

Towards a New Cosmopolitanism

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When Candido Mendes asked me what I would think about a new cosmopolitanism, I decided to begin my research googling both this word and the expression that seems to me to have taken its place in our present time, I mean, “global citizenship.” If we add cosmopolitanism to its seldom quoted sister cosmopolitism we have 1,150,000 results (in English), while global citizenship, as a phrase, between inverted commas, presents 1,290,000 results.¹ This is quite amazing, since cosmopolitanism is a centuries-old word, while global citizenship is quite young. In order to avoid possible mistakes that could arise from keeping myself to English, the modern lingua franca but not

¹ All data from the Web, as well all URLs mentioned here, were retrieved on October 25, 2011.

the most spoken language in the world, I did the same research in French (611,000 for *cosmopolitisme*, and only 174,500 for *citoyenneté globale* or *mondiale*²), in Spanish (243,000 against 282,000), and Portuguese (98,700 against 84,500). It is thus difficult to extract a common pattern, since in English and Spanish global citizenship wins, while in French and Portuguese we have the contrary trend. But what gives us food for thought is to notice that, even if cosmopolitanism is a much older word and should be more known to most than global citizenship, the new phrase performs very well in comparison to the other one.

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I went then to Ngram. It is another Google free software. It is more sophisticated than a simple Google research, since it sorts the words according to the date when they were employed. It then allows us to know *when* a word has been more employed than another, and when they switched roles, so to speak. A good synthesis of how it performs can be found at <http://books.google.com/ngrams/info>.³ Google obviously affords more importance to the last few years, since it re-

2 The phenomenon called globalization (or globalisation in American English) is sometimes translated in French as *globalisation*, but more often as *mondialisation*. Left-wingers from other Romance language countries, including Brazil, will prefer the French version to the English one, but they are no more than a small minority, contrarily to what happens in France.

3 A more complete explanation is found in Jean-Baptiste Michel, Yuan Kui Shen, Aviva Presser Aiden, Adrian Veres, Matthew K. Gray, William Brockman, The Google Books Team, Joseph P. Pickett, Dale Hoi-berg, Dan Clancy, Peter Norvig, Jon Orwant, Steven Pinker, Martin A. Nowak, and Erez Lieberman Aiden, "Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books," *Science* (published online ahead of print: 12-16-2010).

searches their appearance at web sites, which are a quite young development, rising in number exponentially year after year. Google will do its researches employing a database numerically superior to Ngram, but it will emphasise the last years, and will always give more room to a specific year than to the previous one. Ngram then affords us a more balanced result. It will show us, for instance, that “communism” had its peak in the mid-1960s, and then it dropped to its more modest levels of the immediate post-II World War. Also, even if Ngram gives much importance to texts written in English, it deals with some ten different corpuses, in seven distinct languages, so its results can be considered quite accurate. But, anyway, if we compare the words we have been researching, we will find results that differ dramatically from the Google ones. Cosmopolitanism is almost inexistent in English. Cosmopolitanism, however, makes a solid stable peak from the mid-1920s to 1970, when it drops, losing some 30% of the occurrences it had during its golden years—but, from the mid-1980s, it recovers itself and by 2000 will attain new records. On the other side, global citizenship is almost non existent until the 1990s, being at a par with cosmopolitanism—but then it begins to appear more and more, until in 2000 it will appear some ten times more than it did in 1990, which is a good omen for the word; but still it will be very far from cosmopolitanism, that in the same year of 2000 appeared in Ngram databases some eight to ten times *more* than global citizenship. Going further, in the years between 2000 and 2008 (the last available for the purposes of researching), global citizenship remained completely stable, while cosmopolitanism rose a little more than 11%.

We should also then into serious account the important fact that cosmopolitanism appeared some seven to eight times *more* than global citizenship.

Since Ngram views books, while Google researches web sites, very likely global citizenship is gaining its constituency in the Web, while more sophisticated texts such as books keep to cosmopolitanism. This can explain why in English, Spanish, and Portuguese the frequency of both words is almost equivalent (but not in French, which delivers many more *cosmopolites* than *citoyens* both *globaux* and *mondiaux*) in the Web, while books largely prefer cosmopolitanism.

168 We will present a hypothesis. Of course we could say that as a concept global citizenship has developed since 2000, and Google results will reflect these recent years. It would be very likely. However, we may think that it remains a word more employed by activists and NGO agents than by people in general. It is true that cosmopolitanism has never been a very popular word—it is too long, it smells too much of Greek, two factors that may have played a part, albeit small, in preventing common people to employ it more often than they did—but it seems to be more known than global citizenship.⁴

4 There is a funny collateral aspect in “cosmopolitan,” since it has been for a long time the title of a quite popular magazine published in several countries. I have tried—unsuccessfully, I must avow—to exclude references to the magazine, in order to keep myself to the core of the concept. But the mere fact that a magazine for women takes this title is very interesting, so the discussion will not be negatively affected by the fact I was not able to expunge it from our quantitative data.

Our next step has been to check if either word was employed in a rather positive or negative sense. The research was unnecessary concerning global citizenship, since its use is overwhelming positive, but cosmopolitans have been both praised and condemned, so it was not out of the question to try and sort either negative or positive mentions to them. I was then quite surprised when, surveying the first three Google results pages for cosmopolitanism in both French and English, I found no criticism at all of the word.⁵ This was a rather strange result because cosmopolitans have been strongly criticised by the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the dictators Hitler and Stalin. We should maybe proceed at this point to the critics of cosmopolitanism and see what they can teach us.

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Cosmopolitanism and Its Malcontents

Of course there is nothing in common between Rousseau and the two main mega criminals of the last century.

Hitler hated cosmopolitans because a citizen of the world would never share his Arian ideology of a superior race. And from the late 1930s Stalin killed Trotskyites, either real or imaginary, by the thousands because he deemed them to be unreliable. Later, during the purges of the early 1950s in several Eastern European countries, many of the Communist heroes of the Spanish Civil War would thus be executed because their familiarity with the world outside the Iron Curtain made them potential critics and even foes

⁵ As of October 25, 2011.

of the apparatchiks that had been brought to power.⁶ For Communist parties under the long reign of Stalin's, to be a cosmopolitan was almost a felony. But obviously neither Hitler nor Stalin could be considered as a *critic* of cosmopolitanism; they were slayers, not thinkers.

170 To go to a humane and more sophisticated criticism of cosmopolitanism, we should refer to Rousseau. The great non-*Philosophe* philosopher found fault with the *cosmopolites* because they were nothing, neither men of the nature nor citizens properly speaking. They had lost their identity without acquiring a new one. In a famous passage of his *Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne* (1770-1), Rousseau says he wishes his Pole to be no less, no more than a Pole—he must be someone who could not survive (culturally speaking) outside his country. A so-called citizen of the world would belong to no place. He would have no sense of *appartenance*, he would pertain to no symbolic system.

Thus, if we want Poland to be an independent country and to escape the voracity of its three neighbours, a strong sense of culture—a strong sense of language, of citizenship, even of national idiosyncrasies—must be present. We know Rousseau wrote his *Considérations* to no avail, since in a mere few years a rump Poland would be partitioned by Russia, Prussia, and Austria. But in the long run Rousseau proved himself quite prescient. First of all, Poles kept a strong sense of a national culture, which would be crucial to restore their independence after the Great War. Even if

6 The good reference for this massacre of former members of the International Brigades remains Artur London's *The confession* (1968), later (1970) turned into a film by Costa Gavras.

in the period between 1939 and 1989 it would become a satellite of Germany and later of the now extinct USSR, its sense of a different culture would finally ensure not only its independence, a quarter of a century ago, but also trigger the debacle of the whole ensemble of Soviet satellite governments all across Eastern Europe.

And, to go further, when in the 19th and 20th centuries several peoples hitherto dominated by their large neighbours, many of these being German or Russian speakers, began to assert their independence, the revival of their native languages, the development of an alphabet, the publication of a pre-existent literature, the resource to folklore, and even the invention of traditions, were crucial to their consolidation as independent countries. This is the most important contribution of Romanticism to politics. Following Rousseau, Romantic writers considered national literature and customs in general as the kern of each nationality. In Brazil, for instance, a significant body of 19th century literature, including books written by one of the most popular novelists of the time, José de Alencar, is called “*indianista*,” meaning their main positive characters are pure Indians. Brazilian native people may have been murdered by the hundreds of thousands, they may have been reduced to captivity, and Alencar may have been quite indifferent to the plight of the Indians his contemporaries—but they would play an important role in Brazilian imaginary.⁷ By the way,

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7 Anyway he was more indifferent to the fate of the slaves. Indians would be considered noble, a dignity that was not shared by Africans and their descendants.

in 1822, some decades before Alencar would write *O guarani* (1857) and *Iracema* (1865), the coronation of Brazilian first emperor was already full of mentions to both nature and the Indians: iconography took its part in the assertion of a Portuguese speaking country that had broken its ties with the former European metropolis. Ironically it was at that time that the “*língua geral*,” a sort of Tupi with many elements from Portuguese, ceased to be the most spoken language in the city of São Paulo, then a small burg of some 20,000 souls, probably the tenth more populated city when Brazil became independent.

172 So, even a country that showed no interest in raising its native languages to the status of official ones gave them a little more than lip service. To conclude with Brazil, one of the most important novels written in the first times of the Republican regime, Lima Barreto’s *The sad end of Policarpo Quaresma* (1911), shows a military that becomes so infatuated with the true origins of his country that he begins to seriously study Tupi—and is actually fired from his administrative job when, unconsciously, involuntarily, he writes a whole official memorandum in the original language of most of the first Brazilians. It is a sort of unhappy end to Indianism. It is also an ironical epilogue to Indianist novels and imaginary.

But, if we switch to other experiences, both national and subnational, we can see that in the USSR several so-called dialects that had never before been afforded the noble status of languages were finally put into writing and gained an official status in the years around the constitution of the Soviet

Union; that, after its demise in 1991, their references to local culture and to differences from Russian have multiplied themselves; that the language formerly known as Serbian-Croatian, that would have as its main peculiar feature the fact that it was written in Cyrillic characters by the Serbs and in Latin ones by the Croats, has split in two different languages; that Evo Morales' election in Bolivia meant his inauguration as the first president of pure Indian stock would include a series of ceremonies evoking the Inca past, which had not been officially performed for centuries; that, in a more limited context but by no means irrelevant, a town in Brazilian Amazonia, São Gabriel da Cachoeira, has decided some years ago to have four official languages, beginning of course by Portuguese, but including three other languages from the different indigenous groups that constitute the majority of its population. All of this would be quite unthinkable without Rousseau and his Romantic, so to say, disciples.⁸ While another stream of thinkers was giving the world the rational tools to build modern State, with the rule of law, representation, the theory of contracts, and many other concepts, Rousseau and his followers were giving them feelings. The State was being built as though it was an engineering project, owing a lot to the Enlightenment, but what made people live inside it—and most of all, love it—was a series of affective tools that the Romantic foes of Enlightenment were able to provide. Modern State

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⁸ I am not so sure Romantic writers could be considered as Rousseau's disciples, but anyway they owed him very much.

is thus a difficult but rich blend of *Lumières* and feeling, of jurists and romantic writers, of reason and love.

Freud as a Cosmopolitan

To come to an interesting example of what cosmopolitanism would have meant a century ago, one should refer to a fascinating small book Sigmund Freud wrote in 1915, *ZeitgemäÙesüber Krieg und Tod*, variously translated as *Reflections on War and Death*⁹ or *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death*.¹⁰ It has been written a mere six months after the outbreak of the Great War. Freud will of course dwell on the pulsions unleashed by war, so different of those civilised people are expected to follow in ordinary, civilian, peaceful life. But a passage calls my attention and I allow myself to quote it in full:

Relying on this unity among the civilized people, countless men and women have exchanged their native home for a foreign one, and made their existence dependent on the intercommunication between friendly nations. Moreover anyone who was not by stress of circumstance confined to one spot could create for himself out of all the advantages and attractions of these civilized countries a new and wider fatherland, in which he would move about without hindrance or suspicion. In this way he enjoyed the blue sea and the grey; the beauty of snow-covered mountains and of green meadow lands; the magic of northern forests and the splendour of southern vegetation; the mood evoked by landscapes that recall great historical events, and the silence of untouched nature. This new fatherland was a museum for him, too, filled with all the treasures which the artists of civilized humanity had in the successive centuries created and left behind. As he wandered from one gallery to another in

9 See <http://www.bartleby.com/282/>.

10 See the quotation below.

this museum, he could recognise with impartial appreciation what varied types of perfection a mixture of blood, the course of history, and the special quality of their mother-earth had produced among his compatriots in this wider sense. Here he would find cool, inflexible energy developed to the highest point; there, the graceful art of beautifying existence; elsewhere, the feeling for orderliness and law, or others among the qualities which have made mankind the lords of the earth.¹¹

We have here a rich testimony of both the potentials of cosmopolitanism—even though the word is not employed by the founder of psychoanalysis in his little book—and a metaphor for it that is quite shocking for the present-day reader. First of all, and this cannot be innocent, Freud emphasises nature rather than people. He begins showing how a citizen of the world (a term he does not employ either) will enjoy the blue sea, the snow, the forests. It is not fortuitous if he mentions here no polis, no city, no State, be it monarchical and authoritarian as his native Austria-Hungary, be it republican as its French enemy. Politics, even in the best sense of the word, is absolutely absent from his timely or opportune considerations.¹² Then he switches to a series of metaphors pointing to art. These are the two crucial benefits one gets from going or living abroad: nature and high culture. In our days, when many young people from all countries go abroad—many more than in Freud's times, even though he deserves the credit for sig-

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11 See <http://www.panarchy.org/freud/war.1915.html>.

12 It is quite difficult to mention the *Zeitgemäβes über Krieg und Tod* without remembering Nietzsche's *Unzeitgemäβes Betrachtungen*, translated in other languages as *Untimely Meditations*, *Unfashionable Observations*, *Thoughts out of Season* or *Considérations inactuelles*.

nalling a trend that was just beginning to spread all over his known world—, be it for a mere couple of years or for their whole life, I suppose many would prefer to emphasise a desire to meet people, to know new ways of thinking, feeling, socialising. They can love sea sports or skiing, but most will probably tell us about their social experience.

But this is only a first approach to Freud's reflections. Actually classics have an ambiguous impact on us. On one side they are fascinating when and because they open new venues to us. But then we do little more than recognise in their work what was already implicit in our way of seeing things. They put into words what we already felt, albeit in a more imprecise way. On the other side they surprise us when we do not recognise them. They often show themselves to be quite far from us. We prefer usually not to dwell on this second point. We are keen to acknowledge their qualities insofar as they do not conflict with our views. We like when they expand our conscience, when they give a boost to our feelings. But we often refrain from accepting they could differ from us as much as they do. We do not follow them when they challenge us too far. It is not unusual for us to ignore or to condemn their ideas we strongly disapprove of. But our disagreement should not imply stopping them from being classics, or intelligent.

So his second point is: the world is a museum, each country (or culture) a different gallery in this enormous museum. We are of course fond of museums. I suppose all of us who gather here at the Academy of Latinity meetings enjoy visiting the museums of the cities where they happen. But we have also felt already for a long time that mu-

seums make the past, so to speak, even more past than it is. Thanks to most museums, past is history. The association between museums and death has been more and more recurrent in the last decades. Modern professionals working in museums do their best to bring them to life. They seem to be quite successful in science museums, which are full of experiments and allow visitors, especially children and teenagers, to delight as they not only see the objects but also interact with them. On the other side, the idea of a museum where you may not touch the objects, where they must be preserved with the utmost care and protected from everything that would damage them—especially visitors—has been strongly criticised in the last years. It puts problems to everyone, from visitors themselves to museum professionals and to government officials who decide about budgetary priorities and are not very happy to put public money in objects that will not be appreciated by the public. To sum this point, I could say that what seems strange and ironically *unzeitgemäßig*, out-dated, in Freud's paper is that he *praises* as an important human conquest the ability to travel from country to country as though each one was a different gallery; worse still: he turns the world into a museum: it is as though Freud did *murder* the world.

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The Rousseau Experience

Since all we can do in a conventional museum is *to see* the objects, but never interact with them, never touch them, Freud seems to develop a view of cosmopolitanism that is completely at odds with what we can call the Rousseau experience. If Rousseau were ever to go to Poland he would

enjoy several forms of culture, but most of all the popular ones, and we could add: those who would leave no physical memory, as dance and folk songs before it became possible to video or register them.¹³ Let us remember what he says about the origin of the languages in the hot climates, that is, the *good* origin of languages. In hot climates language stems from love, not from need. The first word people say in cold countries is *aidez-moi*, while in the hot ones they begin by *aimez-moi*.¹⁴

Là se firent les premières fêtes: *les pieds bondissaient de joie*, le geste empressé ne suffisait plus, la voix l'accompagnait d'accens passionnés; le plaisir et le désir, confondus ensemble, se faisaient sentir à la fois: là fut enfin le vrai berceau des peuples; et du pur cristal des fontaines sortirent les premiers feux de l'amour.¹⁵

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There is no high culture, here, and neither beauty of nature; there is folk culture. There is nothing that can be registered. Rousseau is the great philosopher of presence. He mistrusted writing, because when we write it is easier to lie or to be misunderstood. Presence is much superior to representation. Presence gives you a greater proximity to truth. If he were our contemporary, he would also mistrust all sorts of register—videos, audios, the Internet. They are born from the same (bad, evil) root as writing. Even if they allow us

13 Rousseau loved dance. In his *Essai sur l'origine des langues*, he refers to the birth of languages in hot countries: the youth begin to *dance* around the springs.

14 In other passages Rousseau will explain that if many people live in cold climates it is because, after man had begun to populate the continents, there has been a huge natural disaster—the Earth has changed its axis.

15 Chapter IX, “Formation des langues méridionales.” My italics.

to see the face of our interlocutor, even if you see the other person, as we can do in Skype, even if you have many more elements to trust the sincerity of what people say, all of this is still to be mistrusted. No representation can be trusted as truthfully sincere. What you see is not necessarily the reality. There is no substitute for presence. Thus Rousseau tells us of the sheer impossibility, or rather unacceptability, of museums. If cosmopolitanism is the ability to regard each different culture as a distinct gallery, as a set of objects, from loosely defined *objets d'art* to consecrated masterpieces, Rousseau has every reason to dislike it. This can show us his criticism of a man without qualities, a man without identities, which determines his criticism of the *cosmopolite* and explains why this is not only a disagreement about politics. It is a disagreement about culture. Folk culture, which lives no more than the time its performance lasts, that is “eternal while it lasts” to employ a famous verse by Brazilian poet Vinicius de Moraes,¹⁶ yes. Works of art hung from the walls and worshipped by those who visit them, no.

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But to return to Freud, he concludes with something more substantial. His cosmopolitan traveller (or expatriate resident) ends by discovering some different possibilities of what culture can be. But, lo!, he still refers only to “high” possibilities. He talks of “cool, inflexible energy,” maybe a Prussian trait; of “the graceful art of beautifying existence,” which could be an Italian and French feature, and finally of the “feeling for orderliness and law,” most like-

16 In his “Soneto da fidelidade.”

ly a British characteristic. The cultures he selects are the dominant ones. They are the ones that shaped modern European and world culture. They even remind us of the famous Marx's comment about scientific socialism stemming from *British* economists, *German* philosophy, and *French* politics. These are the same countries that Freud most appreciates. Then, if they come to war among themselves, it is surely a huge tragedy. But it is possible the tragedy does not come only from the unprecedented quantities of dead young men at the battlefields, but also from the fact that those who have been able to make themselves "the lords of the earth" are at war among themselves. It will of course be unfair to say that Freud would not regret it so much if war was waged against people devoid of one of those three major features (energy, aesthetic sense, or the love of law and order), but anyway he adamantly concludes that he is moved by the pride that mankind has been able to rule the earth. What is tragic in the I World War is that we fell short of our leadership, of our ability (to employ Bacon's and Descartes' word) to be masters and possessors of nature. Africans would not aspire to this greatness. The Great War is so tragic because it is not only a big war, even a world war—it is a war against the world we men made, against the human just pride to do and perform great things.

Rousseau would of course never agree with this point of view. But enough of this; I think I made my point. Cosmopolitanism has not been a pure blessing. It has had its critics, and it has been possible to criticise it from a bona fide point of

view. Not all foes of cosmopolitanism can be considered as Nazis or Stalinist.

The First Cosmopolitan

But we should not forget that Freudian cosmopolitanism smells to us as too Victorian, too conservative. Cosmopolitanism can be much richer. We should now refer to Diogenes of Sinope, the Cynic philosopher who challenged his admirer, Alexander the Great, refusing the honours and riches the Macedonian king was anxious to bestow on him; he simply asked the mighty conqueror not to deprive him of the light of the sun. This famous anecdote shows us someone who is not afraid of the powers that be, and at the same time is content to enjoy something that has no monetary value—the sunlight—and is available to everybody, rich or poor. It is a witty commentary on vanity. Alexander thinks he can deliver the philosopher anything; he is happy to be so powerful; but Diogenes despises his earthly power.

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Anyway, what concerns us here is another passage in Diogenes the Cynical's life. According to Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, when his homonym from Sinope was "asked where he came from, he answered: 'I am a citizen of the world (*kosmopolites*).'" This means he breaks with the strong Hellenic idea of the polis as a unit in itself. The Greek polis, as the Roman *civitas*, can be quite fair towards its members; it can be democratic; it can consider everybody as an equal, except of course the women, the slaves, and the foreigners. The problem is that they will not even try to expand their citizenship to the geographical

space that shares its language and customs, be it Greece or Italy. The Athenian final failure in the Peloponnesian War can be justifiably ascribed to their blunt refusal to cooperate with other polis; they would prefer to enslave or even to massacre them, as they did to the Melians, rather than recognise them as their partners or their equals. A Pan-Hellenic polis never existed. The inability or unwillingness of the Greek to unite themselves was very likely the main reason why Alexander could so easily storm their cities and conquer them one by one, before proceeding to the East and beginning his final career as an Oriental emperor and god.

182 Concerning the Romans, their attitude during the social conflicts of the 2nd century before the common era made it quite clear to all other peoples of Italy that Roman citizenship and the privileges it entailed were not for them; actually, it was only the emperor Caracalla that would grant Roman citizenship to all subjects of the Roman Empire, and this at the time of his *Constitutio Antoniniana* (211 of our era), when those rights had lost almost all of their meaning. When Caracalla reigned, for more than two centuries the will of the prince had been what really mattered in the Empire. To be a Roman citizen at the time of the Gracchi was almost everything, at Caracalla's time it had become almost nothing. Of course the Roman patricians' failure to give their allies and their subjects rights analogous to theirs would bring the Republic to destruction, as Athenian inability to understand what was at play after Pericles would bring Athens itself and Greece as a whole to Macedonian captivity. Thus the failure of both the most impor-

tant States of our Antiquity¹⁷—or rather, of the two States we easily recognise as our predecessors and maybe inspirers—to tread the democratic path of social inclusion would take a huge toll on them. It would cost Athenians their independence. It would cost Romans their freedom.

This can show us how important could have been that a philosopher, even one many would probably dismiss as a fool, presented himself not as a citizen of a particular polis, but as a citizen of the whole world. It is curious he employed the word *kosmos*, which means world, but with two additional meanings: first of all, a world endowed with an order, far from chaotic; and secondly, a world that goes further than human beings. Cosmos does not restrict itself to the human world. It encompasses everything that exists. To be a *kosmopolites* may then mean more than the membership of a polis, be it enlarged to include the whole world. It means that our worldly citizenship could benefit other beings than humans. Animals, for instance, might be as *kosmopolites* as Diogenes. This is a hint, a mere possibility, rather than a strong inference, since he did not develop his strong rebuttal of local polis, but it cannot be ruled out when we read this poor but by no means humble philosopher of yore.

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After Diogenes we will have to wait more than two thousand years before Kant introduces the idea of a cosmo-

17 Most of us, including myself, are completely ignorant of other Antiquities, both Eurasian or from other continents. One day, of course, nobody will consider Rome and Athens as the beacons of Antiquity; other cultures will have come to the fore.

politan law, *jus cosmopolitanum*. And cosmopolitanism has become more or less popular since the 19th century—not too much, but at least in a certain measure.

The Three First Modern Polis

184 Let us come to Borglum's bust of Thomas Paine's on Parisian boulevard Jourdan, across the Cité Universitaire, erected in 1934. In the 1970s I have seen it for years, everyday, when I left the Maison du Brésil to take the Ligne de Sceaux metro. In the bust Paine is praised as "British by birth, American by adoption, French by decree." He, as the Marquis of La Fayette or Garibaldi, was truly a hero of two worlds, the Old and the New. Or look at the 1789 *Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen*. It differs sharply from the 1689 English Bill of Rights insofar as it proclaims some fundamental rights that pertain to all men, not only to those born on a specific soil, the English one. The law voted by the Parliament after the Glorious Revolution was a "bill," not an act,¹⁸ since it preceded and lacked the royal assent, but anyway it was intended as something that owed its legality to a vote and therefore could be changed by another law. But the French text was a "declaration,"

18 An act is voted by the Parliament and sanctioned by the monarch. Before the royal assent, it is called bill. Since the crown was vacant when the Bill of Rights was voted, it kept this name. Half a century before, when the Parliament waged a war against King Charles I, it preferred to give its bills the name of "ordnances," which was commonly employed to refer to the quasi-laws the monarch would sign from time to time. But memories from the first English Revolution were not welcome at the time of the Glorious one.

meaning the *Assemblée Constituante* was no more than a vessel that would convey truths considered as self-evident and that would bind all men in all times. This is cosmopolitanism at its best. It ignores borders. It proclaims all men, and maybe all women, are equal. Even if Athens is one of the great references of the 18th century revolutionaries, they seem to feel that its policy had a flaw—the fact that rights were reserved for the Athenians. This is the fault with *la cité antique*: it is not able, or desirous, to expand its blessings across its borders. In matters of foreign policy, Rome and Athens can be as cruel as a King of the Kings. Other peoples will see them as their foes, as their possible masters, never as their liberators. There was no love lost in their foreign policy. In their actions towards non-citizens¹⁹ they would show no feeling of sharing a common humanity. What then made the French revolutionary act as though they had a mandate to free other peoples from the yoke of despotism? I think this is the very point where cosmopolitanism makes its true début. A polis confined to itself, worse, a polis at war with other polis would make no sense.

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19 Since it is quite usual to compare the United States to a modern Rome, for the role it takes in international affairs, it is quite interesting—and at the same time somewhat chilling—to note that Homeland Security and analogous institutions will refer to foreign people as “non citizens,” which would imply they are devoid of any rights. It is usually not true, and law will protect them when they are in the United States, even as tourists. But since the Patriot Act this protection is not so sure as it has been before. On the other side, what is quite pleasant in American academic atmosphere is that it will refer to foreign students as “our *international* students.” Security and academe view foreigners in completely different ways. This is one of the reasons why I am happy to be an academic.

All the polis should be friends. By the way, it would take two centuries to say that, but since the war between Vietnam and China, both Communist countries, in the end of the 1970s it has been a consensus that “democratic countries do not wage war among themselves.” It is not true, but at least it *seems* to be. It can be considered as a long-term legacy of the French Revolution. Wars have been waged by the revolutionaries, but all of them against the *Ancien Régime*. If Great Britain, until a few years before 1789 the most democratic country in the world, has waged a long term war against France—and a seven year war against the Thirteen Colonies a decade before—this could be ascribed to the strong *non*-democratic elements then still present in British policy. War between two democracies in modern times could only stem from the non- (or not yet) democratic elements in the aggressor State.

To make matters more complex, the three great Revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries view the rest of the world in sharply different ways. The Britons will be content, after 1689, to pursue a national policy that has never adopted as its mission to spread democratic values. They could send missionaries abroad, but they would not consider as their mission to inspire democratic movements. At most they will institute assemblies elected by free White men in some colonies, and even these will lack effective power, as American Revolution easily shows. And after 1776 the American revolutionaries will not show any special fervour in spreading their new values, even though the Philadelphia declaration of Independence speaks of rights “all

men” enjoy, and not only those of British descent. Thomas Jefferson, the author of the more radical ideas in the 1776 declaration, will of course be interested in teaching something to the French when he serves as ambassador in Paris, but his success is quite limited, since at the same time they will not understand how a man who speaks of freedom can have slaves.²⁰ And the first episode of the relationship between the newly founded United States and the not yet independent Brazil takes place with Jefferson as one of the most important actors. Two young Brazilian students at the Portuguese university of Coimbra ask him to help a revolution against the colonial rule. He shows no interest. American policy towards other countries, especially the Latin American ones and after the conquest of the East Coast **187** also the countries in the Pacific Ocean, will be ruled by imperial concerns, and from a certain time imperialist ones, not by the desire to spread democratic values. We could of course remember Abraham Lincoln saw things differently, especially when he voted as a Congressman against the annexation of a huge part of Mexico in the 1840s, but he could not assert a brand-new foreign policy when in power, since he had to face the Secession War, and was assassinated as soon as it ended. Serious historians have not considered the war against Spain in 1898, which brought Cuba and the Philippines to the American sphere of influence, as

20 There is a beautiful discussion between Jefferson and his French admirers—who lose some of their respect for him because he is a slaveholder—in James Ivory’s 1995 film, *Jefferson in Paris*.

an action of solidarity towards their respective peoples, but as a clear imperialist initiative. Until the XIV Points President Woodrow Wilson will present as his reasons to enter the Great War, a generous spirit did not publicly inspire American foreign policy.

188 This leaves us with France as the only one, among the Big Three first countries to develop democracy, engaged in spreading the value of the human rights. Revolutionary France was the only cosmopolis, in a world where democracy or representative government²¹ was rather confined to each polis. Britons and Americans had their polis, and would behave towards the rest of the world in ways that would not differ from despotic countries. They would traffic slaves, at least until a certain moment in time. But what about France? Its missionary calling lasted for less than ten years. After Thermidor, and definitely after Brumaire, France can stay as European outcast and can still inspire some foreigners by its Republican, pseudo-democratic example—remember Beethoven wanting to dedicate his Third Symphony to the First Consul, Napoléon Bonaparte, who at that time had already taken decisive measures in order to curb the revolutionary, generous, cosmopolitan spirit of the Revolution—but it is on the verge of restoring slavery in its American colonies. It also treats the countries it conquers in Europe as colonies. This is of course a second

21 Although 18th century Great Britain had several features we can call democratic, as a whole it is better characterised as a representative government than as a democratic one.

tragedy. When the Spaniards attack the French, fighting for their freedom, they think *liberté* is an ugly word, since it brought them captivity and mass massacres, as we can read in Alejo Carpentier's masterpiece, *El siglo de las luces*, maybe the best account we have—in fictional form—of the great expectations and then the lost illusions brought by the *Philosophes* and the French Revolution. To sum the points we have just been making, it seems all democracies have failed in the Antiquity when and because they did not extend their virtues to other peoples; either you recognise the other as your equal, at least *de jure*, or you risk losing democracy itself. The failure to do that may be the reason that brought ancient democracy to its demise. In modern times, several democracies have tried to expand their values, with various degrees of success. But this shall be one of our main points, and we will soon come to terms with it.

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Modern Cosmopolitanism and its Challenges

Cosmopolitanism in modern days does not develop as a foe to something we could call “politisism,” meaning nations or City-States that recognise rights to their citizens but not to foreigners. Cosmopolitans are global democrats. If you recognise rights to your countrymen, you should acknowledge all humans are entitled to them. But this is not what happens all the time. Maybe one of the most troubling points of 20th century history is the fact that many a democratic country has felt entitled to treat other peoples as inferior beings. The man who made the most of it was, of course, the complete

antithesis to democracy—Adolf Hitler. But all colonial Empires, be they formal as the British, the French, or the Portuguese, or informal as the North American, have established a dual evaluation of humankind. While full rights would be recognized to their nationals, they would be more or less denied to foreigners. For instance, at the same time as France insisted that “*l’Algérie, c’est la France*,” in the 1950s, and did its utmost to prevent the independence of the three North African *départements*, there were distinct electoral colleges in Algeria for European and “Muslim” French, and their respective votes would not have the same value. When Uganda expelled its inhabitants of Indian descent that had British passports, in the late 1970s, the Labour government of Britain did not allow them to enter a country they were nationals of. The United States officially considers foreigners as “non-citizens.” Some pages before, I have commented on the 1979 comment that democracies, or at least modern democracies, have never waged war among themselves. Things may appear to be so, but this is not true. They have quite often staged coups d’Etat against new, young democracies, or against States that were on the democratic pace. The destruction of Mossadegh’s regime in Iran, an act which would later bring the ironical dénouement of excluding all Western-style future for his country as the fervently anti-American ayatollahs came to power, was a clear case of American democracy putting an end to the prospects of a possible Iranian democracy. American support to *coups d’Etat* in Brazil (1964), Chile (1973), Argentina (1976), and even as recently as 2002 in Venezuela, shows quite clearly that sheer

invasion is not the only way to wage war to a country that is on the democratic path. We should take careful notice of this, because this is the way we can measure how important is cosmopolitanism in our days. We do not live in a fairy tale world where all democracies are kind to each other or, at least, refrain from destroying their equals. New democracies may have a hard job trying to consolidate themselves, and in so doing they may quite often have older democracies as their enemies. War, even if of an economic sort and not exactly waged by troops, often appears in the intercourse between democracies.

What is then cosmopolitanism, which are the lessons we can draw from historical experience, what should we do from now on? I will make two final suggestions about it. First, cosmopolitanism implies we should not confine democratic values, or human rights, to a group. It is in their nature to expand. The historical examples of Athens and Rome show us that, when citizenship was restricted to their own citizens and denied to other people they dealt with—either metics (from the Greek *métoikos*) or inhabitants of the colonies those cities founded abroad, i.e., either immigrants to or emigrants from those two powerful City-States—the final victims would be Athenian democracy and Roman republic themselves. In the short run Athenians and Romans, both rich and poor, would profit from the exploitation of the mass of their non-citizens, but in a not so long term their own values would be shattered. Athens fell to Alexander, Rome to the Caesars because their best values came to be at odds with their practice. **191**

This means that democracy is not something you can contain in, say, an Aladdin's lamp. It is in its nature to grow all the time. It tends to be universal. New human rights, for instance, which are in the core of modern democracy, are being declared by United Nation conferences every few years. In so doing, of course, democracy changes. It must take into account different cultures. It cannot be the mere imposition of Western values to other countries. But it is intensely attractive. People who will not bow to other Western values will quite often appreciate the ideal of freedom that is the kern of democracy. So, if you deny it to them, you will only create further troubles for yourself, from a prudential point of view, and from an ethical point of view you will deny your own identity as a democrat.

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Iran is the most obvious case. With the fall of Mossadeh, the West gave the Shah all support he would need. But, in a quarter of a century, his repressive regime also fell—and this time from within, without needing the criminals that had been recruited by CIA in the bas-fond of Tehran to depose the Iranian prime minister.²² Mossadeh had the sad fate of being persecuted by the Shah, who at least did not dare to hang him but kept him under house arrest till his death in 1967—and hated by the ayatollahs, who did their utmost to ban his name from Iranian political history,

22 The best or at least the best available account of 1953 coup against Mossadeh is Stephen Kinzer's *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (2003). For the intervention, mostly North American, in internal affairs of independent Latin American countries, see John Perkins' *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man* (2004).

since he would represent an alternative to the Islamic Republic. He was too democratic for the Shah and his American allies. He was too lay, too democratic—maybe, too Western-style democratic—for the ayatollahs. Of course, if the Americans and the Britons had accepted the transformations Mossadegh was trying to introduce in his country, Iranian history—and world history—would have been very different. Iran might quite well have become a beacon for democracy in the Islamic countries from the 1950s. If something as the “Arab Spring” did not happen until now it is to a large measure the fault of these ill-conceived aggressions, by democratic States, against States that were doing their best to become democratic.

Vietnam is another case. It provides a happier end. Of course, it may be discussed whether Ho Chi Minh was a leader committed to all sorts of democratic principles, but the Declaration of Independence of Vietnam he wrote in 1945 is probably the only one in the world to quote verbatim a passage of the American one. He could have been an ally to the United States, had not France and America decided to wage war on him since the almost immediate aftermath of the II World War. The second Thirty-Year War in history could have been avoided. Even if Vietnam has been able to develop itself in the years after its victory in what it calls the “American war,” and even if Vietnam was generous towards the countries that had killed so many of its citizens, without the Western interventions in Laos (from the 1950s) and Cambodia (from 1970) these two unhappy countries would not present so bad indexes of

human development as they presently do. And in all these cases what was at stake was a clear distinction made, by the imperialists, between full citizens and people who, at best, would not deserve all the rights a White man would have. When general Westmoreland, after being responsible for killing Vietnamese by the hundreds of thousands, infamously said that Oriental people do not have the same respect for life as we have, he put this mind-set in very precise words, if repulsive.

194 It may then be very curious, almost ironic, but more than two millennia after the end of Athenian democracy and of Roman republic the democratic States we have face a challenge that is similar to the one both cities were unable to meet: either you recognise democratic rights to those deprived of them, or you may perish. This may be the big issue of our time. Never before in human history so many people did enjoy democratic liberties as today. But freedom has in its nature to grow. Traditional democratic countries should not create obstacles to the advancement of democracy, including new forms it can take.

Cosmopolitanism as a New Culture

To conclude (this is my second point), cosmopolitanism is not only a matter of politics. The fact that *polis* is at its core should not mislead us. It is a matter of culture, in the broader sense of the world. To be a cosmopolitan is to accept not only that all men are equal, that a world State is desirable, that power should become more and more universal at the same time as it becomes more and more democratic—but

also that culture is a common good we all deserve to share, as both its producers and its users. It will be quite useful for our reflection to come to one of the most infamous detractors of cosmopolitanism. Sometimes we can learn a lot about a political value if we focus on its enemies, unfair as they may be, and not only on its supporters; sometime ago the Greek foes of democracy helped me to better understand the importance of desire in that regime.²³ Let us then go to Stalin.

When he launched an anti-Semitic persecution in his last years of rule on the USSR, Jews were denounced as “rootless cosmopolitans.” “What can A[bra]m Gurvich possibly understand about the national character of a Russian Soviet man?” asked an article in the *Pravda* on January 28, 1949, under the title “About one antipatriotic group of theater critics.” It is interesting to note that, at that time, the three most powerful countries in the world called themselves either “United” (States or Kingdom), or “Union” (Soviet), but, while the first two would add to their official name a geographical qualification (of America, or of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), the USSR was the only one with no reference to an ethnic or geographic background. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had from its inception a clear internationalist aim. Other countries might have joined it. Actually it was expected that the whole

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23 See our article “Democracy versus Republic: Inclusion and Desire in Social Struggles,” in *Diogenes*, English ed., 2008: 55, p. 45-53, <doi>10.1177/0392192108096829; and in *Diogenes*, Chinese ed., 2011, n. 53, p. 137-48.

world would eventually join it, if the ideal of an international Revolution had prospered. This is what makes the question about a Jew's failure to understand "the *national* character of a *Russian* Soviet man" (my emphasis) completely absurd. Of course we know that the war against Hitler was waged as a Great *Patriotic* War, Stalin being aware that ideology would not persuade his subjects to fight the Nazis (and he was certainly content that the Nazis would despise the several Soviet peoples as *Untermenschen*, and often refer to them scornfully as "Asiatic hordes," since this would limit defections from the many Soviet citizens unhappy with Communist rule to a minimum). But *Russian Soviet* should be almost an oxymoron. It would be so for Lenin, who in a famous statement while in power told his companions he "spit[ted] on Russia," since what really mattered for him was international revolution and, then, an international society. Communism, if drawn to its logical consequence, must be cosmopolitan. The Trotskyites knew it very well, by the way.

Then, why did really existent communism condemn cosmopolitanism? It is easy to evoke Stalin as the main responsible for this split between ideas essential to Marxism and a practice completely at odds with them—but it is insufficient. I will hint here at a hypothesis that could maybe be useful. Stalinist hate of cosmopolitanism—that did not begin at the time of the so-called Doctor's, or Jewish, plot against the old dictator, but was strong since at least the Slansky process in Prague, a few weeks or months before, and maybe since the early 1930s and the persecution of the Trotskyites—was most of all *cultural*. Marxism from its

beginning proposed a complete change in the man-made world. It would imply a new economy, a new politics, but also and maybe most of all a new culture. The often quoted—but not too often as it should be—passage of the *German Ideology* where Marx says one day it will be possible for a man to fish without being a professional fisherman,²⁴ and so on, with its almost lyrical overtones, expresses a side of his reflection that has often been submerged by the emphasis given to the Party, the Revolution, and the State. If the misfortunes of History have brought the first proletarian State of the world to be more and more a State, instead of dissolving itself as it should have done according to Marx's principles, if the isolation of the USSR has changed it into a police State, if totalitarianism has been the result of the 1917 Revolution, all of this is completely contrary to what Marx desired.

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But here I take issue with common interpretations of Soviet or Communist Marxism because I do not think these “deviations” were mainly of political or economic nature: they were in a large measure cultural. The Marxist project is Enlightenment brought to its most logical consequence. All sorts of prejudices that stand between our happiness and us must be removed. Of course, one of Marx's main contribu-

24 “In communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, herdsman or critic.”

tions has been to show us, contrarily to what the *Philosophes* would have, that these obstacles are not due essentially to ignorance: they stem from interests. What keeps the poor from being happy is not the ignorance of the wealthy about some basic tenets of human life. It is the profit the rich can make exploiting the poor. So, to come to a State where more people will be happier than ever before, to a state where there will be no more State and everybody will be happier than ever, it is not enough to suppress ignorance. It is necessary to fight the vested interests that are allied to exploration. Ignorance is not alone as an oppressive tool. It is always linked to strong class interests. But these class interests, which will be the main point for Stalin and his cronies, are not Marx's major concern. Their identification can represent one of his great contributions to the knowledge of social and political life, but his aim is still a better life—a better or at least a “good life” that will not be the same as has been proposed by many a philosopher since Aristotle, but that anyway means a change in man's culture. We should maybe think a little more of Marx as an ethical thinker. Or, at least, we should maybe endeavour to read him trying to check what contribution his thought can give to ethics.

Cosmopolitans or Global Citizens: an Addendum

I would have preferred to close with the last sentence, but something remains to be discussed: why are researchers so keen on replacing cosmopolitanism by global citizenship? The vague notion of cosmopolitanism, that played

an important role in Western culture since the 18th century, is losing ground to a more technical word, more akin to professional slang than to common speech: global citizenship is not and maybe will not be employed outside academe, the political world, and NGOs. But these three political actors have been able to give it an importance it did not have a few years ago—say, just a decade ago. Our question could then be: is cosmopolitanism, the ideal of the Enlightenment, losing ground to global citizenship? Is a word full of different meanings, that would encompass the whole spectrum of human life—from art to literature, from history of things past to proposals for a new beginning in political and social life, from the critique of religion to several rather moderate utopias—on the verge of being replaced by a phrase that will belong to only one of those several disciplines, I mean, political science? Is scientific precision outmoding the old charm of cosmopolitanism? I do not have a ready answer for this question. But I would dare say that the main difference is located in the cultural overtones of cosmopolitanism. **199**

Citizenship, be it global or local, is mainly political. It can even hyper politicise life. A lot will then be said concerning rights, responsibilities, liberties. But cosmopolitanism concerns more than this. People—not mere “citizens”—will exchange experiences. The cosmos will be their home. Even if it may seem bizarre to have the whole world as your residence, this is the main point of a cosmopolitan. He will no more look at nature and high culture as at galleries in a museum. He will most likely learn from

people who are very different from him, and who may not love order, classic beauty, or pure energy. A global citizen may unfortunately be less than that. The main issues for him are juridical issues. Is he or she entitled to live in a country other than his, can they be respected as though they were native citizens of that State? These are very important questions, of course. But they lack the flavour of poetry.