795] to Benhabib 2004).

Constitutionalism generally believes that (constitutional) law has to be the fundament of a political community in order to secure (human) rights and political participation. However, if we do not believe in the law of nature or in divine law, law is, in any case, the result of a political process, it can never be its condition. Political rights must be won in battles and they are kept by power, with the modern nation state being the actual institutional manifestation of this kind of political power. Federal cosmopolitanism, as a concept, is thus not leading to more than a mere confirmation of existing power and the extension of the society of nation states. It does not create a cosmopolitical word-society in which the voice of the individual world-citizen can be articulated and represented. This is why other visionaries of cosmopolitanism, like Held (1995) or Habermas (1995 [1998]), demand a common structure of political action on a global level which assures political participation of individuals and non-governmental political formations.

Such a structure is currently not given, it must be created – rivalling state power. But how to assure that the Cosmopolis, if it ever can be built, does not evolve as or becomes an »empire«, a global imperialist structure of the old kind, based on suppressive power (like the Roman

or the British empire), or, of the new kind, as »a decentred and deterritorialising apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm with its open, expanding frontiers« (Hardt/Negri 2000: p. xii)? There does not seem to be an effective antidote against this danger. The dialectics of cosmopolitanism is not sublatale: the Cosmopolis is not real as long as it excludes. And indeed, manifold exclusions not only seem to be a practical reality in the current global order, but cosmopolitanism can be understood as an ideology that hides global inequalities and thus serves the interests of the global elites. On the other hand, complete inclusion is the greatest danger of the Cosmopolis – since that would mean the exclusion of alternatives to the cosmopolitical order. Thus, rather than creating a new order, as it was the »cosmopolitical« project of science in the age of Enlightenment (see Toulmin 1990), the political Cosmopolis seems desirable only as a global disorder, a porous network built on self-organization, in which the vision of wholeness is substituted by the reality of a holeness. If we do not seek to built the Cosmopolis, maybe, it will happen to exist one day – or not. We should not lament about its vagueness. A contradiction in itself, the cosmopolitan Cosmopolis is a true Utopia: a non-place, which is of a greater value as an alternative vision than as a reality.

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