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Cosmopolitanism, cosmopolitics and indigenous peoples: elements for a possible alliance[2]

Introduction

We are witnessing the re-emergence of cosmopolitism. Cosmopolitanism is rising as a politico-cultural movement, which while being globalised in the inter-metropolis connection; it chiefly reaffirms the normative engagement with human rights beyond national borders. Almost simultaneously, several theories have appeared under the term 'cosmopolitical'[3]. They question cosmopolitan common sense and its mono-naturalism as they reclaim the polyphonic de- and re-construction of the world from the heterogeneous forces and entities that inhabit it. Considering their dissimilar assumptions, cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitics do not seem to encounter points of convergence, except their aspirations to think about the world. For those who support cosmopolitanism, this is the field of human political action, while for advocates of cosmopolitics the world is something to be constructed by involving human and non-human actors. In this way, as suggested by Bruno Latour, it could be argued that we are obliged to decide between cosmopolitism and cosmopolitics; between assuming the urgency of saving the world and the slowing down of decisions

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[3] See Stengers (1996; 1997; 2014), Latour (2001; 2014), among others.

that undermine this enterprise; between the 'logical equivalence' and the 'operator of equality' that Isabelle Stengers tells us about (2014).

Although cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitics are opposing and incomparable in a variety of ways, it is possible to find space for mutual interpellation and partial reconciliation. In particular, this text suggests that a possible alliance between theories is feasible. To this end, it analyses to what extent a particular cosmopolitical theory seeking to find a universal normative conception that includes human and non-human dignity, is sensitive to the requirements of entities or subjects pertaining to other cosmos, distinct from that which Western mono-naturalism recognises.

An alliance of this type allows us to see how much cosmopolitics can help to widen the margins of cosmopolitanism. Furthermore, it enables us to better comprehend how cosmopolitanism can articulate at least more than one entity with respect to the vast pool of possibilities that the universe of cosmopolitics offers. During the last fifty years, economic inequality has risen as a consequence of economic and financial globalisation worldwide. At the same time, there has been an increase in ecological and socio-environmental deterioration and global economic inequality that has led some cosmopolitan theories clamour for "global justice"[4] and instil a sense of urgency in those political actions in favour of a dignified life. In contrast to this cosmopolitan urgency, cosmopolitics asks us to slow down our decisions and remake politics in terms of pluralism and not in terms of what is considered exclusively human. It seems just as reasonable to subscribe to the sense of urgency of cosmopolitanism as the call to slowness and increasing pluralism made by cosmopolitics. Therefore, by paraphrasing Latour, is it possible to find cosmopolitan theories whose politics recognise at least more than one entity as a part of its cosmos, and whose cosmos recognises that politics as not being exclusively human?

In what follows, this text offers examples of this mutual interpellation between cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitics. It analyses the normative argument called the

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[4] See Beitz (1999), Pogge (2002), Singer (2004), Steiner (2005), Caney (2005), Nagel (2005), among others.

"capabilities approach" developed by the liberal-feminist philosopher Martha Nussbaum, which can be thought of as a normative variant of the cosmopolitanism fervently criticised by Stengers and Latour. This approach is typical of extended cosmopolitanism: its elements make it more appropriate for interpellation with cosmopolitics. a) It presents a non-essentialist conception of humanity; b) it recognises the dignity, agency and status of the human subject and a limited group of non-human animals; c) it recognises that the purpose of social cooperation, by extension, is to achieve multiple species living together on the same planet; d) it identifies human dignity through the attainment of morally relevant capacities that one realises through the performance of the body and social praxis; and, e) it conceives of multiple forms of links between human beings and the environment as a relative value and not merely instrumental.

Nevertheless, one must regard the cosmopolitanism of Nussbaum's theory as a normative declaration situated in a particular (mono-naturalist) ontology, and consider the ontological pluralism that characterises the world. This implies, for example, that cosmopolitanism must strive to account for the prerogatives and demands of individuals and collectives that symbolise the "radical otherness" (Viveiros de Castro, 2010). I am referring to cosmologies of some indigenous societies in Latin America, whose identities date back to the pre-Columbian period and European colonisation.

Cosmopolitanism and the critiques of cosmopolitics

The term 'cosmopolitan' is usually employed in two ways (Caney, 2005). On the one hand, it refers to a normative position (or moral cosmopolitanism), and on the other, to a particular cultural configuration resulting from globalisation (cultural cosmopolitanism)[5]. According to Pogge (2002), moral cosmopolitanism is a

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[5] This text presents versions of cosmopolitanism developed by Anglo and European authors, but it recognises other version that could be more appropriate for the problems of the "global south",

normative position based on three principles: the value of the individual (regardless of affiliation); a commitment to equality; and the existence of current moral obligations between individuals and institutions around the globe[6]. For its part, cultural cosmopolitanism conceives nations and metropolis as being enriched with greater exchange between diverse cultures that promote globalisation while it positively values politics of tolerance of diversity.

Under this conceptualisation, the argument by Ulrich Beck (2004) corresponds with a hybrid between moral and cultural cosmopolitanism, given that it articulates the phenomenon of increasing transnationalism of ties around the globe as the "cosmopolitanization of reality". In Beck´s judgement, cosmopolitan theory is better to other theories that struggle with the problem of otherness. His "realistic cosmopolitanism" suggests a universal minimum of norms or inalienable human rights that would be self-evident from a cosmopolitan common sense and which would be supported by the overwhelming majority of the (Western) population.

Beck's cosmopolitanism bothers Latour. The latter accuses Beck of seating himself in a false common sense and of reflecting nothing more than the good ethnocentric intentions of European internationalism. Not only does Latour critic Beck; he also disagrees with stoic positions and Kant. Latour argues that no cosmopolitanism understands that "when there are conflicts, not only cultures are at stake, but also the cosmos itself" (Latour, 2014: 47). In essence, for Latour, cosmopolitanism spreads in alliance with reason and science created in the West. However, because cosmopolitanism is part of only one cosmos, it does not incorporate other voices and reject that the pluriverse is part of politics (De la Cadena, 2010).

including the "subaltern cosmopolitanism of De Sousa Santos (2003), or the "decolonial cosmopolitanism" of Mignolo (2000).

[6] This tradition has Greek roots, and has been adopted by philosophers as disparate as Kant and Derrida.

Beyond the critiques of Latour, we must ask ourselves if it is possible for cosmopolitics to salvage any element of cosmopolitanism. As I mentioned, this article values the sense of urgency and the construction of the world that cosmopolitanism either well intentionally or arrogantly pursues. That urgency makes sense on a planet that is feeling the severe social and ecological impacts of socio-environmental degradation. At the same time, cosmopolitics considers that any cosmopolitan argument must be capable of interpellation of the "cosmic idiot"[7]. This is articulating more than a single entity in the cosmos, and bringing together a politics that is not exclusively human. These requirements find their greatest plausibility in the Martha Nussbaum's cosmopolitan argument of the "capability approach"[8].

Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach as "extended cosmopolitanism"

The "capabilities approach" developed by Nussbaum is a normative argument based on the definition of a set of capacities that constitute a morally dignified human and non-human animal life. This approach has the potential to establish principles that guide a theory of global distributive justice as much as the design of domestic or international policies on matters of development; human rights and security; and matters relating to animals. From a politically liberal-feminist and cosmopolitan philosophy, Nussbaum's approach has the aspiration to be universal, that is to say, based in the notion that a life can be lived with dignity by each individual human on the planet, independent of the social grouping to which they belong (Nussbaum, 1992). Furthermore, it advocates for a life that can be lead with dignity by non-human animals, based on the intuition that all animal creatures in the world have the moral capacity and right to flourish and prosper.

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[7] The "cosmic idiot" is a conceptual character developed by Gilles Deleuze, who represents a skeptical position and resistance to any instance that seeks to accelerate the legitimation of knowledge. The "cosmic idiot" calls us not to rush to believe that we have sovereignly the meaning of what we know.

[8] It does not reject that other cosmopolitan philosophical theories might also be capable of cosmo-political interpellation.

The list of capabilities are as follows[9]: *Life* (able to live a complete life); *bodily health* (able to enjoy freedom of movement, protection of the body, and opportunities for sexual satisfaction); *senses, imagination and thought* (use the senses, imagine, think and reason); *emotions* (have affective ties toward things and other people); *practical reason* (able to form a conception of good and a critical reflection on one's life); *affiliation* (live with and towards others, show concern for other human beings, participate in various forms of social interaction); *relation with other species* (live in relation with animals, plants and the world of nature); *play* (laugh, play and enjoy recreational activities); *control over the environment* (participate in political decisions that govern the live of individuals)[10]. This list is subject to reformulation and contestation in each one of its components, to the extent by which it recognises possible contributions from other voices (Nussbaum, 2000: 77). For example, the capability of *relation with other species* emerges from discussions and suggestions developed among Norwegian organisations for the safeguarding of relational ties citizens have with the boreal forests understood as a place to enjoy a particular type of solitude.

The capability approach, as a cosmopolitan argument, has five characteristics that distinguish it from Beck's work and other cosmopolitan proposals. The capability approach gives the opportunity to minimally participate in the cosmopolitical space. Firstly, it is not based on an essentialist conception of the human or on a collective social support (as supposed by Beck); rather, it is based on a historic and pragmatic unfolding of life as activity. In this sense, the capability approach defends a strategic formulation of universality to ensure basic human and non-human capabilities. The capability approach is susceptible to interpellation and specification from dialogue with diverse societal configurations. Secondly, it recognises dignity, agency, and status of subjects, humans and non-human animals: for Nussbaum, humans and animals possess given moral powers (not derived from contractual or utilitarian premises) that they use to establish themselves through the realisation of their capabilities. Thirdly, the moral and non-essential equality between humans and

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[9] Initially intended for humans, expandable *mutantis mutandi* to some animals.
[10] This list was prepared according to the Works of Nussbaum (1992, 2000 &2011).

animals is viable under the premise that the objective of social cooperation is "to live with dignity, together in a world in which multiple species try to flourish" (Nussbaum, 2007: 346). Fourthly, it understands human and animal dignity as the attainment of capabilities, that is to say, through the performance of the bodily and social belonging, and not through the abstract and rationalist retelling of what it is to be human, such as that presupposed by Kantian cosmopolitans. Finally, the approach seeks to protect, through the capability of *relation with other species*, the multiplicity of substantive ties (neither instrumental nor individual), which man establishes with his environment and the beings that inhabit it.

Shortening the distance between cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitics?

To what extent does Nussbaum's add to Kant and Beck's cosmopolitanism? And under what terms is it more inclined to align itself with the cosmopolitical project? In order to contribute to a partial response to these questions, it is necessary to remember what the central elements of cosmopolitical argument are. For Stengers, cosmopolitics is an operator for equality. It implies that "all have to be present in the mode that makes the decision as difficult as possible" (Stengers 2014: 39). Therefore, cosmopolitics is a decelerator of politics, which does not accept representation, which rejects any simplification via equivalential similitudes. However, at the same time, the cosmopolitics proposal suggests the encounter of heterogeneity, between a plurality of worlds that destabilise and undermine the intentions of Kantian "perpetual peace". The "cosmic idiot" asks for slowness in the face of the urgency of solving the problems of the world; it proposes a cosmos whose politics resists the exclusively human, a politics whose cosmos conceives of a potentially infinite list of entities.

In view of this definition, Nussbaum's cosmopolitanism offers a version that overcomes the weaknesses of Beck's theory, and which *in a limited way*, establishes points of linkage with cosmopolitics.

Since cosmopolitanism identifies an organic continuity between humans and non-human animals, it is indisputable that the ontological terrain upon which the

"capability approach" is erected is mono-naturalist. At the same time, cosmopolitanism conceives both groups as possessing agency, moral dignity and morally relevant capabilities inscribed in their social and bodily capabilities. As such, the organic mono-naturalism, that ties the approach to a scientific theory, fulfils the secondary role facing the moral value of these capabilities. Hence, mono-naturalism operates as a vector of equality between humans and non-humans in the pursuit of a thriving and established life for diverse forms of life and species that live on earth.

Both, strategic universalism and the moral commitment of capabilities to equality are elements that make us think how the "capability approach" can be understood as something more than a mere generator of equivalencies between different entities, though less than an operator of equality in the sense of Stengers. In effect, the interrelation between humans and non-humans is one of the elements that are under consideration in Nussbaum's argument on cosmopolitanism (Nussbaum, 2007: 347). In addition to this, one must add that although animals do not represent themselves in cosmopolitical politics, they at least participate in an indirect form. One can suggest that this proposal configures a space whose cosmos is composed of more than one entity and whose politics does not exclusively involve human beings. Because of this, Nussbaum's cosmopolitanism is more than Beck's cosmopolitanism and more inclined toward a cosmopolitical articulation, in spite of its limitations.

In what way could Nussbaum's cosmopolitanism open itself more boldly to cosmopolitical interpellation? How could it articulate itself in a political pluriverse? Firstly, I argue that it must be susceptible to destabilisation resulting from encounters with other ontologies. For this, the terms of the approach must open themselves up to consider prerogatives and demands of other subjects or actors that symbolise the "radical otherness" (Viveiros de Castro, 2010). "Radical otherness" is referring to those practices and worldview conceptions belonging to cosmology and ways of life of indigenous societies, whose identities date back to the pre-Columbian period and European colonisation.

These ontologies, which underlie and reproduce through social practices of various indigenous collectives in Latin America, emphasise modes of relation between

humans and non-humans that are distinct from those which mono-naturalism recognises. For example, the animist ontology, whose distinctive characteristic is the social continuity between indigenous communities and communities of non-human beings (Descolá, 2004)[11], which characterises the viewpoints of various groups that inhabit the lowlands of South America. Furthermore, the analogist ontology, where indigenous collectives integrate non-human entities on different levels, but in a hierarchical manner, as occurs in some indigenous societies in the highlands of South America (Descolá, 2013). In order to have a better understanding of the sociocultural and political ways of these human collectives, it is crucial to develop a disposition toward the recognition of ontologies distinct from mono-naturalism.

The work by Marisol De la Cadena depicts what is at stake when the interaction between natural beings and human beings confront at least two ontological perspectives; there are important political consequences. In 2006, indigenous organisations from Cusco, Peru, mobilised in defence of the mountain *Ausangate*, whose integrity they saw as being threatened by the possibility of a major mining operation being located on its slopes. In the cosmology of Andean indigenous peoples, Ausangate, represents a spirit that is a source of life or death, misery or wealth, depending on how appropriate the interactions those communities establish with this entity. Therefore, the construction of a mine does not only represent an ecological danger; it also increases the possibility that *Ausangate* could go crazy and reach the point of "killing people". This is because the interruption of practices of respect and affect that characterised the relationship between the indigenous community and natural spiritual beings from the Andes, can have uncontrolled consequences (De la Cadena, 2010: 339-341).

Therefore, we have two understandings with respect to the conflict that *Ausangate* evokes. From the 'mono-naturalist' point of view, the mountain has a cultural or ancestral value for indigenous peoples and socio-environmental activists[12]. Its

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[11] Or "perpectivist", if said social continuity is not substantive but pronominal, according to Viveiros de Castro (1998).
[12] They protested alongside environmental activists in the plaza de armas in Cusco, displaying boards that said "We defend our cultural ancestry with our lives: No to the mine!" (2010:338).

contamination represents an ecological and socioeconomic danger for these communities. However, from the point of view of the animist or analogical ontology, it is the affect, respect and relationships of reciprocity between agents of the earth and humans that are in danger. Both understandings structure a cosmopolitical argument that contrasts two positions or worlds around this very entity (the mountain). Based on this conflict, the 'capability approach' could invoke, from its mono-naturalist condition, the capability of *relation with other species* as the normative function for protection of the link between *Ausangate* and the communities. In a similar way to the recognition of ties between Norwegian citizens and the boreal forests, in the case of *Ausangate* in Peru, the 'capability approach' seeks to protect a group of morally relevant and historically constructed interactions between society and nature.

In recognising the relationship of moral continuity between humans and other non-human beings, one is accounting for a bond of strength. For example, if the ecological habitat of socio-cosmology is damaged, by paraphrasing Nussbaum, human and non-human members are prevented from living a morally dignified way of life. Cases such as the one of *Ausangate* shows us that the breakdown of modes of relationship, respect and attachment between participating entities and the cosmopolitical Amerindian universe, pose a serious threat to indigenous people in terms of leading a dignified life. These cases constitute matters of concern and justice, at least in the cosmopolitan theory of Nussbaum, which, despite its limitations, offers the best conditions for a cosmopolitical articulation.

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