

Cosmopolitanism and nationalism*

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Ernest Gellner was, among many other things, a cosmopolitan – both intuitively and by conscious commitment. He was also one of the great analysts of nationalism in our age. I hope my analysis of some problematic and promising relationships between these two clusters of ideas reflects appropriately the huge debt all students of these topics owe Gellner.

But there is another sense in which Gellner is an apt exemplar. He was nearly equally philosopher, anthropologist, and sociologist. And I want at least to suggest philosophical, anthropological, and sociological dimensions in contemporary cosmopolitan discourse and suggest that all three need to command our attention. We need to achieve a certain disciplinary cosmopolitanism, which, I would suggest, does not require us to give up nationalist attachments to our disciplines but does require us to reach beyond them and sometimes look critically at them.

Cosmopolitanism has become an enormously popular rhetorical vehicle for claiming at once to be already global and to have the highest ethical aspirations for what globalisation can offer. It names a virtue of considerable importance. But, and these are my themes, it is not at all clear (a) that cosmopolitanism is quite so different from nationalism as sometimes supposed, (b) whether cosmopolitanism is really supplanting nationalism in global politics, and (c) whether cosmopolitanism is an ethical complement to politics, or in some usages a substitution of ethics for politics.

Cosmopolitanism in the modern social imaginary

Salman Rushdie (2000) writes that ‘among the great struggles of man – good/evil, reason/unreason, etc. – there is also this mighty conflict between the fantasy of Home and the fantasy of Away, the dream of roots and the mirage of the journey’. Cosmopolitanism is a central way in which the modern era has organised ‘the fantasy of Away’. The term is operative in culture and commerce, ethics and politics. Whether as the fashionable man of the world or the responsible (and gender neutral) citizen of the world, the cosmopolitan inhabits the world.

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The modern era has also reorganised ‘the fantasy of Home’. The more local world of face-to-face relations still matters, of course, but so do nations. The old contrasts of country village and capital city, *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, are reworked in the era of globalisation. To have a merely national outlook seems altogether parochial (even though nations may be large and historically built by integrating very diverse groups).

Human nature is indeed contradictory. We seek excitement and security, difference and familiarity, and, as Rushdie suggests, the pleasures of being both home and away. This is not like the contradiction between seeking good and doing evil anyway. In this case, moral virtues are claimed for each side. Great explorers and patriot heroes are both praised in schoolbooks. Loyalty to one’s own is reinforced not only by myths and moral tales but by ‘one’s own’ themselves. Yet as the parable of the Good Samaritan reminds us, a more expansive view of moral obligation has also long been taught.

At the moment, away is more in fashion among intellectuals and especially political theorists. But home has a strong popular following. Debates over cosmopolitanism are largely about this tension.

Cosmopolitanism means focusing on the world as a whole rather than on a particular locality or group within it. It also means being at home with diversity. Its main meanings refer in this sense to an orientation or capacity of individuals. But the noun cosmopolitan is also used to describe the actual diversity of specific countries or cities. Paris is more cosmopolitan than Lille, one might argue, and New York more cosmopolitan than Cleveland (and neither Lille nor Cleveland is at the opposite end of the spectrum). The meaning is primarily that the city’s diversity reflects that of the world – without denying that many inhabitants of Paris and New York are in fact quite parochial in their perspectives. At the same time, cosmopolitan may describe the growing interconnection of the whole world across national and other boundaries. Paris and New York have cosmopolitan connections – to Shanghai, Delhi and Cairo. And the world itself is more cosmopolitan the more such connections exist.

Sometimes cosmopolitan is used loosely simply to mean transnational. Often it denotes a more rigorous stress on the truly universal. This is crucial to most systematic uses of the term in ethics and political philosophy. But though the latter usage is more linguistically precise – cosmos refers to the whole – it raises the theoretical question of just what makes the world – or the cosmos – whole. Is it nature? Or divine creation? Or human history? Most ethical thinking approaches the whole, the universal, as a complete set of all human individuals (usually those alive at one time, though occasionally ancestors and more often those yet to be born are also given consideration). Each of us, we might say, has a duty to consider the implications of our actions for everyone. But thinking in terms of a set or category of human individuals misses part of what makes cosmopolitanism a compelling concern today: the extraordinary growth of connections among human beings and

variously organised social groups, relationships mediated by markets and media, migrations and infectious diseases.

Precisely because the world is so intensively connected today, cosmopolitanism has become an important theme in politics and social science, not only ethics. It figures in practical affairs and public debates as well as intellectual explorations. Interest in cosmopolitanism has also been fueled by anxieties over identity politics and multiculturalism. Many commentators are worried that efforts to support different ways of life undermine the common culture required by democracy. They think that too much respect for ethnic and cultural differences among nations undermines attempts to enforce universal human rights.

There are, however, three potential lines of confusion built into the idea of cosmopolitanism. We have noted two already. First, does it refer to what is common to the whole world and unites humanity? Or does it refer to appreciation of the differences among different groups and places? And second, does it refer to an individual attitude or ethical orientation, or does it refer to a condition of collective life? But confusion of the third sort is at least as common: cosmopolitanism is both description and normative program and the distinction is often unclear.

Indeed, part of the attraction of the idea of cosmopolitanism is that it seems to refer at once to a fact about the world – particularly in this era of globalisation – and to a desirable response to that fact. Ulrich Beck (2006) suggests that we should think of two linked processes. The growing interconnection of the world he calls ‘cosmopolitanization’. He uses ‘cosmopolitanism’ for the attitude that treats these as a source of moral responsibility for everyone.¹ But the very overlap in terminology suggests (despite occasional disclaimers) that one is automatically linked to the other. And this is not just an issue in Beck’s writing but a wider feature of discourse about cosmopolitanism.

Clearly, neither the interconnectedness nor the diversity of the world brings pleasure to everyone. Growing global connections can become a source of fear and defensiveness rather than appreciation for diversity or sense of ethical responsibility for distant strangers. Globalisation can lead to renewed nationalism or strengthening of borders – as has often been the case since the 2001 terrorist attacks. But like many others Beck hopes that instead a cosmopolitan attitude will spread. He emphasises that risks such as environmental degradation turn the whole world into a ‘community of fate’.² Cosmopolitanism is, for him, the perspective on what humanity shares that will help us deal with this. Cosmopolitanism offers an ethics for globalisation.

Globalisation requires an ethics not only because ordinary people find themselves interacting more often with people from other countries, cultures, and religions but because they are implicated in relationships with others around the world whom they will never meet. Through trade and foreign aid and wars and diplomacy and the tourist industry and the global organisation of religion, people on every continent are joined to others through indirect

relationships. These are mediated by information technology, business corporations, governments, and NGOs. But they remain human relationships and therefore demand ethical evaluation. What are we doing (or failing to do) for those dying in Darfur? What responsibility do we share for the intellectual property regime that – depending on how you evaluate it – ensures the production of new drugs to treat diseases around the world or makes those drugs harder to buy for anyone who isn't rich. And how should we think about the very fact that some are rich and some are poor for reasons having more to do with the countries into which they are born than the efforts or intelligence they have put into their careers?

But as even these examples should make clear, globalisation demands more than ethics. Precisely because so many of the crucial relationships that drive and shape it are indirect, they do not resolve easily into interpersonal norms. They require action aimed at states, corporations, markets, and media – systems and technologies in short. They require politics. And politics is required in another sense as well, the sense of political speech that constitutes social organisation, not only interpersonal relationships.

Mixing fashion, commerce, ethics, and politics

Always in vogue for elites, though sometimes suspect to others, cosmopolitanism has lately become even more fashionable. The trend started in the 1990s, after the end of the Cold War amid intensifying globalisation. 'Cosmopolitan' is now a compliment for the suave in a way it hasn't been since the 1920s or at least the 1960s (when, in Cold War spirit, spies epitomised the cosmopolitan). The Cosmopolitan is a popular drink, a 'sophisticated vodka based cocktail, flavored with orange and cranberry', made famous as the favorite drink of the young women on TV's *Sex and the City*.³ Those self-styled girls didn't show much interest in the political philosophy of globalisation or Kantian ethics. But they were surely cultural descendants of Helen Gurley Brown, who reinvented *Cosmopolitan* magazine in the 1960s.

Now, as then, cosmopolitanism lives a double life as a pop cultural evocation of openness to a larger world and a sometimes more systematic and academic claim about the moral significance of transcending the local, even achieving the universal. Both have flourished especially in good times and amid optimism about globalisation. *Cosmo* (as the magazine came to be called) was founded in 1886, riding the wave of a stock market boom not unlike those of the 1920s and the 1990s. The Gilded Age (as Mark Twain's novel named it) ground to a halt with the stock market crash of 1893. The Roaring 20s took a dive, along with flappers and Fitzgeraldian cosmopolitanism, in 1929. Their 1990s successor was wounded deeply by the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center (among the headquarters of corporate cosmopolitanism) and deflated in 2002 after overheating. But though 2002 marked a 'severe correction' it wasn't a bust of 1893 let alone 1929 proportions.

Cosmopolitans with lifestyles linked to the market were chastened. But like the Dow Jones Industrial Average, they caught their breath and came back.

The Dow has set a new record (though volatility is growing as I write) and enthusiasm for cosmopolitanism is similarly buoyant. It is of course not merely a matter of drinks but of hopes for human rights. Cosmopolitanism is what we praise in those who read novelists from every continent, or in the audiences and performers of world music. It is the aspiration of advocates for global justice, and the claim of managers of multinational businesses. Campaigners on behalf of migrants urge 'cosmopolitan' legal reforms out of both concern for immigrants and belief that openness to people from other cultures enriches their countries. 'Cosmopolitan' is the first category in the advertisements posted by would-be husbands seeking brides (and vice versa) in the *Sunday Times of India*.⁴

The many different usages reinforce the fashion for the concept but they muddy its meaning. 'Cosmopolitan' is claimed sometimes for a political project: building participatory institutions adequate to contemporary global integration, especially outside the nation-state framework. It is claimed sometimes for an ethical orientation of individuals: the suggestion that each should think and act with strong concern for all humanity. It is claimed sometimes for a stylistic capacity to incorporate diverse influences and sometimes for a psychological capacity to feel at ease amid difference and appreciate diversity. It is used sometimes for all projects that reach beyond the local (with some slippage depending on whether the 'local' is the village or the nation-state). It is used at other times for strongly holistic visions of global totality, like the notion of a community of risk imposed by potential for nuclear or environmental disaster. It is used at still other times to describe not individuals but cities, as for example New York or London, contemporary Delhi or historical Alexandria gain their vitality and character not from the similarities of their residents but from the concrete ways in which they have learned to interact across lines of ethnic, religious, national, linguistic and other identities. Of course citizens of these cities interact largely in trade and there is an easy extension of usage from the cosmopolitanism encouraged by interaction in physically located markets or along long-distance trading networks to the idea that a global market is intrinsically cosmopolitan because not contained by nation-states.

Britain was a center of the 1990s boom in talk of cosmopolitanism. Reference to 'cosmopolitan Britain' became standard speech, as in: 'Cosmopolitan Britain has emerged as one of the world's most diverse and innovative food and drink markets'.⁵ It evoked sophisticated, metropolitan culture versus the non-cosmopolitan hinterlands; this was a period of renewal in the cultural and financial life of British cities with yuppies, art galleries, and startling improvement in restaurants. It evoked multicultural Britain versus monocultural English, Scottish, or Welsh national identity. This was not only a matter of revaluing the different historically British cultures but of incorporating immigrants from former colonies, Eastern Europe and

elsewhere (with the accent on black and brown faces at Cambridge and Oxford, in Parliament and reading the TV news – only somewhat undercut by more concentrated and less happy black and brown faces in Brixton, Bradford, and other less thriving locales). Perhaps most of all, cosmopolitanism evoked a positive orientation towards European integration and engagement with the rest of the world. The LSE (the London School of Economics and Political Science for those without this cosmopolitan knowledge) was academic headquarters for this, with a range of intellectual exchanges and conferences, new master's programs focusing on fields like human rights and NGO management, a clutch of international celebrity professors, and (not coincidentally, fee-paying) students from all over the world. The LSE became in a sense the first really European university (as the European University Institute outside Florence was a more rarified center for advanced study only). Britain was especially well placed to embrace this cosmopolitanism because English was increasingly the world language, because it had joined the EU without losing its special relationship with the US, because it was a major financial center, and because its former Empire gave it unusually strong connections around the world.

Britain remains a center of cosmopolitan discourse, and also offers a good example of the way in which cosmopolitan style can flourish as part of economic and statist projects. Consider British Airways' rebranding as 'a global, caring company, more modern, more open, more cosmopolitan, but proud to be based in Britain':

What is vital to this new identity is its international feel. This is indicative of BA's desire to be a global player. Also, according to BA, it shows Britain's own multi-cultural mix. However, the emphasis is on presenting the positive aspects of different cultures and how British Airways truly supports its operations, including its many joint ventures, in different countries. All this leads to a positive image for the 60 per cent of BA customers who are not British.⁶

But the message is not just for foreigners. As British Airways' branding consultants point out: 'The United Kingdom is not keen on being seen as the country of outmoded traditions and old castles. The new surface shows a youthful, cosmopolitan Britain, confidently looking to the future.'⁷

Indeed, this example of commercial cosmopolitanism comes on the heels of the late 1990s rebranding of Britain itself as 'Cool Britannia'. 'New Labour' was in the leadership but hints of the Mod 1960s and the once mighty Empire were not accidental. Advertising campaigns designed to brand nations have become common, in fact, situating countries in global communications and global markets. Nearly every nation claims to be cosmopolitan but with distinctive arts and culture and delightful local scenery. With their logos and slogans, nations are marketing themselves not just to tourists but to investors and sometimes to their own citizens (Aronczyk 2007). The nation-branding around the Olympics – whether in China, Greece, or Spain – always includes a reminder to citizens to feel good about themselves, and their government.

In both popular culture and political science, cosmopolitanism often figures as an attitude, a style, a personal commitment. This is not necessarily political or even ethical. The contrasting significance of the phrases 'citizen of the world' and 'man of the world' suggests the difference. The latter is as likely to be about expanded tolerance for ethical lapses, or simply about more fashionable clothes.

Cosmopolitanism signals a direct connection between the individual and the world as a whole.⁸ But if this is sometimes given ethical emphasis, equally often the world appears simply as an object of consumption, there for individuals' pleasure: 'The goal of cosmopolitanism is self-expression and self-realization', writes Kimberly Yuracko (2003: 91). 'Cosmopolitanism presents individuals with a wide range of options; they choose the one that will bring them the most pleasure and gratification.' More commonly, being cosmopolitan is glossed as being a 'citizen of the world'. Even if this suggests more ethical obligations than mere self-gratification, contemporary usage gives this an almost unambiguously positive valence – who wouldn't want to be a citizen of the world? But of course the idea can be terrifying if what world citizenship means is exclusion from citizenship and rights in particular states. Past demonisations of 'rootless cosmopolitans' shouldn't be forgotten. And the two often coexist. There is no upper class in the world more dedicated to cosmopolitan shopping than that of Russia. But it is not just ignorant rural Russian masses with minimal access to the new megamalls that participate in xenophobic nationalism. State elites and well-connected millionaires press antic cosmopolitan policies. Even oligarchs who drive Bentleys and have homes in the South of France are complicit – though they may also become objects of nationalist attack.

The issue is not just one of consumerism versus ethics, or the coexistence of stylistic cosmopolitanism with political nationalism. It is the tendency to substitute ethics or style for deeper senses of politics. Cosmopolitan typically suggests an attitude or virtue that can be assumed without change in basic political or economic structures – which are external to the individual. Much of its appeal comes from the notion that cosmopolitanism (a version of ethical goodness) can be achieved without such deeper change. But therein lies a key problem in an otherwise attractive concept.

Cosmopolitanism is not simply a free-floating cultural taste, personal attitude or political choice, however; it is a matter of institutions. What seems like free individual choice is often made possible by capital – social and cultural as well as economic. Take the slogan in Sony's recent computer advertisements: 'C is for Choice, Color, and Cosmopolitanism' (*Business Wire* 2006). Surely C is also for capital.

Or again, after Singapore's president spoke of the island's 'cosmopolitans' and 'heartlanders', a local blogger posted mock advice on how to be a cosmopolitan: 'Many Heartlanders think that to become a Cosmo, you need a lot of money. Nothing could be further from the truth. Being a Cosmo is essentially a state of mind, and has nothing to do with that overdraft that

keeps you awake at night' (Krishnaswamy 2000). He continues with advice on wine and watches, cars and condos. But, as he says, 'Travel is the true measure of a Cosmo. "Been there, done that" is their motto.' Sadly, his readership is 'those of us who haven't been, primarily because we haven't a bean'.

The markets, the migrations, and the media that encourage and shape cosmopolitanism are not simply responses to individual taste or morality but creatures of capitalism. This does not determine every detail of their operation nor does it make them necessarily bad. But it does mean that cosmopolitanism is not free-floating, not equally available to everyone, not equally empowering for everyone. The material globalisation on which cosmopolitanism rests is strikingly unequal as well as uprooting. This is one of the reasons why the cosmopolitanism of some sparks the resentments of others. But it would be a mistake to identify anxieties about cosmopolitanism simply with resentment or indeed with ethnic prejudice or benighted localism. In the first place localism is not always benighted. More basically, belonging to specific social groups is an important source of collective strength for many; the solidarity of these groups is a basis for action to redress many ills and sometimes even to mitigate inequality; communities, nations, and religions motivate many in ways that abstract membership of the human race does not. We need not simply oppose cosmopolitanism and belonging, as universalism and particularism are opposed in logic and in Parsonsian theory.⁹ They can be complements to each other.

The melting pot

The cosmopolitan critique of particularistic belonging is a sort of global revision of the older idea of a melting pot. This was proposed most famously as a description of the United States in the early twentieth century. An era of high immigration had brought together speakers of different languages, followers of different religions, people raised in different cultures. A prominent rabbi used the image of a melting pot in a Passover sermon, simultaneously praising American openness and warning his congregation against excessive assimilation. Israel Zangwill, a London-born playwright of Russian Jewish ancestry took up the phrase as the title of a 1909 play in which he suggested that in America all would be remade in a new common culture. Each would be free to pursue a new individual destiny.¹⁰ Theodore Roosevelt attended and applauded. The phrase stuck.

But the phrase had much older roots. Emerson, for example, referred in 1845 to racial and cultural mixture through the metaphor of 'the smelting pot'; there were still earlier anticipations in Crèvecoeur and other colonial commentators. The 'melting' metaphor was used to discuss the question of how autonomous and distinct the separate American states should be, as in Winterbotham's (1795) observation that: 'some from jealousy of liberty were afraid of giving too much power to their rulers; others, from an honest

ambition to aggrandize their country, were for paving the way to national greatness by melting down the separate states into a national mass' (quoted in Kohn 1944: 288). The passage helpfully reminds us of the parallel between debates over the integration of immigrants and those over the incorporation of disparate regions, provinces, and states into a larger common nation-state.

By the 1970s, some worried patriots were writing of 'the rise of the unmeltable ethnics' (Novak 1973). And some happier patriots were celebrating the salad bowl or the mosaic instead of the melting pot, mixture without loss of distinction. In other words, America remained diverse and maintaining cultural distinctions and ethnic solidarities – rather than melting them away in the assimilationist pot – became a positive goal. Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1970) suggested claiming both sides of this debate, arguing that especially in cities there was simultaneously assimilation and reproduction of ethnic identity and that both things could be good. Richard Sennett (1970) argued for the 'uses of disorder' that made cities vital, even when it spilled over into conflict, and that made the lives of individuals richer.

A new wave of immigration in the 1990s put the issue back on the front burner. It came, moreover, after twenty years in which the idea of multi-cultural coexistence and a politics of recognition had been in the ascendancy. An increasing number of authors called for stronger assimilationism, for a deeper sense of political commonality, for resistance to 'identity politics'. Then the terrorist attacks of 2001 made the issue feel newly acute. Samuel Huntington, as often, caught an aspect of the national mood and framed an issue on the minds of many who hesitated to name it so bluntly. His recent book, *Who Are We?* (2004), is shaped by a deep anxiety that Hispanic immigrants do not want to become Americans in the same sense as did his WASP ancestors (it is perhaps no accident that he traces descent to immigrants who came on the Mayflower and is a descendant of several generations of Harvard men). Indeed, Huntington suspects, Latin American immigrants not only don't want to assimilate, they can't. It is not clear to what extent Huntington thinks that the problem is the strength of Hispanic-Catholic identity or the unanticipated weakness of American nationalism as a culture of assimilation. Either way, he articulates a sense of threat among many in the US analogous to that which many Europeans feel over Islamic immigrants.

Yet this new anxiety over unmeltable immigrants has risen at the same time as a widespread celebration of the melting pot ideal in the form of mixed race identities. In the US this is symbolised by Barack Obama and the golfer Tiger Woods – who describes himself as 'Cablinasian': simultaneously Caucasian, Black, Indian, and Asian.¹¹ It is given a reified form by genetic testing which gives sharp percentages and geographies to ancestry. People who thought themselves simply Black – like the jazz musician Quincy Jones – may be told their genes are only sixty-six per cent African. The prominent African-American literary critic Henry Louis Gates learned that his traceable ancestry is half European and joked that perhaps he wasn't Black enough to head African-American Studies at Harvard (Gates 2007a, 2007b). But just as the

extension of this into a popular expression like ‘his blood is half white’ represents a slippage from genes to one of their physical manifestations, so the reimagining of sociocultural categories as biological represents a slippage. Ironically, while the dominant response to genetic accounts of ancestry is to see race as biological, it makes as much sense to say that the demonstrated genetic diversity within populations like ‘African-Americans’ reveals the extent to which these were social and cultural constructions (though they are not less real for that). On the one hand, mixed race identities are important and should not be dismissed in favor of ethnic essentialism. On the other hand, it is a worrying illusion to think that problems of race will simply fade away because of intermarriage or genetically demonstrated ancestral mixtures. It is also an illusory solution to problems of migration and citizenship simply to say – though it can be true – that many migrants have rights in multiple nation-states and understand their belonging in complexly overlapping ways.¹²

Take Palestinians in Israel. Multiple and overlapping identities are real, but not without problems. Jewish Israelis are frightened by a demographic peril: a growing population of Muslim Arabs inside the Jewish state. Arab Israelis benefit from citizenship but also chafe at its limitations, injustices, and initial premises. And if nationalism is problematic, it is far from obvious that there is a ‘postnational’ resolution available for the problems of Palestine.

With their own history of minority life, Jews involved in the founding of Israel were of course worried about creating new minorities. For a (perhaps ironic) example, return to Israel Zangwill, the playwright who popularised the idea of the melting pot. Zangwill was a prominent cultural Zionist and the author of books like *The Principle of Nationalities* (1917). As an advocate of Jewish ethnic nationalism, he argued that Jews needed to face up to the necessity of forcing Arabs out of Palestine (see Simons 2003). The new Jewish state, Zangwill argued, needed a clear Jewish majority. He thought constitutional government and especially democracy required this. In a 1916 conversation with Vladimir Jabotinsky, for example, Zangwill asked what Jabotinsky would do with the Arabs if the Jews got a Charter for Palestine. Jabotinsky replied with the classic answer that there was enough room in Palestine on both sides of the Jordan for six or eight million people and the Arabs numbered only half a million. ‘All this is just idle chatter’, replied Zangwill, adding that people, such as Jabotinsky, from Eastern Europe ‘considered it quite normal for more than ten minority groups to be found living together in a small area. However, peoples from Western democracies would see this as a disease for which there could be no cure. To allow such a situation in our Jewish State would be like gorging [*sic*] out our eyes with our hands. If we receive Palestine, the Arabs will have to “trek”’ (Simons 2003).

The last reference is, of course, to the Boer trek to escape English domination in South Africa. Zangwill’s name became associated with the description of Palestine as a ‘land without people for a people without land’. In fact, he did not offer this as a mere description. Rather, responding to Lord

Shaftesbury's suggestion (originally with reference to Syria) that Britain might give 'a country without a nation to a nation without a country', Zangwill was clear that there were Arabs who would have to be moved in order to achieve the desired goal (Garfinkle 1991). 'A land without people for a people without land' became a slogan justifying Jewish appropriation of Palestine to create Israel and not surprisingly provoked a nationalist response.

Imagining a world without nations, a world in which ethnicity is simply a consumer taste, a world in which each individual simply and directly inhabits the whole, is like imagining the melting pot in which all ethnicities vanish into the formation of a new kind of individual. In each case this produces an ideology especially attractive to some. It neglects the reasons why many others need and reproduce ethnic or national distinctions. And perhaps most importantly it obscures the issues of inequality that make ethnically unmarked national identities accessible mainly to elites, and make an easy sense of being a citizen of the world contingent on having the right passports, credit cards, and cultural credentials.

American debates over immigration and assimilation predate independence, often as debates about the peopling of specific colonies, and shape both images of America and practical policies through the history of the United States. The dominant American ideology – common among scholars as well as the broader population – suggested that the 'first new nation' was precisely not an ethnic nation. Tom Paine famously held that 'Europe, not England is the parent country of America' – though one might suggest that 'European' is itself an ethnic category of sorts, at least by comparison to, say, Asian or Latin American. In any event, British – and indeed, specifically English – history loomed large in US school curricula. But both 'consensus' historians (e.g. Higham 1955) and later social scientists (e.g. Greenfeld 1992; Lipset 1996) have commonly seen nativist movements as aberrations, recurrently overcome, and the main pattern as an idealised mixture that transcends ethnicity.

This view perhaps grasps an element of truth in its contrasts to Europe, but it has been very uncritically held. From the beginning it failed to confront both the fundamental challenge of racial domination and the continuing hegemony of an elite constituted in part through ethnicity. Long described as White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP), this has broadened, but not entirely disappeared, and continues to be reproduced in common experiences of education, religion, and culture, as well as networks of social relations.¹³ Recurrently, the notion of the ideal postethnic nation has also confronted waves of less elite nativist sentiment and political agitation.

And finally, the assertion of ethnic identities and the positive valuing of difference also have a long tradition, and one that has long made uncomfortable those who would see the struggle as only between assimilationists or cosmopolitans and nativists or racists. W. E. B. DuBois wrote famously of the double-consciousness of those for whom an ascriptive racial identity must always compete with an inclusive national identity. Yet, in *The Souls of Black*

Folk (1953: 2–3) he advocated no simple choice. ‘One ever feels his two-ness, – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.’ The American Negro may long ‘to merge his double-self into a better and truer self’. But ‘in this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American . . .’

Various sorts of ‘both/and’ identities are pervasive in the modern world. They are brought to the fore by international migration, by European integration, and by the claims of multiple states on common cultural traditions and identities, like China and Taiwan and for that matter Singapore. Islam and Christianity are each religions that produce common identities crossing national divisions. Gender, race, and even engagement in social movements can produce ‘both/and’ identities (cf. Anzaldúa 1999; Collins 1991). Neither universalism nor essentialist nativism or nationalism deals well with these multiplicities and overlaps, and indeed it is common for universalists to imagine all claims to group solidarity on the model of nativist closure – and for nativists and nationalists to imagine all suggestions that multiple identities matter as ‘rootless cosmopolitan’ challenges to the integral whole. Celebration of multiple identities has recently come into vogue – for example as multiculturalism – and has produced both universalist and particularist responses.¹⁴

Salman Rushdie says he writes love songs ‘to our mongrel selves’ (1989: 394); he refuses to be simply Indian, lives in England, and travels enough to show those who would stop him in the name of religious purity that they have failed. Indeed, one might think it is hard for anyone to be ‘simply Indian’, so deeply plural and cross-cutting are the identities of the subcontinent. Yet there are other Indians living in England whose very sense of being is bound up with being Indian. And as Tariq Modood (2005) notes, many immigrants from India in the era of partition became Pakistanis without ever living in that country, and then in the dominant British politics of identity became ‘Asian’ and then more commonly ‘Muslim’. Indian now distinguishes mainly Hindu Britons (ironically echoing the assertions of religious purity of some Hindu fundamentalists back on the subcontinent). There are also angry Englishmen determined to make sure that neither Indians nor Muslims ever feel they belong unequivocally to England’s green and pleasant land. Of course there are also Indians in India for whom England is only ancient history and India itself somewhat abstract but for whom village or caste are central locations. There are at least as many for whom a militantly Hindu account of being Indian is fundamentally compelling. And there are still other Indians for whom the Communist Party (or rather, one of them) is still vital and transcends ethnicity and nationality and others who love mathematics partly

because it seems a universal language as well as a good source of that other universal, money. In England, when asked their national identity, those of Indian descent face the same puzzle as others: is the right answer English, British, or just possibly European?¹⁵

This sort of field of multiple and heterogeneously structured identities has become increasingly common in the contemporary world but it shouldn't be thought that identities were ever quite so clear or singular in the past as ideology sometimes suggested. Colonialism produced plenty of examples and independence didn't neatly straighten them out. Think of Léopold Senghor, first President of Senegal but before that a member of the French National Assembly and all the while a pan-Africanist, one of the founders of the idea and movement of negritude. Earlier empires produced their own such complexities, but even villages were not quite the homogenous communities of myth and nostalgia.

From the 1960s through the 1990s multiculturalism was in vogue. The wave seems since to have crested. By 2007 a *New York Times* art critic could draw a contrast between Manhattan's somewhat more central art world and its Brooklyn cousin by saying 'Multiculturalist terms like identity, hybridity and diversity may sound like words from a dead language in Chelsea, but they are the lingua franca of the Brooklyn show' (Carter 2007).¹⁶ It's not only in the Chelsea galleries that 'identity' sounds passé; it seems *so 1990s* to a range of social theoretical hipsters. They want to give identity and especially identity politics a rest and be cosmopolitan. But cosmopolitanism is claimed by multiculturalists as well as those who think multiculturalism has gotten out of hand and needs to be tamed by emphasis on universal humanity (and those who think multiculturalism is simply no longer trendy). Indeed the very idea of multiculturalism was also something of a theoretical muddle. On the one hand it suggested the essential malleability of identity and on the other the essential priority of identity (though both sides tended to condemn essentialism). The same went for the 'politics of identity'. This meant most coherently that identity was always subject to politics – to struggles within groups over what they stood for, to struggles between those with different agendas over which identity would be primary. Would 'workers' or 'women' win defined allegiances? But to many it also meant simply that different groups struggled politically to get due recognition for their identities or over issues in which the stakes were defined by group identity (Calhoun 1993).

Cosmopolitanism is most often invoked by those who see identity politics as a sort of mistake – like lingering ethnonationalism, rather than citizenship of the world. But the issues haven't gone away. European politics is rife with struggles over whether national identities or the common claim of 'European' should be primary. There are few African countries where claims for religious, or ethnic, or regional or 'tribal' identities aren't sometimes as powerful as projects of national integration. Latin American countries find themselves in common identity in the struggle against US domination, but internally are split by movements deriving significant force from indigenous resentment

against elites defined in part by European ancestry (as well as cosmopolitan property). The economic rise of China both masks identity struggles within the People's Republic and intensifies others around Asia. And from the Middle East through South and Southeast Asia (and indeed in Europe, Africa, and the US) Islamic renewal generates both struggles over identity and struggles defined by religious identities that modernisation theorists had pronounced permanently fading.

Universalism as style

As a social condition, cosmopolitanism is not universalism; it is belonging to a social class able to identify itself with the universal. Belonging to the global cosmopolitan class is structured by social institutions just as surely as belonging to a local caste in India or a Parisian *quartier* anxious about Arab neighbors or European unification. We should be accordingly cautious about following earlier modernisation theories in identifying cosmopolitan unambiguously with progress or following individualistic philosophical traditions that approach such cosmopolitanism overwhelmingly as a matter of individual ethical judgment. Some modernisation accounts do help us, however, for cosmopolitanism today shares much with the formation of national elites a century or two ago. As Ernest Gellner (1983) described this process, it always meant a triumph of high culture over culture embedded in popular life and more local solidarities. And as Bourdieu (1958, 1977) suggested, this always meant symbolic violence.

In considering nationalism, Gellner stressed the interests industrial production gave members of the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie in developing new lateral ties not mediated by courts or old trading cities, and in extending the high culture in which they participated into a (hierarchically organised) common national culture open to the larger populations mobilised in their enterprises and new cities. Deutsch (1966) and Anderson (1993) offered different causal arguments but describe largely similar processes of communication and the flourishing of elite culture and its production of much broader national culture. And cosmopolitan projects today largely continue this pattern of simultaneous class formation and integration – now transnational rather than only national. But the national solidarities forged on earlier material bases are not simply old-fashioned and sectional.

What appeared often to modernisation theory simply as progress was a complex pattern of loss and gain. Villages overtaken by industrialisation were complexes of culture and social organisation not always easily or happily given up by even poor inhabitants. Provincial cultures devalued in the course of national integration were often intensely valued by those who spoke provincial dialects and languages. But the high culture that supplanted provincial culture was the product of cultural creativity, not simply power, and included works of brilliance and enduring value far beyond their role in

creating elite-dominated national cultures. And the connections forged by workers in towns and cities enabled them to pursue democratic politics and sometimes better material conditions of life than their village-bound forebears. They experience the loss as wrenching, but they invested themselves in struggles to make the new national cultures serve their interests and understandings of the world as well as those of elites. They achieved a level of collective voice in large-scale politics that was unprecedented (if alas, not always adequate, sometimes subverted and often squandered). In a mixture of victories and concessions they secured national institutions that offered them notable protection and support even if not as much equality or fairness as often promised. Even more than the villages lost in earlier political, economic, and cultural transformations, thus, nations are not merely objects of familiarity and affection but achievements of struggle. Far from perfect, they still should not be lightly denigrated, especially not in the name of a new elite-dominated cosmopolitan culture (nor even a corporate-dominated mass culture) that leaves underlying structures of social inequality untouched or even is complicit in versions of globalisation that, like neoliberalism, accentuate inequality.

Contemporary cosmopolitanism commonly reflects the experience and perspective of elites and obscures the social foundations on which that experience and perspective rests. Thinking about cosmopolitanism as ethical universalism reinforces the lack of attention to the social foundations on which it rests – even when ethical universalism might be a basis for egalitarian critique.

Whether in the Roman Empire for the Stoics, or the (temporary) post-Westphalian pacification and growth of European states for Kant, or the great trading and imperial cities of high modernity, or global capitalism today, cosmopolitanism always depends on social foundations. Transnational institutions can be developed that offer ordinary people greater voice. Emerging global elite culture and mass for-profit consumer culture can both be contested. International law and regulation can limit both capitalist rapacity and state violence. But cosmopolitanism alone commonly focuses attention away from these political, economic, and social questions and towards apparently free-floating ethics and culture.

Thinking about cosmopolitanism as taste or even intellectual orientation reinforces its association with elites and makes it harder to understand the actually existing cosmopolitanism of multicultural cities (which involves not only stylish consumption or the gaze of *flâneurs* but soccer matches, ethnic jokes and grudging accommodation of neighbors). This connects to a tendency to imagine cosmopolitanism more as escape from the constraints of cultural prejudice than the production of cultural capacities for interaction and integration. If we look more at the material and institutional underpinnings of actual cosmopolitanism we will see less rational planning and more historical production of varied practical ways of organising life across, not only in, communities. Thinking about cosmopolitanism as a political idea

demands attention to whether it is a corrective and complement to national and other solidarities or itself grounded in some other global solidarity.

Cosmopolitan style and taste and ethics and politics can reinforce each other but also contend with each other. I want to raise questions about the tendency for cosmopolitan ethics to substitute for transnational politics, about the tendency for abstract thinking about the potential global whole to undermine appreciation for actual if incomplete and imperfect integration in cities, nations, and religions. Integrating only part of humanity, I will suggest, doesn't mean merely being particularistic or parochial.

Political, ethical, and stylistic cosmopolitanism are all important, but it is useful to distinguish them. We need to emphasise thinking about institutional underpinnings and contexts for cosmopolitanism, and especially about the significance of 'belonging' or social solidarity. Cosmopolitanism is often conceived as the transcendence of such belonging. Much cosmopolitan thinking participates in seeing culture as identified with place, and travel as bringing escape from its constraints. But as James Clifford (1992) has noted, cultures can travel.¹⁷ Indeed diasporas can and often dramatically do produce cultural conservatism among the relocated, although they can also give rise to 'vernacular' or 'demotic' cosmopolitanism as working-class migrants find themselves opened to other cultural influences (see Werbner 2006). But note the implicit shift in reference. Does saying that Pakistani migrants in Manchester or the Persian Gulf are open to new cultural influences and changed thereby indicate that they think of themselves as citizens of the world, bearing ethically equivalent obligations to all others?

Some writers identify cosmopolitanism with a reflexive, open, inclusive normative consciousness. Martha Nussbaum (1996), for example, sees cosmopolitanism in terms of individual selves, located amid concentric circles of potential connections – and sees cosmopolitanism as the ethically superior identification with and sense of obligation to the widest, maximally universal circle of human as a whole. Anthony Appiah (2006) has argued for a 'rooted cosmopolitanism' in which local ties still matter even amid far-flung connections and with a global ethical consciousness. If his is the perspective of postcolonial cultural elites, and more generally those who came from somewhere but went to Princeton (and Harvard and Oxford), others stress the extent to which a range of different occupations, even warfare, may bring recognition of the larger world beyond local (or national) cultural roots (Cheah and Robbins 1998). But in all these cases, cosmopolitanism is an 'outlook'. It is about either ethical obligations or cultural openness.

Cosmopolitanism may be a cultural orientation, but it is never the absence of culture. It is produced and reinforced by belonging to transnational networks and to a community of fellow-cosmopolitans. There are different such communities – academic and corporate and NGO, religious and secular. One may participate in multiple such networks, but it is an illusion – an ideological illusion – to imagine citizenship of the world as simply freedom from belonging to more sectional groupings.

There is, thus, something misleading when Ulrich Beck writes: 'To belong or not to belong, that is the cosmopolitan question' (2003: 50). It is true that some people are given the freedom and confidence to experience 'belonging' as much more optional than others. But we should see in such experience a systematic underestimation of the social foundations of this freedom and confidence – class position and privileged citizenship. And we should see cosmopolitans as belonging to cosmopolitan networks and culture, not just escaping locality or nation.

Oddly, Beck asks the question in a paper devoted to the analysis of global inequality. His agenda is to focus our attention on the 'big inequalities' between rich and poor nations. These, he suggests, dwarf inequalities within nations. There is something to this, though it oversimplifies empirical patterns of inequality. Beck is certainly right that 'it is surprising how the big inequalities which are suffered by humanity can be continuously legitimised through a silent complicity between the state authority and the state-obsessed social sciences by means of a form of organized non-perception' (2003: 50). But what he doesn't consider is the extent to which participation in a multinational cosmopolitan elite is basic to the reproduction of that non-perception. The elites of 'poor' or postcolonial countries who participate in global civil society, multilateral agencies, and transnational business corporations not only make money their compatriots can barely imagine but make possible the cosmopolitan illusion of elites from rich countries. This is the illusion that their relationships with fellow cosmopolitans truly transcend nation and culture and place. Cosmopolitan elites too often misrecognise transnational class formation as the escape from belonging.

It is impossible not to belong to social groups, relations, or culture. The idea of individuals abstract enough to be able to choose all their 'identifications' is deeply misleading. Versions of this idea are, however, widespread in liberal cosmopolitanism. They reflect the attractive illusion of escaping from social determinations into a realm of greater freedom, and from cultural particularity into greater universalism. But they are remarkably unrealistic, and so abstract as to provide little purchase on what the next steps of actual social action might be for real people who are necessarily situated in particular webs of belonging, with access to particular others but not to humanity in general. Treating ethnicity as *essentially* (rather than partially) a choice of identifications, they neglect the omnipresence of ascription (and discrimination) as determinations of social identities. They neglect the huge inequalities in the supports available to individuals to enter cosmopolitan intercourse as individuals (and also the ways in which certain socially distributed supports like wealth, education, and command of the English language are understood as personal achievements or attributes). And they neglect the extent to which people are implicated in social actions which they are not entirely free to choose (as, for example, I remain an American and share responsibility for the invasion of Iraq despite my opposition to it and distaste for the US administration that launched it).

Whether blame or benefit follow from such implications, they are not altogether optional.

Cosmopolitanism seems to signal *both* the identity (and therefore unity) of all human beings despite their differences, *and* appreciation for and ability to feel at home among the actual differences among people and peoples. We focus sometimes on the essential similarity of people and sometimes on their diversity.

We should be careful not to imagine that either sort of cosmopolitanism is an immediately useful example for democracy. Modern democracy grew in close relationship to nationalism, as the ideal of self-determination demanded a strong notion of the collective self in question. Nationalism was also (at least often) an attempt to reconcile liberty and ethical universalism with felt community. This doesn't mean that we should not seek more cosmopolitan values, cultural knowledge, and styles of interpersonal relations in modern national democracies. It certainly doesn't mean that we should embrace reactionary versions of nationalism which have often been antidemocratic as well as antic cosmopolitan. But it does mean that we need to ask some hard questions about how cosmopolitanism relates to the construction of political and social solidarities. Does cosmopolitanism actually underpin effective political solidarity, or only offer an attractive counterbalance to nationalism? How can we reconcile the important potential of multiple and hybrid cultural and social identities with political participation and rights? What is the relationship between valuing difference and having a strong enough commitment to specific others to sacrifice in collective struggle or accept democracy's difficult challenge of living in a minority and attempting only to persuade and not simply dominate others with whom one does not agree? It will not do simply to substitute ethics for politics, no matter how cosmopolitan and otherwise attractive the ethics. It will not do to imagine democratic politics without paying serious attention to the production of strong solidarity among the subjects of struggles for greater self-determination.

Many forms and visions of belonging are also responses to globalisation, not merely inheritances from time immemorial. Nations and national identities, for example, have been forged in international relations from wars to trade, in international migrations and among those who traveled as well as those who feared their arrival, and in pursuit of popular sovereignty against traditional rulers. Nationalism has often grown stronger when globalisation has intensified. Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and other religions arose in the contexts of empires and conflicts but also have been remade as frames of identity crossing nations and yet locating believers in a multireligious world. Religion has shaped globalisation not only as a source of conflict but of peacemaking. The significance of local community has repeatedly been changed by incorporation into broader structures of trade and association. And communal values have been articulated both to defend havens in a seemingly heartless world and to set examples for global imitation. While structures of belonging may be shaped by tradition, thus, we need to

understand them not merely as traditional alternatives to modernity or cosmopolitanism but as important ways in which ordinary people have tried to take hold of modernity and to locate themselves in a globalising world.

In a broad, general sense cosmopolitanism is unexceptionable. Who – at least what sophisticated intellectual – could argue for parochialism over a broader perspective, for narrow sectarian loyalties over recognition of global responsibilities? Who could be against citizenship of the world? But the word ‘citizenship’ is a clue to the difficulty. Cosmopolitanism means something very different as a political project – or as the project of substituting universalistic ethics for politics – from what it means as a general orientation to difference in the world. And a central strand of political theory is now invested in hopes for cosmopolitan democracy, democracy not limited by nation-states. In the spirit of Kant as well as Diogenes, many say, people should see themselves as citizens of the world, not just of their countries. This requires escape from the dominance of a nationalist social imaginary (that is, a nationalist way of understanding what society is and constituting new political communities).

It is an escape that carries the risk of throwing the baby out with the bathwater. We should, I think, join in recognising the importance of transnational relations and therefore transnational politics, movements, and ethics. We should try to belong to the world as a whole and help it thrive, and be more just and better organised. But we should not imagine we can do so very well by ignoring or wishing away national and local solidarities. This is something I think the work of Ernest Gellner affirms. We need to be global in part through how we are national. And we need to recognise the ways national – and ethnic and religious – solidarities work for others. If we are among those privileged to transcend national identities and limits in our travel and academic conferences and reading and friendships we should nonetheless be attentive to the social conditions of our outlook and the situations of those who do not share our privileges.

Notes

1 Beck similarly plays with the distinction between substance and process to say that Europe doesn't exist, only Europeanisation – ‘an institutionalized process of permanent change’ which is producing ‘social and political integration through cosmopolitanization’ (Beck and Grande 2007: 5–6).

2 Beck's arguments are spread across several books, but see in particular *Cosmopolitan Vision* (2006). For a more general summary of largely similar views, see Daniele Archibugi's collection *Debating Cosmopolitics* (2003).

3 One of the several bartenders with claims to have invented the Cosmopolitan, Toby Ceccini of the Odeon in New York's Tribeca titled his autobiography *Cosmopolitan: A Bartender's Story* (and the pun is intentional). Tribeca is of course the New York neighborhood most identified with the 1990s boom, but then the boom was even more strongly identified with Silicon Valley, so it is apt that the blogging consensus gives San Francisco the strongest claim on inventing the drink of the decade. But only in New York did the above-named bartender write his autobiography. It was that sort of decade.

4 It should be noted that while ‘cosmopolitan’ is the first category listed, the ads go on for many pages organised also (for the less explicitly cosmopolitan) by caste, community, language, religion, profession, and previous marital status. International educational credentials are noted throughout, but only in the ‘cosmopolitan’ section are alliances invited specifically in terms like ‘Cultured, Cosmopolitan, Westernized’ or ‘Smart, Westernized, Cosmopolitan working for MNC’.

5 See the UK Ministry for Trade and Investment; http://www.investoverseas.org/United_Kingdom/UK_Sectors/Food_and_Drink.htm.

Examples can readily be multiplied from almost any market imaginable: ‘With a more cosmopolitan Britain driven by “lifestyle” and “design” home and garden television programmes ...’ (<http://hiddenwires.co.uk/resourcesarticles2004/articles20040503-05.html>). In Britain as elsewhere, though, the years after 2001 marked a change: ‘Suddenly the celebration of postnational, cosmopolitan Britain has been eclipsed by the return of “security and identity” issues’ (Goodhart 2006).

6 See the CEO of British Airways Bob Ayling’s comments in British Airways News, 10 June 1997. See also Euran Global Culture Networks at (<http://www.uran.com/BC/art&BritishAirways.htm>) (accessed 7 April 2007).

7 See JY&A Consulting at (<http://www.jyanet.com/cap/0614fe1.htm>) (accessed 15 January 2007).

8 In this as in other ways, it echoes rather than transcends nationalism; see Calhoun (1997) on this presumption of ‘directness’ rather than mediation. Of course there are exceptions to this general tendency in cosmopolitan thought, efforts to understand cosmopolitanism from within various scales of relationships across lines of difference rather than categorical similarity on a global scale. For a noteworthy example, see Pollock (2000). Much more abstractly, David Held (1995) considers recognition of diversity as a hallmark of what he calls ‘cosmopolitan democracy’ but sees the issue more as one of finding appropriate representative mechanisms on a variety of scales than of shifting the idea of cosmopolitanism away from global categorical similarity to the multifarious and heterogeneous making of connections which is necessarily at least partly local.

9 Talcott Parsons (1951) described societies as differing along several ‘pattern variables’. Universalism/particularism was one of these – and Parsons associated modernisation with movement toward the universal. This notion of a linear variable diverted attention from the coexistence of the two – whether in harmony, in tension or in dialectical relationship.

10 The play is not about overcoming national difference but about overcoming a mixture of ethnic, religious and class difference. Updating the Romeo and Juliet story, it centers on love between two Russians – a poor Jewish man and a woman of noble Cossack descent who are able to find love in America.

11 Before Tiger Woods, an iconic representation of racial mixture as an attractive vision of the future was a 1993 *Time* magazine cover in which several pictures seeming to reveal different racial identities were morphed into each other by computer imaging.

12 See Soysal (1994) for an early consideration of important ways in which migrants may be legally recognised, afforded welfare rights, and even given political representation (though usually only at the local level) even without becoming full-fledged national citizens.

13 Not all WASPs are elite, however, and interaction between those at Harvard and those in Appalachia is strained (when it takes place at all). But the connection of the two in a common category also helps to produce the primacy of ethnic over class consciousness.

14 See for example Habermas’s (1998: 203–38) response to Charles Taylor’s (1994) ‘politics of recognition’ and Huntington’s (2004) polemic against excessive Latin immigration to the US.

15 The real and growing numbers of people who have formal rights in multiple polities shapes the issue but doesn’t solve the problem. We see not so much ‘postnational citizenship’ as a new complexity in citizenship which is still primarily organised in nation-state terms. Discussion in political theory has often been informed too much by formal legal rights and an optimistic reading of the European case. See Soysal (1994), and also the more recent discussion in Benhabib (2006).

16 It is worth noting that Manhattanites’ belief in having advanced beyond identity issues is exceedingly class structured. It is a post-multiculturalism for those who can afford some of the most expensive real estate in the world and expensive art to go in it.

17 See also Hannerz (1992), who distinguishes different sorts of movement around the world from foreign correspondents to labor migrants and tourists and notes that these produce different challenges for and orientations to the production of meaning. Among other things, for some involvement with other cultures is in a sense a 'cost' while for others it is a benefit.

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