

## *A non globalized cultural cosmopolitanism*

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Riassunto: Questo articolo si prefigge l'obiettivo di (A) fornire un'introduzione a *Le Cosmopolite* di F. Monbron che consenta di intendere in modo diverso il Cosmopolitismo del diciottesimo secolo. Questa lettura alternativa (B) non concepisce l'umanità come una realtà dotata di un comune fondamento e i cui membri avrebbero i medesimi diritti ma, piuttosto, come ciò che si ottiene nel corso del viaggio, guardando al diverso e prendendo atto della propria piccolezza. È inverosimile che (C) una cosa tanto piccola possieda un'identità stabile, statica. Ritengo che quest'idea consenta di distinguere efficacemente il cosmopolitismo dalla globalizzazione e da ciò che si definisce "essere cittadini del mondo". Quest'ultima qualifica si ottiene solo curiosando tra la molteplicità di forme e la varietà di ciò che ci circonda.

Abstract: The aim of this article is (a) an Introduction to F. de Monbron's, *Le Cosmopolite* in order to present a different way of understanding Cosmopolitanism in XVIIIth. (b) Such way doesn't think that humankind has the same background and identical rights, rather humanity is something you get travelling, looking at the different and realizing you are a tiny, insignificant thing. (c) So little thing that you have not a firm identity. With this idea I think we can separate cosmopolitanism from globalization and become a "citizen of the world" because we have curiosity to know the multiform and varied world we live in.

Keywords: Fougeret de Monbron, Cosmopolitismo, Globalización

Sommario: Introduction – *The Cosmopolite* by Fougeret de Monbron – The foundation of our present – Cosmopolitanism and globalisation – Cosmopolis

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and knowledge – The right of the inquisitive – Cultural cosmopolitanism – What to do with the right of the inquisitive man? – Conclusion – Bibliography

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## Introduction

The starting point for my paper lies in those events which have already been baptised as the “Arab spring” and which were followed with great interest several years ago. I am convinced such interest was accompanied by a somewhat haughty attitude according to which the various Arab movements were fighting to achieve something we had enjoyed for a long time, as if the southern shore of our Mediterranean was coming of age and we were to welcome them to the grown-up world we had long been enjoying. It was as if all we had to say is “look, they want to be like us” which to me seemed a cocky conviction with which you really could never go to welcome anyone.

This, moreover, was linked to an idea that seems to have been established for some time, according to which globalization advances unstoppably. A globalization that joins the ideal of cosmopolitanism in order to introduce an inevitable world governed by an economic and political system that is more or less our world. And this is something that I think can be dangerous for our own democracies and for this reason in what follows I would like to introduce a rather different cosmopolitanism from the one we are familiar with—a cosmopolitanism that has little to do with the globalization which in fact seems inevitably to have won, but rather considers the idea of global citizenship more in cultural than in political terms.

To this end my paper is divided into three parts. The first offers a quick sketch of the work of a forgotten author who, in the XVIIIth. was the first to publish a book inspired by the ideal of “citizen of the world”. The second shows how we understand our

cosmopolitanism and why we have linked it to the idea of economic and cultural globalization. The third part, shows what is lost as a result and introduces cultural cosmopolitanism as a cosmopolitanism which is founded on the notion of journey and built around cultural attention.

### ***The Cosmopolite* by Fougeret de Monbron**

In 1751 *The Cosmopolite or the citizen of the world* was published. Its author was Fougeret de Monbron. This little book enjoyed a notorious fame in its day. It exerted great influence on thinkers like Diderot o Voltaire, was greeted with enthusiasm by Lessing and captivated Byron<sup>1</sup>. Yet *The Cosmopolite* slipped into oblivion, only emerging from time to time when it was cited by some scholar essaying a history of cosmopolitanism. Those citations usually affirm that, apart from the title, Monbron's work bears no relation to our cosmopolitanism and that his book only served to give to the word a pejorative connotation (as designating one who does not love his homeland). And all of that is true.

Fougeret de Monbron took as the starting point for the book his recollections of a series of journeys he made between 1742 and 1748. It is important to emphasise that those recollections were only the starting point: the work is not «a travel book nor an autobiography, nor a political pamphlet or collection of gallant tales»<sup>2</sup>, but a series of reflections strung together one after the other which are neither profound nor even ordered in any way. Rather they are merely thoughts which Fougeret de Monbron uses as a visiting

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<sup>1</sup> From now I will use the first edition of Fougeret de Monbron's book (the page number will be next to the cited text). There is a modern edition from É. LAGILLE, *Fougeret de Monbron, Le Cosmopolite ou le Citoyen du Monde*, MHR Critical Texts, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> R. TROUSSON, *Introduction to Fougeret de Monbron, Le Cosmopolite, ou le citoyen du monde, suivi de La Capitale des Gaules ou la Nouvelle Babylone*, Bordeaux, Ducros, 1971, p. 13.

card on the pretext of his journeys and which allow him to make some observations and draw some conclusions regarding the character of the world's inhabitants which might be of use to him in his daily life. The lasting impression is that the cosmopolite of the title never quite becomes a complete, well-defined or definitive citizen, but is rather an other engaged in a quite disorderly, random process of self-fashioning while he is travelling, moving from one place to another. And that is the heart of the cosmopolitanism Fougeret de Monbron outlines. For all its "lack of rigour", I think it would do us a great deal of good to heed it, if only to assess what we would gain if we could add another shade to our customary manner of understanding cosmopolitanism (which often is understood as a sort of globalization with too many side-effects).

His first port of call was England where he was driven by a feeling of Anglomania very common at the time in France which found in English politics a model to be envied. There he travel with his declared wish to discover the genuine philosophical man Diogenes had spoken about, the man who stood aloof from the world and devoted himself exclusively to what his heart and intellect decreed suitable; to discover the free man who is not thrall to the opinion of others or to conventional prejudices, customs or morals. And there, right at the start of his odyssey, something happens which will recur throughout his journeys: failing to find what he was looking for, he repacks his bags and departs in the conviction that it's the same the whole world over. Disappointment and an empty purse lead him back to France where, after a few weeks' rest, he declares himself as unquiet and needing nothing more than to toss a feather up in the air to find out the direction of his next journey. Fougeret moves from one country to another because he likes travelling, and anywhere will do because "his homeland is the world". More than "homeland", the world is his "home" for what emerges from *The Cosmopolite* is that is has no more home than

travelling itself<sup>3</sup>: for when Monbron is not on the move he is absolutely nowhere and is himself nothing, as if he had lost his very human condition.

His next journey is to Turkey, and then to Italy, Spain, Portugal and Prussia, before finally returning to England, a little more sceptical than before on the issue of the excellence of the English, although he cannot deny their possession of the only political system where one can be free. It is worth recalling that just as his journeys are improvised and that there is no really important reason why he goes to any particular place, so the thoughts he regales us with in *The Cosmopolite* are the product of chance, of the contingencies and happenstance of their author's life (an author who at no point intends to say what the world of human beings essentially is). They are nothing more than small, disconnected notes which offer no scheme of human nature and are put together just as Monbron underwent the experiences that give rise to them<sup>4</sup>.

In the absence of any fundamental idea about human nature, this book grants us no greater vision of humankind than that which in fact may be found in beings who like us walk, dress, love, and eat. There is then no scope for us to imagine ourselves in a world which unifies us all in a nature shared by all, there is not glimpses of a common human nature or a common law, there is not the possibility of a common citizenship from which to declare our rights and to press our claims. No; for Monbron there is nothing beyond the reality in which we subsist with greater or lesser fortune, no way of imagining ourselves beyond that "greater or lesser fortune", beyond that simple getting by in life which, in Monbron's case,

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<sup>3</sup> The essence of *The Cosmopolite* is the next sentence: «When I became healthy, I tossed a feather up in the air in order to know the direction I would take my journey», p. 32.

<sup>4</sup> «The only purpose I have is to give expression on paper the reflections I made during my journeys in the way in which the chance and occasion suggested to me», p. 33.

almost always means losing<sup>5</sup>. It may be for this renunciation of the humanity which underlies all men, that his contemporaries and modern critics was led to agree in his abhorrence of humanity and to accuse him of misanthropy. On account of that misanthropy *The Cosmopolite* is said to be not Cosmopolitan at all: it would be a poor thing a citizenship of the world where the traveller never felt that he shared some universal and common core of humanity with those he met along his way. I am not sure that that is really Fougere de Monbron's view of things. There is neither abhorrence nor disdain. It is true that he only wants to live life his way, but I have a feeling that through living life his way, forms of living with the other evolve in a way more cosmopolitan than those which have developed on the basis of the desire (sometimes the imposition) of building a world together with the other. That is what I now wish to demonstrate.

### **The foundation of our present**

Unless I'm mistaken, a misanthrope is someone who shuns society, but Monbron does not do it; we don't have to follow him very far before to notice that he is always in company, always observing the other with attention<sup>6</sup>. There isn't a line of *The Cosmopolite* where Fougere de Monbron is not attending to the other, watching them with curiosity, showing an interest in what they do. And this interest is the origin of an empathy which, when all is said and done, is the motive force behind his whole account.

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<sup>5</sup> «It is highly likely that anyone but myself would, in view of such an encounter, take a secret pride in having made a conquest, but throughout my life I have received so few strokes of luck that no such thought even flickered in my spirit», p. 108.

<sup>6</sup> «On the other hand, one cannot be eternally devoted to oneself; a little company, whether good or bad, helps to pass the time», p. 38.

What is interesting is that, because he rejects any universal idea of humanity, or of humanity's rights, Monbron founds his understanding of the human on the fact of going and looking and talking and having adventures with the other. In fact he is happy to chat away with anyone (in a Turkish cemetery, with a dissipated Roman nobleman, with a young aspiring actress ...), and pays attention to what they have to tell him. And from what he is told, he is able to compose his reflections which consequently do not spring from any assumption previous to the conversation, the tale, the story he is told, do not presuppose that before anything happens, even before the initial greeting, the person he is going to talk with shares with him a humanity which will be corroborated in what he tells him or, otherwise, in what he doesn't know about himself. No; Monbron's world does not posit a universal reason which, expanding like a god through the universe, makes all men brothers in some sort of humanity; for him humanity is rather built out of the conversations people actually have, out of the acts of treason, the deceptions, the misfortunes suffered by the company of human beings, as well as out of the pleasures, laughter and happiness which are also to be obtained from the same company.

In short, the Cosmopolitan traveller *a là* Monbron, the one who regards his travels only as readings from the book of life instead of as a revelation of whatever it may be that joins all lives, is the sort of traveller who offers us his opinions and judgements on the basis of the steps he has taken along with the pleasure he has derived from them and the cautions he has learned from the situations he has been in, and so forth. There is no sentence, no imperishable statement, no ultimate truth to be established because travel is a random affair, as are friendships, and life itself which is endlessly changing and unimaginable before setting off on the journey. Accordingly, Monbron's only imperative is to "attend" to the other with empathy, to be inquisitive, and to recognize himself in the pleasure that accrues on travel and on seeing new things by means of which to carry on the tale which tells of his own life.

Yet we shouldn't permit the charm of travel to make us unjust. There must be some difference between one man whose only request is to be allowed to live his own life and another who, while living his own life, is also capable of imagining a world where peace between nations is possible as well as a system of law which is binding on us all. And in fact there is a difference. Our international organizations, such as the UN, the International Court of Justice, and all those which are generally considered to be indispensable because they are the only redoubt of global justice, are related in some way to an idea, with a stoic tone, according to which is conceivable a state of universal right which has nothing at all to do with the right of the inquisitive man which may be claimed from the pages of *The Cosmopolite*. The power to organize our world, to solve conflicts in a less cruel (more civilized) way is not for been forgotten; it would be very hard for us to stop imagining that there can be no justice unless it is established globally and that that entails a global citizenship, or at least the possibility that some parameter for global legislation exists (for example the Human Rights charter)<sup>7</sup>.

Let us be honest. The International Law we aspire to is much more than the right of the inquisitive man who asks to be allowed to travel at his own whim; our cosmopolitanism is tied to a notion of global justice, of being able to make pronouncements and pass judgements in countless places because we brandish a notion of Human Rights outside of which we believe there is nothing but

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<sup>7</sup> Stephen Toulmin demonstrated, several years ago, that the idea of Cosmopolis was the basis of international stability from the XVIII century. And that was possible because we started to build our modern order from the conviction that all countries are obviously different, but they have a minimum in common that serves us the reference in order to have an universal measurement. That minimum refers to the human condition (for us to the Human Right Charter) and from this starting point we can imagine the place of perpetual peace where all countries can solve his differences. See S. TOULMIN, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity*, The University of Chicago Press, 1990.

inhumanity<sup>8</sup>. Monbron explicitly proclaims himself a citizen of the world at the very moment he wishes to travel for a second time to England, when he is told that he cannot because he is a French citizen and France and England are at war; whereupon he declares himself removed from any dispute “between the great ones”, adding that he neither French nor English but simply someone whose homeland is the whole world<sup>9</sup>. Today this might sound like the protest of someone who is not permitted to do what he wants, in this case travel where he likes; and in such cases we consider it is prudent, first of all, not to travel, and then to refer the conflict to an international instance which may attempt to use a Cosmopolitan law to impart (global) justice and impose a fair solution. As you can see, we have learned some lessons and worked to develop a rather more sophisticated, elaborate and effective cosmopolitanism.

## Cosmopolitanism and globalisation

K.A. Appiah puts forward a two part definition of cosmopolitanism. On the one hand the cosmopolitan is whoever believes that there are some basic issues on which all human beings can agree; on the other, whoever additionally recognizes that one’s own life can be enriched by attending to different modes of human life<sup>10</sup>. I think that this idea raises more problems than it solves and, in the last resort, changes the playing field of cosmopolitanism because

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<sup>8</sup> View a very clear difference between the stoic cosmopolitanism (our cosmopolitanism) and the cynical one (the Monbron's cosmopolitanism) in R. LETEVALL, *The Idea of Kosmopolis: Two kinds of Cosmopolitanism* in R. LETEVALL, M.K. LINDER (eds.) *The Idea of Kosmopolis*, Södertörns Academia Studies 37, Hudinge, Sweden, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> «He asked if I had forgotten that we were then at war with England. I said no, but I was an inhabitant of the world and kept a strict neutrality between the belligerent powers», p. 126.

<sup>10</sup> K.A. APPIAH, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, W.W. Norton & Co. New York, 2006.

it converts cosmopolitanism into a game whose goal is the education of the global citizenry<sup>11</sup>. Yet Appiah's idea is nonetheless useful because it is a fair expression of the attitude we usually have when first –and somewhat ingenuously–we were confronted by our world, as globalised as it is multiculturalised. Unfortunately, the first part—that there exists such a thing as human nature from which a cosmopolitan right can be derived—has frequently hid the second—which alerts us to the riches available in mixing—and I would like to talk about this before returning to Fougeret de Monbron's little book and suggesting how it might make some contribution to our understanding—and admiration—of cosmopolitanism.

A cosmopolitanism, our cosmopolitanism, which began to install itself at the time of nineteenth century colonialism. Or with the colonial attitude which was later, and until quite recently, held by civilized democracies. If it were a matter of establishing a universal law and of giving to all an adequate degree of civilization, then so had to be do it, and thus the whole world would be inundated with *progress*. I should not be suspected of irony here; what I am attempting is to draw a parallel with some forms of regarding our globalised world. For the fact of the matter is that until a short time ago history was history as established in the Enlightenment, and that meant the elimination of differences which only hampered the working of reason. I repeat: I do not mean to be critical of our world; it was fine, for example, that no order existed that was different from the one indicated in our Human Rights charter. And that being the case, it is convenient for that charter to homogenise the whole world. Which means no homogeneity anyway beyond the recognition of a conception of human nature which is really

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<sup>11</sup> Cfr. M. NUSSBAUM, *Frontiers of Justice*, Harvard University Press, 2006 and also W. KYMLICKA (ed.), *The rights of minority cultures*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995.

enviable<sup>12</sup>. Those voices, for example, which have spoken from the UN or the International Court of Justice in the Hague have more or less reflected this enviable conception of human nature, and while it is true that there have always been divergent points of view, it is evident that the UN tried to gather all such differences together in a context of civilised debate. And there is nothing wrong with that. It is just that we should be aware that the only justice there has been, has been an Enlightenment one, one which has spoken with the voice of a cosmopolitanism which grew up around a notion of citizenship which was pronounced with the same tone Modernity used to talk about the civilized world (Europe and North America). Given that that world is enviable, no one should feel the least bit of guilty for attempting, for instance, to defend the dignity of women where it is offended; to do so may well be Western, enlightened and ethnocentric, but I imagine that the women defended care little about “ethnocentrism” like that, about that sort of erasure of the differences that are peculiar to them<sup>13</sup>.

But at this point a question occurs to me, a question which I shall try to answer later as it is not very pressing here. The question is: Shall we learn nothing from those on whom we impose our cosmopolitan voice? And if we shall learn something, how shall we learn it? To recast the question in the terms of the context in relation to which it occurred to me: in the face of the past revolts in North African countries, does any value attach to the consideration that they are embarking on their own journey towards democracy? Are those events simply an imitation, a desire to achieve what we already have? Is cosmopolitanism simply the assumption that in

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<sup>12</sup> R. Falk from this point introduced the notion of a global civil society. Cfr. R. FALK, *On Human Governance: Towards a New Global Politics*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1995 and ID., *Achieving Human Rights*, New York, Routledge, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> It is needed not to be blind to the fact that Cosmpolitanism implies demands of global justice. TH. POGGE (ed.), *Freedom from Poverty as a Human Right*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007.

the last resort we all share *more or less* the same values which find expression in *more or less* similar political systems? It may be that the answer to all these questions is simply “yes”, which strengthens the sensation that little by little, in the course of that part of history we have had to live, cosmopolitanism has been translated into a globalisation where all cherish the same aspiration, namely to live in freedom (by which is meant everyone acting according to their wishes without bothering anyone else). We are all in agreement on this point; we all desire the same thing; we all use the same information and communication networks; we all really draw on the same body of important information; we are all citizens of a world which institutes a common citizenship (understood most of the time as democratic citizenship). Some way or another the global world has translated cosmopolitanism to a shared conviction: of course we have the same nature, that of the free man who aspires to live in a democratic order which expresses its justice worldwide. But does it really *have to be* like that?

Maybe it does. Probably the Arab rebellions we followed several years ago, were merely the returning to the democratic field of a flock which had never really been there before, but which had longed for such a home, which it had always nurtured in its heart and in its desires; probably they are merely becoming members of a world of rights which, in short, is tantamount to a world where very similar products, democratic models and snippets of information are universally consumed. If it all really *is* like that, we should view with suspicion the way cosmopolitanism has established a tremendously one-dimensional world by throwing its weight behind the conviction that there are basic issues on which all human beings agree. Such suspicion is, I think, well grounded because that conviction underlies a view of the other in which the other is not *really* different (she merely aspires to be like us).

## Cosmopolis and knowledge

At this point we would do well to remember that the guarantee of a universal ideal of humanity was granted by the confidence that such an ideal could be known, could be revealed by knowledge. In truth, the dictum “dare to know” seems to be the quintessence of the Enlightenment because it presumes that all knowledge will end up in the same place, in the Encyclopaedia which contains everything, absolutely everything there is to be known about the world, and where all the questions have already been answered with rigour and uncontaminated by idols and prejudices: they are completely objective or disinterested. And because it is objective and does not answer to interests, the knowledge set on display in the Encyclopaedia is universal. It is valid for all, has no wish to deceive—it is, in short, the same for the whole of humanity which, without ever setting foot out of home, would happily lend its signature to what the Encyclopaedia regales it with. Yet the truth is that today we have lost such guarantee since our globalization does not entail knowledge. Or at least it does not entail *a particular* knowledge. In fact, knowledge has become threadbare in the correlation of bits of information which are really data whose only ambition, far from to constitute an Encyclopaedia, is simply to be data<sup>14</sup>. Whether that is good news for democracy or bad news for thought, is a matter I shall not dwell on here for I simply want to highlight the fact that today there are many points of view which demand to be recognised as knowledge, and, at the same time—and by way of emphasising diversity—there are already many works of analysis—and it is widely acknowledged—that show how knowledge is permeated with interests.

However, which had hitherto been assumed as truth in all philosophical, sociological, linguistic, historical, etc., reflections

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<sup>14</sup> I discuss the difference between the traditional encyclopedia and today’s Wikipedia in *Globalización vs. ciudadanía cosmopolita* in « Astrolabio », 9 (2009), pp. 195-203.

looks like a political and economic contestation to those countries or organisations which had been told that they were bereft of modern knowledge (i.e. unprejudiced and objective). May be it is obvious that a given country should not be permitted to develop nuclear energy when the "wise" countries knows such nation doesn't know how to use it for appropriate purposes. But is it as clear as that? That transgenic products may flood the world in order to put an end to the hunger that afflicts it is a scientific and probably objective argument which is always laced with commercial idols and whims which lead us to suspect that the objectivity of the claim "we are fighting against the hunger" should not be the only issue to be taken into account when assessing it. Just as in those two cases, our cosmopolitan citizenship, our universal Cosmopolis of human rights, is rooted in a knowledge of human nature and of its rights that cannot be regarded in any straightforward way as neutral, objective, "human" in any universal sense. Or even if it were, is it really the case that the universal knowledge does not change from everything that goes on in the world? Is what is human and what rights correspond to it so clear, fixed and established? And how does one learn, change, modernize?<sup>15</sup>

### **The right of the inquisitive**

There are three kinds of traveller. There's the one who leaves home and, like a tourist in a seaside town, sees nothing on his trip: he eats the same things as always, speaks the same language as always, and he is sometimes even accompanied by his neighbours. There is too the one who looks at the world without leaving home and finds in that world his own home. Much more considerate than the first tourist, this global cosmopolite is even able to learn some words spoken in the place he travels to and acquire some of the

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<sup>15</sup> From another point of view O. Höffe has pointed very similar consequences in O. HÖFFE, *Wirtschaftsbürger, Staatsbürger, Weltbürger*, München, C. H. Beck, 2004.

foreign customs. But he does so because he thinks that everybody can learn from everyone without having to leave one's own town, that if only he had seen the interesting things he learn on an TV report, he could have picked up the same customs he comes back with like a new person from a foreign country. Finally, there is the traveller who on his travels sees different things which make him see the home he set out from in a different light. Such a traveller is Fougeret de Monbron.

Unlike *The Cosmopolite*, our cosmopolitanism has no need to leave home in order to feel that the world is our home and consequently denies that any differences he happens to find beyond his doorstep are fundamental. Even before leaving, before putting on our scarf and opening the door, we know what those who live outside our neighbourhood must be like, however far away they live. At bottom all homes are like ours, with only small variations in the decoration which barely change the basic structure of the home we are used to<sup>16</sup>. Of course there are differences, but they can easily be recognized as non-essential, and we can also recognize that in a nutshell every single human being is striving to live with the other in a world of freedom, dignity and recognition, a world as defined, more or less, by the Human Rights charter.

There is nothing odd, then, about the fact that the idea of Cosmopolis has not infrequently gone hand in hand with the eradication of the differences which ran counter to that notion of human identity which underwrote it. That may be why it has ended up reaching fulfilment in a process of globalisation which has sometimes included a strong component of imposition, without realising

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<sup>16</sup> By way of example, it has just occurred to me to point out how similar are all the world's supermarkets, be they in Tokyo, Chicago or Madrid. There are small differences but they only have to do with minor variations in culinary taste which do not affect the basic structure of aisles (with all the knowledge applied to their positioning that they imply), shelf-fillers (with all the knowledge regarding how to pay and to hire them which that implies), checkouts (with all the knowledge ...), and so on and so forth. This is what *we* mean today by globalised world.

that if you eradicate difference, you may be eradicating something important. It has been in this area that philosophical discussion of the last thirty years has been centred—a discussion which has been transformed into social, political and economic evidence at the very moment that those who had seen how their differences were eliminated by those who were stronger than them, have grown sufficiently in size to be considered with enough weight to get their voices heard<sup>17</sup>. And in the first place, their voices have been raised to air their grievance at the imposition of an Enlightened universality which sounded alien to them and as a consequence of which there has been a tendency to turn a blind eye to their particularities, to their different ways of being human beings<sup>18</sup>.

But true travel, or so at least it seemed to Fougeret de Monbron, is to move from one place to another and look. And that mobile looking can never ascertain what things are *really* like (neither before or after looking at them). In fact, it cannot vouch that anything really is and will be forever; on the contrary, all it can do is project an ever-changing film before our eyes which tells us that we are a (ever-changing) part of that film.

To travel and to look, not in order to pin things down but to see them as they unfold and reveal themselves—that is the essence

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<sup>17</sup> This is the main reason that nowadays the issue about Justice is changing into a discussion about Global Justice. Cfr. O. O'NEILL, *Bounds of Justice*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000; J.C. VELASCO, *La Justicia en un mundo globalizado* in « Isegoria », 43 (2010): 349-362; and also POGGE, *Freedom from Poverty*, 165 ff.

<sup>18</sup> We can see daily that an orthodox construction of modernity has even made uniform our own past, without having to leave our neighbourhood. Just think of those histories of thought where only those thinkers fit who fit, or of art or culture where you only find what is there to be found; think too of the very history of our own country, a history written on the basis of acts of forgetting which at times have been all too substantial... May be A. MacIntyre was right when he exposed that Cosmopolis was a nowhere. Cfr. A. MACINTYRE, "Is patriotism a virtue?" in R. BEINER (ed.), *Theorizing citizenship*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1995, pp. 209-228.

of the inquisitive man who is Fougeret de Monbron. For if things, people and situations appear along the journey, they turn out to be so in so far as they are part of the journey, and they will only make sense in the account of that journey. We only have the narrative, the moment when the things unfold. And those moments are fleeting, they are suited to the place and context. In a word they do not fit well with the yearning for a law which puts us all in order. Accordingly, the citizenship of the world that *The Cosmopolite* proclaims does not predicate any Citizenship with a capital letter; rather its premise is that one becomes a citizen on account of having been in many places and because one gets to know oneself by means of all those places. This is evident in *The Cosmopolite*: travel is necessary if we are to know ourselves and to understand our life in company with the other. That is why there is no citizenship before the journey. Indeed, there is nothing before the journey of the inquisitive man.

### **Cultural cosmopolitanism**

Now, looking at others with the desire to start a conversation and to surrender oneself in that conversation is to look at them from a cultural perspective. A cultural perspective? Let's take culture as what it is today, namely a diversity of places from which may arise lifestyles. The gaze of the inquisitive traveller pays attention to the site where we human beings strike up *effective* relationships out of which rules and forms of behaviour are generated with which lifestyles are constructed. When paying attention to cultural mores there is no prior definition of what "human" is, of what the rights of humans may be; simply we have a real participation in a small parcel of life by means of which identities are formed. For example: for Fougeret de Monbron to experience the Venetian Carnival is to come to know a way of life and to derive pleasure from recognising oneself living that sort of life (a life of which one previously had had no knowledge or experience). Venice thus becomes

much more than its system of government (which is treated, naturally enough, in Monbron's account): it is a cluster of forms of conduct which regulate one or several lifestyles. What we today call culture is what constitutes Venice as Monbron experiences it, it the Venice he attends to.

Therefore, cosmopolitanism is transformed into the desire to attend to ways of life, into what I would call cultural attention. Unlike the Cosmopolis which opt for a universal right for all peoples, or at least in the possibility of a right universally accepted by each people, the only right of the Cultural Cosmopolitan proves to be the right claimed by curiosity to go away for traveling at the slightest excuse. To travel is to stroll and live in every cities,; is the desire to be everywhere, is to know that one is master only of one's own whims which take us from one place to another<sup>19</sup>. That is why for the traveller frontiers are continuously shifting, both political frontiers and those of his own identity.

(a) Political frontiers because any border is erased by the map of his journey<sup>20</sup>. It isn't so much that such a thing as countries exists and the good cosmopolitan can live in all of them because the

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<sup>19</sup> Cultural cosmopolitanism must allude to a world which is much more than the concert of nations, which reveals its Cosmopolitan nature not in the conditions which make travel possible (in the fact, for example, that France and England need to be at peace and part of a globalized order if one is to travel from one to the other), but in whatever it is which makes us travel from one country to another regardless of the state of its diplomatic relations or of world globalization: probably cultural cosmopolitanism is a disposition of life, as Waldron point to be the main characteristic of Cosmopolis. J. WALDRON, *Minority cultures and the cosmopolitan alternative*, in W. KYMLICKA (ed.) *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 93-119.

<sup>20</sup> «The little pleasure I tasted during my stay in Lisbon together with the constant fear I harboured of falling into the hands of the gentlemen of the Holy Office, made me take the decision to leave as soon as possible. It was not long before the occasion presented itself. An English fleet was on the point of setting sail for Great Britain, and I thought the best I could do was to avail myself of that fact. I communicated my desire to Mr. de Chavigny, the French ambassador. He asked me whether I had forgotten that we were then at war with England. I

whole of humanity shares a common core; rather frontiers are permeable, do not define or legitimise anything, but they are there as part of human knowledge—to put it another way, of humanity’s constructive will. But since such knowledge and such a will are always contingent, frontiers, nations, changes of language and customs, are also reconfigured by own journeying<sup>21</sup>. A journeying which is always a desire to look and to attend to the other, to what he does, and to the (cultural) sites where he builds his identity.

(b) The frontiers of one’s own identity are also assaulted because the journey is the sole bedrock of our humanity (of our human nature); it is the opportunity to follow our own random steps, which gives us the account in which the story of identity is told. It is not merely the case that I get to know myself in the course of the journey; the fact actually is that it is necessary to travel in order to be fully human. Travel is not an internal journey, but a cosmopolitan one which aims to “embrace” the other so that one may know oneself: we can have no other notion of ourselves but our moving from one place to another. We only *are* when we are in many places because we fashion ourselves by means of all those places. This is the citizenship of the world that the cultural cosmopolitan offers us: a citizenship which acknowledges that we are never anything because we are the very possibility of being anything when we are in disposition to take all paths, to listen to all voices, to take pleasure in trying out all changes.

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replied that I had not, but that I was an inhabitant of the world and maintained a position of strict neutrality between those belligerent powers», p. 126.

<sup>21</sup> «My retreat is much more peaceable in so far as I feel comfortable anywhere but in prison. All countries are to me alike provided that I may enjoy their clear skies in freedom and preserve my own person conveniently until the end of its days. Absolute master of my will and independent sovereign, in changing place, customs, climate at my whim I have everything and need nothing. Today I am in London, perhaps within six months I shall be in Moscow, in St Petersburg, in fine, how should I know? It would be no miracle that one day I should go to Isfahan or Peking», p. 136.

This may be why citizenship according to cultural cosmopolitanism is told in a travel book which does not even amount to *an* experience, but is rather an accumulation of experiences cast as ordained by luck and the caprices of recollection and oblivion. Fougeret de Monbron's journey is an ongoing, ceaselessly self-modifying construction of his self. «To travel is, then, to distance oneself from the need to remain faithful to a here and now and to oneself. To travel, and to tell it, is to be the other, to compose an identity from one day to another»<sup>22</sup>, and, accordingly, to recognize the other culturally before politically, and to acknowledge also that she is not my fellow-citizen, she is not another element identical to me in a big market, but is really the journey, the site where we make a definitive appearance. Though we never do so in any complete or "authentic" way, but as a non-unified sequence of events whose account is stuck together with the glue of chance<sup>23</sup>.

That is important because it implies to realize that we are always shaping ourselves (and thereby acquiring a shape), but that what we are is not that shape but the fact that we shape ourselves. To avoid sounding needlessly metaphysical, let us say for now that Fougeret de Monbron knows who Fougeret de Monbron is when he travels, when he sails, when he strikes up conversations and when he finds out about histories and customs. He really fleshes himself out in the sediment that all those stories, happenings and curiosities.

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<sup>22</sup> L. MICHEL, *Le libertin malgré lui. Une lecture de l'oeuvre de Fougeret de Monbron*, in A. CHAMAYOU (ed.) *Éloge de l'adresse*, « Cahiers Scientifiques de l'Université d'Artois », 2000, pp. 171-188, p. 182.

<sup>23</sup> Fougeret de Monbron. A misanthrope? At worst a highly inquisitive misanthrope who writes to others, addresses others, constructs his own life with the help of others ... maybe simply a man who has realized that the first step could be self-love or self-interest, but such step leads immediately to some kind of affection, of relation in which the heart takes pleasure in attending to the other. In learning from them.

I really find myself when I speak, when I enter into dialogue with what the others offers me with all his forms and styles of life<sup>24</sup>. That is why the Cosmopolitan is not the one who thinks that all human beings are essentially or by nature the same, or who with the best of intentions declares that no grand accords are required for people to live with each other and that Cosmopolis can be built if people do not ask for too much (as I stated earlier in line with Appiah 2007); on the contrary, the cosmopolitan is the person who, while thinking such things, goes one step further and recognizes himself precisely in the conversation he holds with those who are like him and not like him<sup>25</sup>. That is why is fundamental attention to different languages and ways of putting the world into words in order to recognize oneself. Attention to cultural diversity, if I may be permitted the expression, is not a more or less compelled step towards tolerance, but an indispensable part of configuring one's own identity.

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<sup>24</sup> It would be worth to look at the cultural cosmopolitanism as a confluence of several contemporary views. The «crucial feature of human life is its fundamentally *dialogical* character» (C. TAYLOR, *The politics of Recognition*, in A. GUTMAN (ed.) *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994, p. 32. Original emphasis) through which the individual constitutes an identity for itself in relation to Herbert Mead's well-known "significant others". A corollary of this contingent because reactionary (or responsive) identity is the dispersion of the subject into disparate selves which, long before the postmodernists, had been indicated by Mead: «We divide ourselves up in all sorts of different selves with reference to our acquaintances. [...] There are all sorts of different selves answering to all sorts of different social reactions. It is the social process itself that is responsible for the appearance of the self [...] A multiple personality is in a certain sense normal» (*Mind, Self, and Society*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1967 [1934], p. 142).

<sup>25</sup> And he recognizes himself not a homogeneous, invariable, pre-constituted someone, but as someone who is insignificant, always unknowing, whose very identity, utterances and life are merely straws in the wind. Fragile, unable to say "I am like this always"; yet also claiming the right—of the inquisitive man—to be able to follow—and to constitute himself—wherever the wind—chance, life—may take him.

This is the cultural cosmopolitan's great claim: culture is the very essence of cosmopolitanism. Why not forget about the concert of nations and put our money on the global world of the traveller? To travel is to listen to other voices, to know that we are with others, and to take pleasure in making ourselves in the company of others. The corollary of that is that if I take an interest in another country it is not because of any political connections or economic agreements, but because I am able to see myself in a new light when I come to know other ways of life. At this point relationships with others begin to build themselves on the basis of the pleasure of being with others. To pick up cultural threads is something which helps, not to know each other better, but to know ourselves better. Rooted in this conviction, international relations (and also those which govern the construction of civil society, but that is another matter) become truly effective. Rather than tolerating or putting up with those who are different, we journey to them out of interest; more than in recognizing them, we take pleasure in recognizing ourselves through their way of life. When we listen to them we will sometimes take them in, other times not; but our desire that they be there, in order to build ourselves and the city we wish to live, will always be patent.

The cultural Cosmopolitan may not conform an institution, but *is* a force which spread through the world our desire to be with the other. A desire to go and look, to be, in a way, the other. To break down frontiers not because we want to live at peace with our neighbours (or, put another way, because we want our neighbours to leave us alone), but because we want to see ourselves in their light. It may be the case that establishing Cosmopolitan relations that way may not guarantee certain results in the “concert of nations”, but I think it is the most effective way of living together.

## What to do with the right of the inquisitive man?

Is there any sense in admitting the right of the inquisitive man and recalling a cosmopolitanism which instead of erecting a great Cosmopolis only expresses the desire to travel and look? To travel and therefore to cultivate oneself, to enjoy oneself, to fashion oneself in the movement from one place to another, and to know that one will only be in so far as, like a straw in the wind, one displaces one's own life with the only reason provided by chance or caprice. This may be a suggestive proposal, but *prima facie* has little chance of inaugurating a world that can be *effectively* inhabited by a wide variety of human beings.

But although the cosmopolitanism of the inquisitive man may seem quite helpless when it comes to talking about morals and politics, it is also what spurs us on, for example, to form our world on the basis of the assumption that Human Rights are anything but a bureaucratic pastime. Rather they are a project of permanent travelling, listening and attending. As well, of course, of renewal, of change, of thinking afresh about what we are made of—even of rethinking, while endlessly travelling, our Human Rights charter.

To be a “traveller” with human rights does not mean to belittle them, but to set off with them, to look with them, to learn *for* them. We know that they are a limit against barbarity, but we should also know that that limit is not fixed and can, for instance, indicate increasing zones of barbarity (even in our own home). And we find that out when others discover a part of ourselves that we had not seen before, when they problematize and make us uncertain about our inmost essence. Monbron did not set out on his journey with a travel guide in his bags; on the contrary, having read them all he always supposed that he was exposing himself to what had never been imagined, to what had never occurred to him or to

anyone before (for that reason Monbron always scoffs at books of travels and even at his own conclusions)<sup>26</sup>.

It is clear that Fougeret de Monbron is a traveller; less clear that he is not a citizen of the world, but crystal clear that the world Cosmopolis wants to install, the world we usually associate with our cosmopolitanism, is anathema to him. If, when all is said and done, that world has ended up twinning itself with a sometimes utterly disagreeable globalisation, it might be worthwhile to turn our heads and to see in the travelling origin of cosmopolitanism a valuable wellspring. The Monbron's attitude is freed of any perspective shaped by "real humanity", of any perspective from the divine eye<sup>27</sup>. Of course there is sometimes an attitude to be imposed, a place to flee, a person to betray! But such options are never cloaked in—or justified by—a right, not even a "right of humanity"; rather they are outcome of desires, preferences or tastes. Therefore, and because Monbron is well aware that agreement is better than ongoing conflict, armed with his attitude we shall always be ready to pact and negotiate unburdened by the arrogant thought that we have complete and prior knowledge of who we are and of which agreements are obviously rights.

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<sup>26</sup> When Monbron was travelling Josiah Tucker proposed five categories in order to classified the different kinds of travellers. The most respectable of all was the kind of traveller Monbron reflected: «travelling to rub off local prejudices (which is the most commendable motive, thought not the most prevailing) and to acquire that enlarged and impartial view of men and things, which no one single country can afford». J. TUCKER, *Instructions for Travellers*, Dublin, 1758, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> «I have to warn you that my wandering imagination does not match with the methodic order», p. 13.

## Conclusion

In the light of the foregoing it is clear that cultural cosmopolitanism offers no mechanisms for solving international conflicts; but it is also obvious that when we view life more “intimately”, so to speak, such mechanisms may slip into oblivion since even ideas of nation or home should be impugned.

Looking around us, not patronisingly, not with half an eye on our own homes (where we all wish to return) or to see our own selves (as what everyone wishes to be), but learning through what we see (through how we are seen). Remembering, with a traveller’s gaze, that we have built our welfare on the basis of shutting ourselves up at home and securing a justice for ourselves which sometimes leave global justice in oblivion. To regard the past North Africa revolts –or whatever others– as the manifestation of a simple desire to enter the marvellous democratic fold (and I say so with no irony) will signify our own inability to understand our own world democratically (that is, in the spirit of a traveller) and to realize that we have to enter into with those who wish to gain access to the modern world (without having to subscribe to our way of being inevitably modern).

We must learn what a petty thing are our Rights, but also any others. Only that way can change and conceive of our life (our very world) experimentally, as befits the life of all travellers. Assuredly, there is no more home that continuous travelling, and that means that human life is fashioned when we go out and look around us, when we try to be with the other. An other who is as different as he is important and priceless, for he constitutes the very essence of the journey. Because, as Monbron teaches us, we travel not for looking at stones<sup>28</sup>, but to strike up conversations, to live with the

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<sup>28</sup> Every time Fougeret de Monbron offers a physical description of a place he laughs at the banality of what he is doing; and thereby he laughs at the vanity of guidebooks, at their wisdom and knowledge which tell us what things are like or that things exist in one way, not another.

other and to learn from her. And to enjoy or detest her company. That is why the cultural cosmopolitan defends the other and protects the difference with all his strength: such is the only way to construct his own identity. It is a different kind of cosmopolitanism which may be of use to us today. It is the difference between leaving home to have a look around and staying in the living-room to browse travel books which show us how all the world can be contained within the four walls of our house. Who knows whether it might not be a bad idea, for example, to conceive of our Human Rights as a project of endless journeying, listening and attending? And as well, of course, of renewal, of change, of thinking afresh about what we are made of—even of rethinking, while endlessly travelling, our Human Rights charter.

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