

Synthesis: an Anglophone Journal of Comparative Literary Studies

No 4 (2012)

Translation and Authenticity in a Global Setting



Beyond Hybridity and Authenticity: Globalisation, Translation and the Cosmopolitan Turn in the Social Sciences

Esperança Bielsa

doi: [10.12681/syn.17281](https://doi.org/10.12681/syn.17281)

Copyright © 2012, Esperança Bielsa



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Beyond Hybridity and Authenticity: Globalisation, Translation and the Cosmopolitan Turn in the Social Sciences

Esperança Bielsa

Abstract

This article focuses on current debates on the role of translation in the context of globalisation and, more specifically, on its prominence in theories of contemporary cosmopolitanism. Whereas globalisation theory was predominantly silent about the role of translation in making possible the flow of information worldwide, assuming instant communicability and transparency, translation has assumed a central importance in recent accounts of cosmopolitanism which focus on global interdependence, the negotiation of difference and the notion of multiple modernities. It is argued that such a concept of multiple modernities allows us to shift the emphasis away from notions of hybridity and authenticity and to stress the degree of interaction between different cultural traditions. A concept of translation becomes key in analysing the form in which these interactions take place and in specifying a notion of cosmopolitanism as internalisation of the other. The article finally discusses current debates on the transformation of citizenship as an instance of cosmopolitan processes of translation and internalisation of otherness.

Globalisation and translation

Globalisation, the economic, social and cultural processes that contribute to increased connectivity worldwide, has led to an exponential increase in translation and, at the same time, has placed translation in a unique position as a key mediator of intercultural communication. Translation —part of the shared languages and linguistic competencies that are a key infrastructure of global communication (Held et al. 345)— allows the global circulation of meaning and shapes the nature of the discourses that are disseminated in different localities. Contemporary globalisation¹ has witnessed the appearance of English as a global *lingua franca*, but this phenomenon has not led to a decline in the significance of translation. On the one hand, people whose native language is not English are constantly translating themselves into the dominant global language in order to communicate beyond their own locales. On the other, consumers prefer to use their own language for access to informational goods, which has led to a considerable growth of internet content in languages other than English in recent years, while the localisation industry has similarly experienced an unprecedented expansion.

However, current geopolitical inequalities are directly mirrored in translation, and a more attentive look at global linguistic flows reveals the basic asymmetries and inequalities that are an important feature of globalisation. Thus, some accounts of globalisation have pointed at the number of book translations from English and into English as an indication of the power distribution in global information flows, where those at the core do the transmission and those at the periphery merely receive it (Janelle 56-58; Lash and Urry 28-29; Held et al. 345-46). The global dominance of English is expressed in the fact that books originally written in English currently account for 55 to 60% of translations worldwide, while translations from German and from French, the only other languages that hold a central position in the global translation market, are about 10% each (Heilbron 2). At the same time, British and American book production are characterised by a low number of translations. Since the 1950s the number of translations has remained roughly between 2 and 4% of total book production, declining even further over the past decade. Thus, translations accounted for just 1.4% of books published in 2001 in Britain and 2.07% of books published in 2004 in the United States (as compared, for example, with 22.9% in 2002 in Italy or 7.3% in 2004 in Germany) (Venuti 11).

In this context, according to Lawrence Venuti, the global dominance of English is expressed not only in the low number of books which are translated into English but also in the way they are translated, following a strategy that denies the foreignness of the text and hides translation's very intervention. Venuti has produced a critique of what he defines as domesticating translation, which is based on making a translated text read fluently, as if it was an original, thus rendering translation invisible, transparent. The effects of domesticating translation are to conceal the conditions under which it is made, starting with the translators' crucial intervention in the foreign text, and to create a

recognisable, even familiar, cultural other. To this, Venuti opposes what he calls “foreignising translation,” which disrupts the cultural codes of the translating language in order to do justice to the difference of the foreign text, and deviates from native norms to stage an alien reading experience (15-16). Foreignising translation remains a marginal form of literary translation, while in other spheres where the transmission of information is the primary concern, such as localisation or news translation, the strategies followed are also clearly those of domesticating translation.

Given its key mediating role, it is surprising how little attention has been devoted in the social sciences to specifying and analysing the nature of translation in globalisation processes. One reason for this might be the widespread assumption that translation is a transparent process, which merely facilitates linguistic and cultural transfer without leaving any traces of its intervention. In the context of globalisation, and the ever increasing quantities of information flows on a global scale, the assumption of transparency becomes linked to one of instantaneity, which brings, according to Michael Cronin, “Anglophone messages and images from all over the globe in minutes and seconds, leading to a reticular cosmopolitanism of near-instantaneity,” devaluing the effort, the difficulty and the time required to establish and maintain cultural connections (49).

More generally, globalisation theorists have devoted more attention to the increased circulation of information, ideas, goods and people than to the productive conditions that make it possible. This has led to assuming that global texts can automatically be received by audiences and to obscuring the crucial intervention of translation in the production of a multiplicity of local versions.² Moreover, the assumption of transparency has led social scientists to ignore the fact that different translating strategies generate radically different texts, and more generally to underplay the degree to which translation calls the whole relationship between different languages and cultures into question.

The study of translation sheds new light on the processes of global interdependence on a concrete level and contributes to an understanding of the nature of cultural globalisation. In this context, it is necessary to distinguish between two, seemingly contradictory aspects of translation in the global dissemination of information. On the one hand, the asymmetrical nature of information flows determines, as pointed out above, that those at the centre often do the transmission, while those at the periphery merely receive it. In this sense, translation contributes to the dominance of Anglo-American culture by facilitating its dissemination worldwide. But, on the other hand, the predominance of domesticating translation, which denies real foreignness and fabricates recognizable others in the translating language, also means that global texts are significantly altered at the local level and that the influence of translation in this process of hybridisation should not be underestimated.

Translation in approaches to contemporary cosmopolitanism

The invisibility of translation in globalisation theory contrasts with its prominent role in some key accounts of contemporary cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism has received in recent years renewed attention in the social sciences as an important component of the heightening of global consciousness, which Roland Robertson emphasised as the significant subjective dimension of globalisation. The term is used not only to describe an empirical reality but also to question established disciplinary trends and to point to new methodological orientations. Thus, it denotes both an objectively existing social reality and a methodological approach to describing this reality. Cosmopolitanism is also viewed in its critical potential as embodying a transformative vision of an alternative society. An elucidation of the nature and role of translation in enabling and shaping intercultural communication today embraces these three dimensions of the concept.

Cosmopolitanism goes back to Greek Antiquity, where the notion of cosmopolitan or citizen of the world was developed by the cynics Antisthenes and Diogenes and the stoic Zeno, social outsiders to the *polis*, denoting inclusion, equality, and the idea of a universal community as opposed to particular allegiances to actual city-states (Fine and Cohen 138). Further, it is to the Enlightenment tradition,

and in particular to Kant's theories on cosmopolitanism and the attainment of perpetual peace, that many contemporary approaches to cosmopolitanism appeal. These emphasise the transformation of international law from a law of states to a cosmopolitan law based on the rights of individuals which do not only derive from the fact that they are citizens of their respective states, but also members of a cosmopolitan community (Bohman and Lutz-Bachmann; Fine; Habermas). Cosmopolitanism today, or what has widely been called the new cosmopolitanism, is characterised by a renewed attention to our global destinies, brought about by globalisation. Robert Fine signals the dismantling of the Berlin Wall in 1989 as the symbolic event that gives an image of the breaking down of boundaries and the emergence of new forms of solidarity.¹ However, it is particularly a perception of global interconnectedness as negative globalization (Bauman), and as a crisis of interdependence (Beck), that characterises contemporary cosmopolitanism. At the same time, what is referred to as cosmopolitan social theory entails a critique of the centrality of the nation-state in social theory and a defense of a new alternative approach to social reality.

In this context, Ulrich Beck's understanding of cosmopolitanism, and in particular his effort to connect the study of cosmopolitanism with sociological theory, is considered a major contribution to the debate. Beck has formulated a critique of what he calls "methodological nationalism" and argued for its replacement with "methodological cosmopolitanism," a new analytical perspective on social reality which frees itself from the national categories that have dominated thought and action. He describes the cosmopolitanisation of social reality, which is perceivable in the global risks and crises that we face in our global interdependence. Cosmopolitanism is thus for Beck no longer an idea but a reality, to which social science must respond with a new way of looking and understanding, with what he calls the cosmopolitan vision. Following Beck, the methodological nationalism that has characterised sociology and other social sciences, according to which the nation, the state and society are the 'natural' social and political forms of the modern world, is blind to this growing transnationalisation and to the multiple identities and affiliations that go beyond national frontiers. The cosmopolitan vision replaces the national vision and opens people's eyes to an already existing cosmopolitan reality. It is perceptive of the absence of borders and of cultural mixing and contradiction, of the new landscapes of identity and memory brought about by globality.

Beck also elaborates on cosmopolitanism as the recognition of otherness, and on universalism and relativism in the context of global interdependence. While universalism can only treat the other as equal and thus tend towards hegemony and the elimination of difference, relativism can only work through accentuating difference, tending towards the principle of incommensurability, which makes mutual comprehension of different perspectives impossible. However, the consequence of the assumption of incommensurability is the non-interference between cultures in a world where non-interference has become impossible and interference is easily transformed into violence (Beck 80). Cosmopolitan realism thus insists on how interrelation and intervention occurs in the constitution of our forcibly intercultural destiny, considering others as both different and equal (Beck 81, 84), beyond the limits and flaws of multiculturalism, which still operates in terms of non interference between homogeneously conceived cultural groups. Finally, Beck employs the notion of "reflexive cosmopolitanism" (97) to designate what is new in twenty-first century cosmopolitanism, this growing consciousness of an existing cosmopolitan reality.

On the other hand, Gerard Delanty's approach to the cosmopolitan imagination is centred on the relationship between cosmopolitanism and modernity. As he notes, the cosmopolitan imagination, as a condition of self-problematisation and incompleteness, is integral to modernity. Further, Delanty distinguishes current developments in social theory from the dominant Enlightenment notion of cosmopolitanism as a transnational republican order because they suggest a post-universalistic cosmopolitanism. Here, different modernities coexist and a single world culture is not postulated ("Cosmopolitan" 27). Therefore, in what he calls critical cosmopolitanism, "the cosmopolitan imagination occurs when and wherever new relations between self, other and world develop in moments of openness" ("Cosmopolitan" 27; *Cosmopolitan* 52-53). It is thus the principle of world

openness, created out of the encounter of the local with the global, which Delanty emphasises as constitutive of cosmopolitanism. Moreover, the combination of the local and the global (rather than universalism) and the attempt to reconcile universal solidarity with particular solidarities can be more widely taken to define cosmopolitanism today, which in this sense is of a post-universalistic kind ("Cosmopolitan" 27, 34-35; Fine 14). This post-universalistic cosmopolitanism emphasises tensions and conflict (between the global and the local, between the universal and the particular) rather than simply plurality, as constitutive of modernity. Therefore, processes of cultural hybridisation and localisation are highlighted as important ways through which the local and the national are redefined through their interaction with the global.

World openness or openness to others are basic categories in Delanty's notion of critical cosmopolitanism. Also for Beck, the cosmopolitan vision breaks with the insularity of national consciousness by opening itself to others and internalising their vision, imagining alternative ways within and between different cultures and modernities (112-13). The key role of translation in this context has by no means gone unnoticed. Thus, Beck at one point states that the cosmopolitan capacity obliges one to practice the art of translating and laying bridges, with which he means both relativising one's form of life in front of different possibilities and looking at oneself from the perspective of the culturally different (126). This obligation emerges not only from the fact that "the 'global other' is in our midst" (Beck and Grande 417), but also from the necessity to develop truly cosmopolitan, collective responses to the most tangible problems of a world at risk.

Delanty also notes that translation plays a central role in the cosmopolitan imagination and that critical cosmopolitanism opens up spaces of discourse and identifies possibilities for translation. He argues that cosmopolitan processes

take the form of translations between things that are different. The space of cosmopolitanism is the space of such translations. While the capacity for translation has always existed, at least since the advent of writing, it is only with modernity that translation or translatability, has itself become the dominant cultural form for all societies. ("Cosmopolitan" 43)

Furthermore, Delanty explicitly states that an emphasis on cultural multiplicity and interaction does not suffice to account for the cosmopolitan dimension of modernity, and adopts the idea of cultural translation to focus on how one culture interprets itself in light of the encounter with the other and constantly undergoes change as a result (*Cosmopolitan* 193-98). His is a groundbreaking account of how translation can be incorporated at the core of any analysis of modernity, to which I will return again in the following section, which sketches how the notion of multiple modernities is currently replacing the idea that modernity has spread univocally from the West to the rest of the world, in what has been called the cosmopolitan turn in the social sciences.

Contemporary cosmopolitanism is characterised by the interconnection between the global and the local, rather than by a general appeal to the universal beyond and above any existing local ties. It concerns the processes through which localities are modified by global phenomena, as well as the transnational connections that are established worldwide. Translation, broadly defined as a specialised means of dealing with the foreign, offers a privileged way of examining the links between the global and the local and of understanding processes of global communication. We have seen how contemporary cosmopolitanism can be defined as openness to and engagement with the other, an engagement which radically questions and transforms a concept of self, thus becoming an important tool for reflexivity and social change. It is in this context that a sociology of translation becomes a necessary part of any sociology of cosmopolitanism today.

Multiple modernities: beyond hybridity and authenticity

Explicit or assumed notions of authenticity have often been present in social scientific and humanistic approaches to modern society, revealing a problematic search for essences in a context in which 'all that is solid melts into air.' In his demolishing critique, Theodor Adorno identified in the early 1920s

the emergence of an existential ontology in the form of a cult of authenticity which, in its use of language and its belief in chosenness, resembled the Christian cult. Theoretical rigour and language were sacrificed in what Adorno characterised as the jargon of authenticity. The jargon of authenticity elevates apparently transparent words as symbols of ideas which acquire a new sense of immediacy and currency but, unlike discipline or profession-related talk, it favours communication across different social fields, generalising a mode of talking across the social spectrum. And it is this fragmented language in which the individual words are loaded at the expense of the sentence and of content, which spread to wider social discourses as a means of negating the loss of meaning of daily life:

In Germany a jargon of authenticity is spoken—even more so, written. Its language is a trademark of societalized chosenness, noble and homey at once— sublanguage as superior language. The jargon extends from philosophy and theology...to pedagogy, evening schools, and youth organizations, even to the elevated diction of the representatives of business and administration. While the jargon overflows with the pretense of deep human emotion, it is just as standardized as the world that it officially negates; the reason for this lies partly in its mass success, partly in the fact that it posits its message automatically, through its mere nature. Thus the jargon bars the message from the experience which is to ensoul it. (Adorno 3)

The success of the jargon of authenticity in all realms of social life after the Second World War points to one important connection between intellectual and academic discourses and wider social discourses, and helps to feed the belief that the social distance that separates intellectuals from the people can be symbolically abolished.³ In their mystification of social relations, discourses of authenticity place the emphasis on cultural uniqueness and the purity of origins and make it difficult to grasp the heterogeneous and ever changing nature of cultures, and the often contradictory character of intercultural relations. Concepts of cultural hybridity were developed from the middle of the twentieth century in different theoretical and empirical forms as a means to challenge essentialist views on culture and became widespread in the 1990s, in the context of new approaches to cultural globalisation that highlighted the degree of mixture of practices and traditions worldwide.

Some of the most significant concepts of cultural hybridity specifically focused on colonial contexts, analysing the way in which Western institutions, discourses and artefacts were adopted by the dominated cultures. Thus, Homi Bhabha centred on the importance of an in-between space, “the cutting edge of translation and negotiation” (38-39). In this context, he developed the notion of mimicry to point to the ironical compromise at which the civilising mission of the West arrives in the actual colonial context. Mimicry appears both as resemblance and as menace, disrupting colonial discourse through the disclosure of its profound ambivalence in defining the other as “almost the same but not quite” (Bhabha 86).

On the other hand, Néstor García Canclini employed a more sociological notion of cultural hybridity and empirically analysed the ways in which hybridity is manifested in Latin American social and cultural structures and practices. Thus, he showed how capitalism has expanded in Latin America not through the elimination of traditional popular cultures, but through their appropriation and restructuration. He approached the changing meaning of crafts and *fiestas* in Mexican society as traditions whose hybrid character is determined by the combination of their ethnic or historical aspects (their origins in pre-Columbian societies) and of their economic aspects (their insertion in a capitalist economy). For example, crafts, which were once produced and consumed within an indigenous community for practical and ritual purposes, are now produced by the indigenous communities in their subsistence economies and then sold in urban markets to be consumed by tourists according to their own cultural and aesthetic values (García Canclini *Transforming*). García Canclini coined the term “multitemporal heterogeneity” to refer to the fact that modernisation did not replace, in many cases, the traditional with the modern, but rather incorporated the traditional in new ways (*Hybrid* 47).

Perhaps the most appropriate illustration of a concept of cultural hybridity that has travelled between disciplines, discourses and academic traditions is found in the notion of transculturation. The term was first used in 1940 by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, who wanted to emphasise that traditional cultures were not merely passive recipients of the modernising influences received through both national capitals and foreign metropolises (as the term acculturation suggests). The cultural critic Ángel Rama later applied it to the work of a generation of novelists of the 1950s and 1960s (Augusto Roa Bastos, Juan Rulfo, José María Arguedas), whom he called the transculturators, who incorporated popular cultural traditions into the novel's language, structure and worldview, thus overcoming the divide between popular culture and the author's own culture that had characterised the regionalist novel of the 1920s. Rama's work on the Latin American novel and his analysis of cultural relations in historical perspective gained wide recognition and influenced many Latin Americanists in the Western academy. In the 1990s, the term transculturation penetrated North-American academic discourse through the work of Mary Louise Pratt, who used it in the subtitle of her book on European travel writing since the middle of the eighteenth century in the context of imperial expansion. According to her, transculturation works both in the representations of the coloniser about the colonies, which are shaped by non-European knowledges, and in the ways that these discourses are then selectively appropriated and refashioned by the new elites in a process of self-invention after independence. To examine the heterogeneous space in which transculturating practices are carried out, Pratt developed the concept of "contact zone," which she defined as "the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict (6). It could be argued that contemporary approaches to cultural hybridity in the context of globalisation appropriately expand the notion of contact zone to the totality of the globe.

In the context of globalisation, intercultural relations have been predominantly perceived either in terms of hybridisation and mixture (eg. Nederveen Pieterse) or in terms of clashes, whether globally (e.g. Huntington's clash of civilisations model) or locally (in what Appadurai has described as a worldwide genocidal impulse against minorities in the context of increasing social uncertainty). Here, an alternative perspective is proposed which, without minimising the significance of prevailing cultural difference and conflict, offers a way of examining specific processes of intercultural transfer and of empirically approaching how texts, ideas and beliefs are communicated across geographical, linguistic and cultural boundaries. That is, a focus on translation allows us to empirically approach Beck's idea of the cosmopolitan vision and Delanty's notion of critical cosmopolitanism as positing the coexistence of different modernities without the creation of a single culture.

In this context, the notion of multiple modernities is becoming an important component of what Beck and Grande describe as the cosmopolitan turn in the social sciences. Until recently, the idea that modernisation was a univocal process which would ultimately imply the disappearance of traditional forms of life and that modernity was a historical condition that is spreading from the West to the rest of the world had predominated in the social sciences. This view was already being questioned by social scientists in the periphery, with notions of alternative or peripheral modernity or concepts such as that of heterogeneous modernity highlighted above. These ideas have now penetrated Western discourses on modernity and influenced new research agendas that emphasise the need to analyse the relationship between different modes of modernity on a global scale. Thus, For Beck and Grande methodological cosmopolitanism is about paying attention to a plurality of modernisation paths, to the diversity of Western and non-Western experiences, and to their interdependencies and interactions (412). It is the latter dynamics of interdependency and interaction, rather than the existing diversity of modernisation paths *per se*, that is important in current conceptions of multiple modernities, becoming key to a definition of cosmopolitan modernity:

the idea of cosmopolitan modernity must be developed out of the variety of modernities, out of the inner wealth of variants of modernity. Cosmopolitan modernization, however, must not be equated with the

concept of pluralization. It not only highlights the existence of a variety of different types of modern society, it also emphasizes the dynamic intermingling and interaction between societies. In this regard it takes up key concepts of the literature on post-colonialism, such as 'entanglement' (Randeria 2004), and on globalization, such as 'interconnectedness' (Held et al. 1999), and it takes them further by introducing the concept of 'dialogical imagination' or the 'internalization of the other': the global other is in our midst. Cosmopolitization relates and connects individuals, groups and societies in new ways, thereby changing the very position and function of the 'self' and the 'other'. Such an 'internalization of the other' can be the product of two entirely different processes. On the one hand, it can be the result of an active, deliberate and reflexive opening of individuals, groups and societies to other ideas, preferences, rules and cultural practices; on the other hand, however, it can also be the outcome of passive and unintended processes enforcing the internalization of otherness. (Beck and Grande 418)

As Delanty also warns us, "The concern with multiple modernities, without this interactive dimension, can lead to the mistaken view of different modernities isolated from each other." (*Cosmopolitan* 188). Therefore, the idea of translation comes again to the fore as an empirical tool that can be useful to focus precisely on the concrete forms these interactions between different cultures take. Translation not only offers a way to examine specific processes of intercultural communication; it also allows us to analyse the diversity of local forms in terms of interpretation and adaptation. Moreover, the idea of internalisation of otherness as constitutive of reflexive or critical cosmopolitanism directly connects with a major tradition of thinking on translation since German Romanticism which has criticised a narrow understanding of translation as the transmission of information and defended a wider view of translation as the experience of the foreign. ⁴ It is this approach to cosmopolitanism as openness to and internalisation of otherness that, if taken to its immanent consequences, situates translation right at the heart of cosmopolitan social theory.

It is currently Gerard Delanty's work that has gone the furthest in this direction. Making use of Bhabha's views on cultural translation and his emphasis on translation as the creation of something new, of Benjamin's essay on the task of the translator and —through Ricoeur— of Berman's important updating of Romantic thinking on translation, Delanty arrives at some key new insights concerning the role of translation in cosmopolitan modernity. One of these insights is the crucial emphasis not just on translating the other, but on viewing one's culture through the eyes of the other, and undergoing change as a result. In this way, translation as internalisation of the other becomes the basis of accounts of modernity that are focused on notions of reflexivity and self-transformation. Another key insight is to reframe the question of homogenisation in the more productive terms of translatability. For Delanty, it is not that cultures are becoming more like each other, but that they are becoming more and more translatable (*Cosmopolitan* 194). Thus the emphasis shifts to the actual processes of communication through which the local and the global are constantly being renegotiated and recreated in new forms. The "cosmopolitan condition of living in translation" (Delanty, *Cosmopolitan* 196) is an expression of this fundamental dimension that translation has acquired for a specification of the processes that constitute our global modernity.

Contemporary debates on citizenship: an example

An example of the cosmopolitan turn in social theory and research that Beck and Grande defend can be found in some key approaches to contemporary transformations of citizenship. The current debate on citizenship is determined, especially in the case of Europe, by two simultaneous developments: the presence of large numbers of people of migrant origin who do not have full access to citizenship rights, on the one hand, and economic and political integration at supranational levels leading to what has been termed postnational societies, on the other. Contemporary approaches to citizenship not only explore how these transformations make it necessary to reconceptualise traditional notions of citizenship, but also propose a notion of citizenship that is not incompatible with a concept of cosmopolitan justice. The importance of this latter dimension is paramount as it directly relates to the third aspect of cosmopolitanism highlighted at the beginning of the second section of this article: its vision of an alternative society built on the grounds of the equality of all human beings, in spite of their irreducible differences, and the universality of rights.

With respect to the above mentioned trends towards erosion of the state system, Seyla Benhabib notes that “The old political structures may have waned but the new political forms of globalization are not yet in sight” (6). Benhabib has examined the transformation of citizenship in the European context in terms of the disaggregation of the Weberian model of citizenship based on unity of residency, administrative subjection, democratic participation, and cultural membership (144-69). Thus, in the European Union the entitlement to rights is no longer dependent upon citizenship status, and different rights regimes exist that sharply separate the rights of citizens of member countries from those of third-country nationals:

One can have one set of rights but not another: one can have political rights without being a national, as is the case for EU nationals; more commonly, though, one has social rights and benefits, by virtue of being a foreign worker, without either sharing in the same collective identity or having the privileges of political membership. (Benhabib 146)

If Benhabib refers to the constitutive tension of liberal democracies between universal human rights and political sovereignty claims, which are by nature particularistic and exclusionary, Étienne Balibar approaches borders as “a non-democratic condition of democracy” (315). Interestingly, he notes that borders and frontiers are simultaneously defined as functions of warfare and as functions of translation or linguistic exchange, making reference to the tight links between linguistic and political communities with the same boundaries, which are continuously enforced and developed through education, literature and journalism (317).

The notion of the border as a function of translation draws attention to its central role in a process of negotiation and democratisation of borders, aiming to situate translation at the centre of contemporary debates on the transformation of citizenship. In this sense, translation is part of “the daily process of resistances and vindications of basic rights on the part of the foreigners, which make them members of an active community of citizens, even before they are granted formal citizenship, thus concretely anticipating a cosmopolitical transformation of citizenship” (Balibar 320). Here, it is necessary to emphasise that this is not a linear process of expansion of the political community through the progressive incorporation of new groups. What is at stake is the very self-definition of this community, which is challenged when rights start to be claimed and exercised by others who do not share cultural membership. This is why an understanding of the contemporary transformations of citizenship as processes of translation, through which others reinterpret and appropriate our institutions and cultural traditions in different ways, reveals fundamental aspects of democratic renewal. Benhabib points out that it is precisely contestation around rights and legal institutions that paves the way for new modes of political agency and interaction, and approaches this dimension through the concept of jurisgenerative politics, through which a democratic people reappropriate and reinterpret the norms and principles that bind them, showing itself to be not only the subject but also the author of the law (169, 181). As an example of jurisgenerative politics, Benhabib examines *l'affaire du foulard*, which dominated French public opinion throughout the 1990s (183-98). The *affaire* started in 1989 with the expulsion of three scarf-wearing Muslim girls from their school and continued with subsequent expulsions in 1996, generating a national debate on what was perceived as a challenge to the separation of church and state and the neutrality of the public education system in the wake of the celebration of the second centennial of the French Revolution. The actions of these girls drew on key institutions and rights of French society, but played them against each other to create an irresolvable contradiction. As Benhabib points out, the girls claimed to exercise their freedom of religion as French citizens, but exhibited their Muslim origins in a context that sought to envelop them within an egalitarian, secularist ideal of republican citizenship as students of the nation (187). They forced what the French state wanted to view as a private symbol into the shared public sphere, thus challenging the boundaries between the public and the private: “They used the symbol of the home to gain entry into the public sphere by retaining the modesty required of them by Islam in covering their heads; yet at the same time, they left the home to become public actors in a civil public space in which they defied the state” (Benhabib 187). The reinterpretation of basic rights in order to defend the cultural and religious identities of Muslim women in public contexts poses new profound challenges to societies that now confront how their democratic institutions are used by others in ways

that were not previously envisaged, and that may ultimately annihilate the very principles of secularism and state neutrality that were the result of prolonged and fierce political struggles in the West. As Benhabib remarks in a fashion that is indebted to Derridean notions of hospitality, “We have to learn to live with the otherness of others whose ways of being may be deeply threatening to our own” (196). This is what distinguishes true cosmopolitan openness from certain cosmopolitan attitudes which refuse to face up to the real dangers and challenges mobilised by a genuine open dialogue with foreigners, such as Kristeva’s “cosmopolitanism without foreignness” (Honig 62-67).

Current debates on citizenship make concrete what Beck and Grande have referred to, perhaps in too abstract a manner, as the presence of the global other in our midst. The exercise of the rights of others who seek to participate as full members in our heterogeneous societies can initiate self-reflexive transformations of citizenship in a cosmopolitan direction. Such an instance of internalisation of otherness must be conceived as a process involving a double translation, through which others appropriate and reinterpret our traditions and institutions and this challenge leads in turn to a re-examination of established forms, to viewing one’s culture through the eyes of the other, and to reflexive self-transformation in moments of cosmopolitan openness.

¹ While it is often pointed out that globalising trends are present since antiquity in early imperial processes, the modern period, marked by Europe’s political and military expansion, is generally taken to be the origin of contemporary globalisation. Different periodisations have been offered of contemporary globalisation. Roland Robertson has referred to the present phase of globalisation as the “uncertainty phase,” which started in the late 1960s and is characterised by the intensification of global interconnectedness and the heightening of global consciousness, thanks to key technological and economic developments. Held et al. —putting political developments at the centre— define contemporary globalisation as marked by the consequences of the Second World War.

² For theoretical perspectives dealing with translation and globalisation, see Bielsa “Globalisation” and Bielsa and Bassnett, ch. 2.

³ A contemporary equivalent to what Adorno described as the jargon of authenticity can be found in Bourdieu and Wacquant’s account of the “new planetary vulgate” voiced by employers, international officials, high-ranking civil servants and media intellectuals, which extends North American categories of thought to the whole planet (2001).

⁴ For a detailed examination of this approach in relation to contemporary cosmopolitanism, see Bielsa “Cosmopolitanism.”

Works Cited

Adorno, Theodor W. *The Jargon of Authenticity*. Trans. Knut Tarnowsky and Frederic Will. London and New York: Routledge, 2003.

Appadurai, Arjun. *Fear of Small Numbers*. Durham and London: Duke UP, 2006.

Balibar, Étienne. “At the Borders of Citizenship: A Democracy in Translation?” *European Journal of Social Theory* 13. 3 (2010): 315-322.

Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Fear*. Cambridge: Polity, 2006.

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Beck, Ulrich. *La mirada cosmopolita o la guerra es la paz*. Trans. Bernardo Moreno Carrillo. Barcelona: Paidós, 2005.

- Beck, Ulrich and Edgar Grande. "Varieties of Second Modernity: The Cosmopolitan Turn in Social and Political Theory and Research." *The British Journal of Sociology* 61. 3 (2010): 409-43.
- Benhabib, Seyla. *The Rights of Others*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004.
- Berman, Antoine. *The Experience of the Foreign. Culture and Translation in Romantic Germany*. Albany: State U of New York P, 1992.
- Bielsa, Esperanca. "Cosmopolitanism, Translation and the Experience of the Foreign." *Across Languages and Cultures* 11. 2 (2010): 163-74.
- . "Globalisation and Translation: A Theoretical Approach." *Language and Intercultural Communication* 5. 2 (2005): 131-44.
- Bielsa, Esperanca and Susan Bassnett. *Translation in Global News*. London and New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Bohman, James and Matthias Lutz-Bachmann. *Perpetual Peace. Essays on Kant's Cosmopolitan Ideal*. Cambridge, London: MIT Press, 1997.
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Wacquant, Loic. "New Liberal Speak: Notes on the New Planetary Vulgate." *Radical Philosophy* 105 (2001): 2-5.
- Cronin, Michael. *Translation and Globalization*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Delanty, Gerard. "The Cosmopolitan Imagination: Critical Cosmopolitanism and Social Theory." *The British Journal of Sociology* 51.1 (2006): 25-47.
- . *The Cosmopolitan Imagination*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009.
- Fine, Robert. *Cosmopolitanism*. London and New York: Routledge, 2007.
- and Robin Cohen. "Four Cosmopolitan Moments." *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism*. Ed. Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002.
- García Canclini, Néstor. *Hybrid Cultures*. Trans. Christopher L. Chiappari and Silvia L. López. Minneapolis and London: U of Minnesota P, 1995.
- . *Transforming Modernity: Popular Culture in Mexico*. Trans. Lidia Lozano. Austin: U of Texas P, 1993.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *The Divided West*. Trans. Ciaran Cronin. Cambridge: Polity, 2006.
- Heilbron, Johan. "Structure and Dynamics of the World System of Translation," UNESCO. International Symposium 'Translation and Cultural Mediation,' 2010.
- Held, David, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt, and Jonathan Perraton. *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999.
- Honig, Bonnie. *Democracy and the Foreigner*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton UP, 2001.
- Janelle, Donald G. "Global Interdependence and Its Consequences." *Collapsing Space and Time. Geographic Aspects of Communications and Information*. Ed. Stanley D. Brunn and Thomas R. Leinbach. London: Harper Collins, 1991.
- Lash, Scott and John Urry. *Economies of Signs and Space*. London: Sage, 1994.
- Nederveen Pieterse, J. *Globalization and Culture*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Rama, Angel. *Transculturación narrativa en América Latina*. 2nd ed. Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1985.

Ricoeur, Paul. *On Translation*. Trans. Eileen Brennan. London and New York: Routledge, 2006.

Robertson, Roland. *Globalization. Social Theory and Global Culture*. London: Sage, 1992.

Venuti, Lawrence. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2008.