

# 1 Translation and the new cosmopolitanism

Herodotus of Halicarnassus here displays his inquiry, so that human achievements may not become forgotten in time, and great and marvellous deeds – some displayed by Greeks, some by barbarians – may not be without their glory; and especially to show why the two peoples fought with each other.

(Herodotus 1996: 3)

The achievements and deeds to be praised in the *Histories* are not only those of the Greeks. Other peoples, other places, will feature in the pantheon of recognition. Herodotus' declaration of faith is partly a result of circumstance, partly an expression of method: a result of circumstance because Halicarnassus was a Dorian town on the western coast of what is now Turkey and in the vicinity were non-Greek Carians (subject to Persian rule) with whom the inhabitants of Halicarnassus had close contact. Herodotus then by virtue of birth finds himself in an intercultural contact zone which will make a life of travel and inquiry into the customs, beliefs and habits of others less a break with a unified past than a continuation of the cultural engagement that was his lot from the beginning. The expression of method is articulated in the word *historia* itself which in its original sense meant 'inquiry' or 'investigation' and was not confined to the later sense of the strict exploration of the past. Herodotus, who appears to have travelled widely throughout the Mediterranean world and beyond, was a disciplinary nomad, an early exponent of what we now call travelling theory, who in his desire to situate the Greeks in the world had to find out for himself what the rest of the known world was like (Lacarrière 1981). To this end, 'his work ranges over many fields and includes geography, anthropology, ethnology, zoology, even fable and folklore' (Marincola 1996: xiii).

What is crucial for the Greek writer is to seek out connections between widely disparate events. Why the dreams and the oracles come to play their role alongside the detailed description of buildings and natural phenomena is because they are all ways of uncovering links and establishing relationships. But even the divine oracles are not immune from the dealings of human language. When Herodotus recounts the story of the oracle at Dodona, he tells of the legend of the black dove 'who perched on an oak, and speaking with a human voice', told the people of

Dodona that on that spot there should be an oracle of Zeus. Herodotus is not convinced and sees the bird as a figurative representation of the female servant of the temple of the Theban Zeus who was carried off by the Phoenicians and sold into slavery. To her new masters, her voice would sound like the twittering of birds, but as she acquired Greek, her language would no longer be heard as ‘twittering’ but as intelligible human speech. Herodotus adds, ‘As to the bird being black, they merely signify by this that the woman was an Egyptian’ (Herodotus 1996: 107).

The Greek author is sensitive in this instance not only to the association of language ‘lack’ with the non-human but to the role of language transfer, translation and cross-cultural communication in the emergence of another contact zone, the oracular, that shifting frontier between human and divine knowledge. Herodotus himself as the bringer of information from elsewhere is close in function to the oracles he describes and like the good people of Dodona must depend for much of his information on what intermediaries can tell him through and in translation (Marincola 1996: xviii).

Herodotus’ inquiry entertains few illusions. Not long into his opening remarks we learn that his story has a bad ending and that the Greeks and Persians will go to war. However, he does not allow his Greek sympathies to restrict his human inquisitiveness. If Herodotus inaugurates Douglas Robinson’s conspectus of Western translation theory, it is because ‘one of Herodotus’s central concerns is with cross-cultural communication – how people speaking different languages manage to pass ideas on to each other – and he places that process in an insistently geopolitical context’ (Robinson 1997: 1). Herodotus in his seeking after connect-edness and in his relentless, cross-disciplinary curiosity is indeed a tutelary figure for thinking about translation. In what follows, however, we want to suggest that it was the intuitions of more marginal members of Greek society that lead us to a more exactly contemporary understanding of the relationship between translation, society and culture.

### **Cosmopolitanism**

It is commonly believed that the notion of cosmopolitanism had its origins in the writings and beliefs of the Cynic philosophers, Antisthenes and Diogenes. For Diogenes, ‘all wise men’ made up a single, moral community, a city of the world, a city defined by mental compatibility rather than by physical geography. It was he who first explicitly used the idea of the cosmopolitan to describe someone who was not rooted in any contemporary city-state but was ‘a citizen of the world’ (Sabine 1961: 136–7). Aristippus, the founder of the Cyreniac school, in a more evocative image expressed a similar idea by claiming that the road to Hades was the same distance from any point in the world. The Stoic philosopher Zeno would further develop the idea, claiming that all peoples carried within them the divine spark and all were capable of using *logos* or divine reason (Mason 1999). As Robert Fine and Robin Cohen point out, ‘Zeno imagined an expanding circle of inclusion – from self, to family, to friends, to city, to humanity. In this process of enlargement

the state itself would disappear, to be replaced by pure reason' (Fine and Cohen 2002: 138).

For the inhabitants of the Athenian city-state, these ideas, though startling, came from social outsiders and were largely ignored. Diogenes was in exile from Sinope in Pontus, Antisthenes was a Thracian and Zeno was a *metic* (resident foreigner) from Citium in Cyprus. These thinkers on the margins of Athenian society were temporarily silenced by their own powerlessness. However, it is Zeno's principles that Cicero would later invoke to argue for the equality of all before the law and Diogenes' declaration would have a long and resonant posterity (Sabine 1961: 164). In 1552, for example, Erasmus refuses the citizenship of the city of Zurich offered by Zwingli, declaring, 'I want to be a citizen not of one single city but of the whole world' (Huizinga 1936: 34). The ideal of humanity as a collection of free and equal beings, possessing the same basic rights and to whom notions of hospitality, openness to others and freedom of movement are primordial, underlies much thinking about translation, cultural contact and the intercultural from antiquity to our own times. Peter Coulmas, in his *Weltbürger: Geschichte einer Menschheitssehnsucht* (1990), offers the reader a historical overview of cosmopolitanism originating in what Fine and Cohen call 'Zeno's moment' (Fine and Cohen 2002: 137) and charting the vicissitudes of cosmopolitan thinking down the centuries. However, rather than replay here the history of cosmopolitan thought we would like to focus on current understandings of what constitutes the cosmopolitan in order to see how differentiated notions of the phenomenon can be used to illuminate debates about translation theory and practice in the contemporary world. To claim that one is a citizen of the world might appear to be a generous and selfless ideal but what does it mean to the state we are in, to the kind of world in which we find ourselves? If the notion of the cosmopolitan is to be of any service then we must have a more fine-grained understanding of what cosmopolitan thinking entails and why the beliefs of Antisthenes, Diogenes and Zeno are still of relevance to contemporary translators and cultural brokers.

The turn of the century has seen a marked renewal of interest in the theory and practice of cosmopolitanism among political scientists, sociologists, philosophers and cultural theorists (Cohen 1996; Brennan 1997; Cheah and Robbins 1998; Zachary 2000; Breckenridge *et al.* 2002). The interest has been prompted by a series of factors that have drawn attention to the necessity for new ways of thinking about the changing circumstances of cultures and societies. First, as early as 1990 Anthony Giddens defined globalization as 'the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa' (1990: 64). Thus, the nation-state system and the sacrosanct principle of national sovereignty which had been elaborated from the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 onwards came under increasing pressure. The global economy under the regime of what Manuel Castells has called 'informationalism' became a vast, interconnected system operating in real time through the agency of information technology and telecommunications networks (Castells 1996). As evidence of this, if there were approximately 7,000 trans-border corporations in the 1960s, there were 44,000 such corporations by the end of the

century (Scholte 2000: 86). Thus, economies or polities could no longer be seen as bounded entities to be described and managed within the framework of the post-Westphalian nation-state.

Second, the end of the Cold War did not result everywhere in an effortless passage to a universal reign of peace and harmony but was characterized, for example in the former Yugoslavia, by the exacerbation of ethnic tensions and the outbreak of extreme interethnic violence. The conflict raised issues about ethnocentric definitions of identity and the consequences of such definitions, and prompted debates about the human rights of individuals versus the sovereign rights of nation-states (Beck 2002: 64–8). Third, the relative hegemony of identity politics, particularly but not only in North America, in the last decade of the twentieth century, led to increasing impatience with static or essentialist notions of identity and a desire to conceive of identity in a more flexible and open fashion (Hollinger 1995). In response to these different phenomena, thinking about the cosmopolitan has taken different forms and we will briefly list these, using a modified form of the classification proposed by Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen (2002: 8–14).

Cosmopolitanism may be thought of as primarily a *socio-cultural condition*. That is to say, in an era of mass transportation, global tourism, significant migration and the relentless time–space compression of economies driven by information technology, cosmopolitanism is the body of thought most apt to describe our essential connectedness as global producers and consumers. Alternatively, cosmopolitanism may be seen as primarily a *philosophy* or *world-view* which, taking its lead mainly from the writings of Immanuel Kant, sees all of humanity as citizens of the world united by a set of common values, a particular philosophical stance towards others (Reiss 1970). This view can take the form of ‘moral cosmopolitanism’ which basically urges all humans to respect each other or it can be cast as a type of ‘legal cosmopolitanism’ which seeks to give expression to shared values in the guise of universal legal rights and duties. A variant on this stance is the idea of a cosmopolitan *attitude* or *disposition* which is not so much the obeying of a moral imperative as the expression of a desire or a willingness to engage with others (Hannerz 1990: 237–51).

Another way in which to present the cosmopolitan is to consider the emergence of *transnational institutions* and the beliefs and practices that these institutions entail. Such institutions include the European Union, the United Nations Organization, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund but also the different organizations representing global civil society such as Greenpeace, Amnesty International or the Global Social Forum (Delanty 2001). The cosmopolitan political project can equally be envisaged at the level of the subject with the notion of *multiple subjects*. In other words, human subjects have a plurality of different loyalties, a multiplicity of different ways in which they can be described or defined. So, depending on the situation, people might find themselves primarily defined, for example, by their age or their gender or their social class or their ethnicity, or by the neighbourhood in which they live, or by a combination of these different forms of belonging. In this view, cosmopolitanism is a way of thinking through the complexity of a polyidentity rather than accepting single,

*Prospects for World Government* is similarly hostile to what he sees as Western cosmopolitan visions of a global future which:

in fact goes no further than a network of connections and functional inter-dependencies which have developed within certain important sectors of the 'global market', above all finance, technology, automation, manufacturing industry and the service sector. Nor, moreover, does it go much beyond the optimistic expectation of affluent westerners to be able to feel universally recognised as citizens of the world – citizens of a welcoming, peaceful, ordered and democratic 'global village' – without for a moment or in any way ceasing to be 'themselves', i.e. western citizens.

(1997: 137)

Craig Calhoun observes that cosmopolitanism is often seen as the 'class consciousness of frequent travellers' (2002: 86–109) and John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge speak of the 'cosmocrats', a highly mobile, meritocratic elite. They are the 'people who attend business-school weddings around the world, fill up the business-class lounges at international airports, provide the officer ranks of most of the world's companies and international institutions' (Micklethwait and Wooldridge 2000: 229).

What the cosmocrats or the new 'hyperbourgeoisie' share is the universalism of social and material self-interest that allows for the easy embrace of a consumerist cosmopolitanism where everything from international eateries to the mix 'n' match of world music seems eloquent confirmation of a post-nationalist utopia. However, though the existence of such a class is a recognizable reality and the suspicions of a Brennan or a Zolo are readily understandable, it is important that cosmopolitan thinking be understood on its own terms. Indeed, the history of cosmopolitan critique from the vituperations of the Nazis against the perils of 'cosmopolitan Jewry' to Soviet diatribes from 1949 onwards against the evils of cosmopolitanism associated with Zionism, Pan-Americanism and Catholicism (Carew Hunt 1957: 38) should invite caution in the substitution of caricature for analysis of the cosmopolitan phenomenon. More specifically, it is important to understand the exact nature of the relationship between the local and the global, the particular and the general, the universal and the specific, as it is this relationship which must inevitably be at the heart of how we might conceptualize translation and translation practice in the contemporary period.

David Held in his definition of 'cultural cosmopolitanism' claims that it is '*the ability to stand outside a singular location (the location of one's birth, land, upbringing, conversion) and to mediate traditions*' that lies at its core (2002: 58; his emphasis). In this sense, of course, all translators are cultural cosmopolitans, in that going to the other text, the other language, the other culture, involves that initial journey away from the location of one's birth, language, upbringing. Even if one is translating into the foreign language as a target language, there is still the element of displacement, as the translator moves from the native language to the other language. So standing outside a singular location is an intrinsic part of

all-encompassing identities for human subjects based on one variable alone (Cohen 1992: 478–83). Lastly, there is a conception of the cosmopolitan that presents it primarily as a *practice* or a *competence*. That is, it relates to the ability to make one's way into other cultures and to actively engage with those living in or through different cultures, languages or milieux. It is this particular notion of the cosmopolitan that underlies much of the work that goes on in the area of intercultural training. What these contemporary understandings of the cosmopolitan offer is the possibility of thinking about translation as a way not only of thinking but of being and acting in the world. In other words, more complex and differentiated understandings of the concept allow us to escape the idle and dispiriting debates about theory versus practice that have blighted certain kinds of writing over the years.

New cosmopolitan thinking, as we can observe from the classification above, is as concerned with how altered circumstances produce a new kind of world to live and work in as it is with trying to understand what kind of world that might be. It is important at this point to distinguish contemporary cosmopolitan theory from other bodies of thought which seek to describe or account for contemporary multi-ethnic, multicultural and/or multilingual societies. What communitarianism, multiculturalism and pluralism, for example, tend to have in common is the ascription of primary identity to the community of belonging so that an individual's entitlement to certain rights or services (such as 'community' interpreting, for example) is based on the individual's membership of a particular community. The community constitutes both the grounds for access to entitlements and the primary framework for self-definition. In this context, David Hollinger contrasts pluralism or mosaic multiculturalism and cosmopolitan thinking: 'Pluralism respects inherited boundaries and locates individuals within one or another of a series of ethno-racial groups to be protected and preserved. Cosmopolitanism is more wary of traditional enclosures and favours voluntary affiliations' (1995: 3). So the stress in cosmopolitanism is on multiple affiliations and the possibility of individual choice rather than the unwavering cultural determinism of communities of descent.

Another school of thought that cosmopolitanism tends to be associated with is that of universalism. The darker version of universalism is that of an overweening humanist enlightenment with a set of prescriptive, 'universal' ideals that provide the alibi for the 'civilizing mission' of imperial and neo-imperial elites. The 'cosmopolitan' in this view is rootless and ruthless, disengaged and disembodied, (falsely) disinterested and (genuinely) disenchanted. A variation on this theme is the ready assimilation of cosmopolitanism to economic and social privilege which is apparent not only in the tirades of the European Far Right but is present also in the analyses of progressive thinkers who are sceptical about the uses to which cosmopolitanism is put by transnational capital. Timothy Brennan, for example, launches a trenchant attack against cosmopolitan thinking in *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now* (1997) where he denounces the current vogue for cosmopolitanism as simply the well-meaning version of American imperialism which under cover of cultural pluralism wishes to ensure the continued dominance of its political, economic, military and cultural interests. Danilo Zolo in *Cosmopolis*:

the translation process, repeated millions of times every day across the planet. But there is of course another dimension which is that translators are expected to be fully in possession of the language and culture of the location of their birth and/or upbringing if they are to function effectively as translators, whether into or out of the native tongue. Indeed, one of the most oft repeated critiques in translation pedagogy is that students of translation fail to recognize the importance of the idiom of the ‘singular location’ (Seleskovitch 1998: 288).

Held’s notion of mediating traditions begins to capture this necessary duality of the translation task but his claim is made more explicit by Stuart Hall in his advocacy of what he terms ‘vernacular cosmopolitanism’:

a cosmopolitanism that is aware of the limitations of any one culture or any one identity and that is radically aware of its insufficiency in governing a wider society, but which is nevertheless not prepared to rescind its claim to the traces of difference, which makes its life important.

(Hall 2002: 30)

The ‘traces of difference’ cannot be ignored, then, in a desire to float free of attachment or through some residual guilt about the pull of a culture or an identity (or a plurality of these) in a world where the fluid and the borderless and the emancipated are held up as virtual synonyms. The difficulty, however, has been to make cosmopolitanism attentive to those differences, to the particular claims of singular locations, without which translation as a meaningful activity would cease to exist. If there are no singular locations, then there is nothing left to mediate and by extension nothing to translate.

If we return to Peter Coulmas, the thinker and historian we mentioned earlier (p. 8), he openly states his preference for a world-view, namely cosmopolitanism, which he believes to be the only one capable of ensuring lasting peace and friendship between the different peoples on the planet. For Coulmas, a decline in cosmopolitanism is always synonymous with the rise of particularism and the birth of nationalism. When he goes on to describe important moments in the history of cosmopolitanism, it is almost invariably in the context of great empires of yesteryear, the Greek, the Roman, the Byzantine, the Carolingian, the French, the Spanish, the Austro-Hungarian and the British (Coulmas 1990: 9–13). This approach is not particularly quixotic and it has become a historical commonplace to underline the multi-ethnic and multilingual character of empires, even if the focus is not as resolutely centred on the West as is the case with Coulmas (Fernández Armesto 1996). The version of cosmopolitanism made explicit by Coulmas is what we might term *macro-cosmopolitanism*, namely a tendency to locate the cosmopolitan moment in the construction of empires, in the development of large nation-states (France, Great Britain, Germany) or more recently in the creation of supra-national organizations (European Union/United Nations/World Health Organization).

For the macro-cosmopolitan, it is only large political units which are capable of allowing the development of a progressive and inclusive vision of humanity, even if occasional hegemonic overreaching cannot be ruled out. Small nations, ethnic

groups concerned with the protection or preservation of cultural identity, former colonies which still subscribe to an ideology of national liberation are dangerously suspect in this macroscopic conception of cosmopolitanism. Bloody conflicts in the Balkans and in Northern Ireland seem to provide more recent justification for the distrust, in Pascalian terms, of the infinitely great for the infinitely small.

Coulmas evokes the popularity of the motto 'Small is beautiful', associating it with a fashionable interest in local costumes, dances and languages. His verdict is clear: 'this nostalgic looking back is clearly opposed to the onward march of history towards larger political entities'. Worse still, he declares, 'The small state is praised' (Coulmas 1990: 303). These small states have indeed a function which is clearly described in a chapter on the great metropolises of history. The latter benefit from the arrival of immigrants from less important states: 'by means of this brain-drain, many brilliant minds escape their country of origin, particularly, small countries offering few possibilities' (ibid., 272). In *Culture* Raymond Williams offers a similar description of the role of the metropolis, with his notion that those who participated in many avant-garde artistic groups were frequently 'immigrants to such a metropolis, not only from outlying regions but from other and smaller national cultures, now seen as culturally provincial in relation to the metropolis' (Williams 1981: 84). Indeed, for Matthew Arnold in an earlier period it was precisely the centripetal pull of the centre that made the notion of separate nationhood for the Irish or the Welsh or the Bretons a dangerous illusion:

Small nationalities inevitably gravitate towards the larger nationalities in their immediate neighbourhood. Their ultimate fusion is so natural and irresistible that even the sentiment of the absorbed race, ceases, with time, to struggle against it; the Cornishman and the Breton become, at last, in feeling as well as in political fact, an Englishman and a Frenchman.

(Arnold 1859: 71)

The nineteenth-century Swiss writer Rodolphe Töpffer noted with mordant cynicism that consecration from the macro-cosmopolitan viewpoint could only come through the metropolis, whose judgements were then internalized by those on the metropolitan edge:

Il faut donc de toute nécessité que cet homme, s'il tient à être illustre, transporte dans la capitale sa pacotille de talent, que là il la déballe devant les experts parisiens, qu'il paie l'expertise, et alors on lui confectionne une renommée qui de la capitale est expédiée dans les provinces où elle est acceptée avec empressement.

(Meizoz 1997: 168)

[It is absolutely necessary that if this man wishes to be famous he must bring his trashy talent to the capital, that there he must lay it out before the Parisian experts, pay for their valuation, and then a reputation is concocted for him which goes from the capital into the provinces where it is accepted with enthusiasm.]

The existence of small countries is justified by their being a kind of pre-cosmopolitan nursery, a warehouse of the mind where cognitive raw materials await the necessary processing and polish of the present and former capitals of empires. If Coulmas is cited *in extenso* it is because he offers in summary form a number of the basic theses of macro-cosmopolitanism, in particular an abiding hostility to political entities that are seen to be primarily defined by notions of national sovereignty or cultural particularism.

### **Micro-cosmopolitanism**

It is possible to oppose to the notion of macro-cosmopolitanism the concept of what we will call *micro-cosmopolitanism*. The concept attempts both to articulate the concerns and intuitions of Held and Hall and to offer a framework for thinking about translation in a progressive, enabling and non-exclusive fashion. Micro-cosmopolitan thought shares a number of macro-cosmopolitan core ideals – such as a concern for freedom, an openness to and tolerance of others, a respect for difference – but it is distinctly different in foregrounding other perspectives, other areas of work and research, and above all in freeing cosmopolitanism from a historical vision and a set of ideological presuppositions that threaten both its survival as a necessary element of human self-understanding and its ability to speak meaningfully to many different translation situations across the planet. Why do we need a micro-cosmopolitan perspective and what does it consist of? We will begin with the necessity for such a perspective.

There are now more nation-states than at any other time in the world's history. In one recent estimate there are around 200 nation-states and approximately 2,000 'nation peoples' who experience varying degrees of displacement, persecution and political uncertainty (Cohen 1997: ix–x). Currently, none of these nations seem particularly keen on abandoning their independence and, in the case of many nation peoples such as the Tibetans or the Chechnes, national independence is still very much a live and contentious issue. In this context, it is unlikely that small or new nations, which have often with great difficulty freed themselves from a former colonial presence, will be particularly impressed by being told that the notion of nation is outdated and reactionary and that clinging to such a notion automatically disqualifies them from belonging to the cosmopolitan community.

A dangerous and fatal consequence of this approach is to set up a progressive cosmopolitanism in opposition to a bigoted, essentialist nationalism where the latter has no place for the former. In other words, the inhabitants of smaller or less powerful political units find themselves subject to the 'double bind' famously described by Gregory Bateson (1973: 242–9). Either you abandon any form of national identification, seeing it as associated with the worst forms of irredentist prejudice, and you embrace the cosmopolitan credo or you persist with a claim of national specificity and you place yourself outside the cosmopolitan pale, being by definition incapable of openness to the other. The effects of this double bind are particularly damaging and in intellectual life bring about the paralysis that Bateson noted so clearly in our emotional lives. Extreme nationalists of all hues

The origin of the concept lies in a paper published in 1977 by the French mathematician, Benoît Mandelbrot. Mandelbrot asked the following question: ‘How long is the coast of Britain?’ His answer was that there might be no answer because the coast was infinitely long. Why? He pointed out that an observer from a satellite would make a guess that would be shorter than that of, say, a travel writer like Paul Theroux negotiating every inlet, bay and cove on the coast of Britain (Theroux 1984) and Theroux’s guess would be shorter than that of a tiny insect which has to negotiate every pebble. As James Gleick pointed out, ‘Mandelbrot found that as the scale of measurement becomes smaller, the measured length of a coastline rises without limit, bays and peninsulas revealing ever smaller subbays and subpeninsulas at least down to atomic scales’ (Gleick 1987: 96). Mandelbrot’s discovery was that the coastline had a characteristic degree of roughness or irregularity and that this degree remained constant across different scales. Mandelbrot called the new geometry that he had originated fractal geometry. The shapes or fractals in this new geometry allowed infinite length to be contained in finite space.

The experience of particular kinds of travellers bears out the discovery of the mathematician. The traveller on foot becomes aware of the immeasurable complexity of short distances in a way that is invisible to the traveller behind the windscreen or looking down from the air. There are many striking examples of this phenomenon. The English mathematician and cartographer Tim Robinson in his *Stones of Aran: Labyrinth* (1995) offers a detailed exploration of the 14,000 fields that make up Inismore, a small island off the west coast of Ireland. The French historian Emmanuel Leroy Ladurie many years earlier offered a similarly fine-grained history of a small village in southern France in *Montaillou* (1976). On a somewhat larger scale, Norman Davies and Roger Moorhouse (2002) demonstrate the immense cultural and historical complexity of just one Polish city, the city now known as Wrocław. What Robinson, for instance, clearly demonstrates as he goes through field after field on this small island is not only the remarkable richness of these reduced spaces but also the omnipresence of traces of foreignness, of other languages and cultures, in a place that through the work of John Millington Synge and others was closely identified with Irish language and culture and Irish cultural nationalism. The local is honoured in Robinson’s work but it is a local that is informed by diversity and difference.

In a sense, it is the fractal travelling of the intercultural researcher in translation studies that allows for the elaboration of a concept of the micro-cosmopolitan and the vital nuancing of cosmopolitan theory as it applies to very different social, cultural and political realities on the planet. The micro-cosmopolitan dimension helps thinkers from smaller or less powerful polities to circumvent the terminal paralysis of identity logic not through a programmatic condemnation of elites ruling from above but through a patient undermining of conventional thinking from below. Indeed, if one of the recurrent criticisms of cosmopolitan approaches has been the charge of cultural, economic and political elitism, then a micro-cosmopolitan awareness is vital to a proper democratization of inquiry and response. The micro-cosmopolitan movement, by situating diversity, difference, exchange at the micro-levels of society, challenges the monopoly (real or imaginary) of a

take refuge in virulent denunciations of anything construed to represent the cosmopolitan (as has been demonstrated in such a tragic fashion in Europe by the history of anti-Semitism) while the proponents of macro-cosmopolitanism for their part are trenchantly hostile to any movement of thought that might appear to harbour sympathy for nationalist ideology.

Another version of this unhelpful dualism is to be found in certain analyses of the phenomenon of globalization. Globalization is typically presented by its opponents as a process of whole-scale standardization (Ritzer 1993). The process is dominated by large multinational corporations and international organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, acting at the behest of the political and economic interests of the world's remaining superpower, the United States (Klein 2002). This thesis has been challenged by a number of thinkers such as Roland Robertson, Jonathan Friedman and Manuel Castells who view globalization as a fragmentary and centrifugal process as much as a unifying and centripetal one (Robertson 1992; Friedman 1994; Castells 1997). Their analyses, which would appear to challenge the hegemony of the powerful, do not in fact offer smaller or less powerful polities a particularly promising role. Once again these polities are cast in the position of *fidei defensor*, as the touchy and scrupulous guardians of national difference. Once more there is the trap of the essentialist conception of national identity, the identity logic criticized by Alain Finkielkraut in his *La Défaite de la pensée* (1987: 65–106) where political and cultural differences are reduced to a simplistic and homogenous version of particularism, usually to favour the material and social interests of local elites. In thinking about translation, the binarism of macro-cosmopolitan approaches, which also underlies Samuel Huntington's thesis on the clash of civilizations (1993: 22–50) or Benjamin Barber's vision of 'Jihad vs. McWorld' (1996), is hardly persuasive and can be deeply disabling both intellectually and politically. Theoreticians and practitioners of translation, whether from larger or smaller units, should not have to be condemned to the facile dualism of these macro perspectives.

Micro-cosmopolitan thinking is an approach which does not involve the opposition of smaller political units to larger political units (national or transnational). It is one which in the general context of the cosmopolitan ideals alluded to earlier seeks to diversify or complexify the smaller unit. In other words, it is a cosmopolitanism not from above but from below. Guy Scarpetta in his *Éloge du cosmopolitisme* is deeply critical of any 'defence of difference' which he believes leads inevitably to the 'affirmation of a biological inequality between nations' (1981: 19). The defence of difference is always problematic if the notion is understood in an essentialist and unitary sense but what we wish to advance here is a defence of difference not beyond but within the distinct political unit. If we may modify an idea first put forward in *Across the Lines*, micro-cosmopolitanism is linked to what we have called *fractal differentialism* (Cronin 2000: 16–21). This term expresses the notion of a cultural complexity which remains constant from the micro to the macro scale. That is to say, the same degree of diversity is to be found at the level of entities judged to be small or insignificant as at the level of large entities.

deracinated elite on cosmopolitan ideals by attempting to show that elsewhere is next door, in one's immediate environment, no matter how infinitely small or infinitely large the scale of investigation.

### **City and country**

If there is a place that would seem to offer itself quite readily to the micro-cosmopolitan approach, it would appear to be the city. In 1961 Lewis Mumford was already claiming that the 'global city is the world writ small, within its walls can be found every social class, every people, every language' (Mumford 1991: 620). The cities that have been classed as the great world cities of the past have included Athens, Alexandria, Rome, Constantinople, Paris, Vienna, London and New York but now great world cities include, for example, Karachi, Toyko, São Paulo, Mexico City, Montreal, Beijing and Shanghai. In the opinion of certain thinkers such as Manuel Castells (1997: 376–428), Saskia Sassen (1991: 195–218) and Gerard Delanty (2000: 99–102), cities, and in particular the large international metropolises, are going to become more and more important at the expense of nation-states. These global metropolises, key nodes in international communication networks, by bringing together a plethora of different cultures, languages, identities, are seen as an inexhaustible reservoir for the renewal of the cosmopolitan spirit. Cities are indeed striking examples of the potential of a micro-cosmopolitan approach and we will see ample evidence of this in our chapter on immigration. The work of the translator scholar, Sherry Simon (1999), on the Mile-End district in Montreal shows that much indeed can be learned from exploring the intercultural spaces of cities. The fact that by the end of the century more than 80 per cent of the planet's population will be living in urban centres would seem to be yet another reason for favouring an exclusively urban focus in research.

The danger, however, is that we end up once again giving new life to a jaded binary opposition: town or country, progress or reaction. In this view, cosmopolitanism is the proper business of cities and the role of the rural population (and this includes those living in towns and villages) is to act as guarantors for the authenticity of the land. It has become a critical commonplace, for example, to show how the city of Dublin was marginalized in Irish writing for many years after independence because in the nationalist imaginary the city was a foreign presence, an alien substance in the Irish body politic (Dublin – city of the Vikings, seat of British colonial power) (O'Toole 1985: 111–16). The countryside alone was deemed worthy of interest by many of the post-independence short story writers (the genre that found particular favour with Irish writers for many decades after the establishment of the Free State), because it was the countryside that was seen to be the incarnation of much that was deemed to be specific to Ireland. Needless to say, in Ireland, it was mainly urban intellectuals – Yeats, Synge, Standish O'Grady, George Moore – who contributed to the romantic deification of the land in cultural nationalism (Hutchinson 1987). If the more extreme forms of nationalism see the city as the polluted well of the cosmopolitan, destroying the manly vigour of the nation, the ready and too facile identification of the city with cosmopolitanism

in the work of many thinkers on cosmopolitanism itself tends ironically to give succour to the most retrograde forms of nationalism.

One could maintain that instead of arguing by implication and by default for a patriotism of the land, it is more enabling to argue for a cosmopolitanism of the land; in other words, to define specificity through and not against multiplicity. Casual observers of Irish traditional dancing in a pub in rural Ireland might properly feel that they are witnessing a practice which is deeply rooted in a locality but they are also seeing the fruit of the influence of French dancing masters who came to Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century, finding themselves unemployed due to the exile or the untimely demise of their aristocratic patrons (Murphy 1995). More recently, *Riverdance*, for all its egregious excesses and Celticist parody, is a striking synthesis of Irish figure dancing and Hollywood musicals. To stress hybridity in non-urban settings is not to devalue but to revalue. That is to say, to emphasize the multiple origins of a cultural practice, the intercultural dynamic in a micro-cosmopolitanism of the land, is to refuse to give in to a moralizing condemnation of particularisms on the grounds that traditions are always bogus, that the supposedly authentic is an elaborate historical trick and that we all know why the Scots were encouraged to wear kilts.

The withering scepticism about the particular noticeable in the work of Benedict Anderson (1991) and Eric Hobsbawm (1990), and amplified ad nauseam in the commentary of media pundits, is damaging to a genuine openness of cultures and engenders a counter-reaction to a current of cosmopolitan thinking seen as destructive, condescending and hegemonic. A key element of the micro-cosmopolitan argument being advanced here is that diversity enriches a country, a people, a community but that diversity should not be opposed to identity by a dismissive, macro-cosmopolitan moralism. If we have insisted on the necessity of considering cosmopolitanism as a phenomenon that is not the unique preserve of the urban, the underlying concerns are partly ecological. It is unlikely that rampant urbanization of both our societies and our planet is the best way for humanity to proceed. The accelerated drift from the countryside in most parts of the world is a factor that detracts from rather than enhances cultural diversity and represents a significant threat to linguistic diversity, to name but one component of cultural specificity (Abley 2003).

It is important that we track the instances of translation which highlight the micro-cosmopolitan complexity of places and cultures which are often outside the critical purview of the urban metropolis. In this way, in the investigation of the links between culture, place and language from the perspective of the fractal differentialism mentioned earlier it will be possible to develop a reading of, for example, non-metropolitan experience which is not condemned to a wistful *passéisme* but is forward-looking in its restoration of political complexity and cultural dynamism to all areas of territory and memory. Such a move, an integral part of the micro-cosmopolitan project, would both revitalize inquiry into a substantial body of the world's literature, both written and oral, which has the rural as its focus and also have important implications for the development of a progressive approach to translation theory and practice in rural communities throughout the world.

A further argument in favour of a micro-cosmopolitan sensitivity stems from a major potential failing of cosmopolitanism which is its weak conception of solidarity. As Craig Calhoun observes:

if cosmopolitan democracy is to be more than a good, ethical orientation for those privileged to inhabit the frequent traveller lounges, it must put down roots in the solidarities that organize most people's sense of identity and location in the world. To appeal simply to liberal individualism – even with respect for diversity – is to disempower those who lack substantial personal or organizational resources.

(2002: 108)

Not only do solidarities of various forms, whether based on religion, ethnicity, language, gender or political orientation, help people to make sense of the world but solidarity is also the basis for social and political transformation. Thus, the proximity of macro-cosmopolitanism to rationalist liberal individualism means that cosmopolitanism can find itself disarmed in the face of a neo-liberal onslaught on social achievements, themselves the outcome of struggles based on political solidarity. It is hardly surprising that the first example of usage under 'cosmopolitanism' in the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* is taken from John Stuart Mill's *Political Economy* in 1848: 'Capital is becoming more and more cosmopolitan'. Similarly, as we shall see in later chapters, to argue for the importance of distinctive language and translation rights as the basis of communal identity is to argue from and on the basis of a notion of solidarity. As Richard Bellamy and Dario Castiglione (1998: 158) point out, 'the proper acknowledgement of "thin" basic rights rests on their being specified and overlaid by a "thicker" web of social obligations.'

In other words, human beings not only have rights and obligations, they also have relationships and commitments. A micro-cosmopolitan perspective admits the importance and complexity of the local as a basis for the formation of solidary relationships but allows for the trans-local spread of those relationships, i.e. for the establishment of solidarities that are not *either* local *or* global but both *local* and *global*. In the words of the Scottish environmentalist, Alastair McIntosh,

I must start where I stand. As children, we used to be told that if you dug a really deep hole, you'd come out in Australia. I think in some ways this is very true. If any of us dig deep enough where we stand, we will find ourselves connected to all parts of the world.

(2002: 7)

So what are the advantages of this new thinking about the cosmopolitan for the way in which we view translation not only in the contemporary world but at various moments in the history of translation practice? It is possible to extrapolate a set of key notions that makes for the distinctiveness of the new intellectual current with

respect to competing bodies of thought and that point to its relevance for translation theory. First, cosmopolitanism allows us to transcend the nation-state model and take cognizance of new (and old) transnational realities in translation. In addition, the micro version proposed in this work pays due attention to the aspiration to distinctiveness, the functions of solidarity and the existence of complexity across scales. Second, and this point in a sense follows on from the first, cosmopolitan theory permits mediation between the global and the local, a crucial point, as we shall see further on in the chapter, for considering translation in its current state. Third, in its unwillingness to be wholly subject to any fixed, permanent, all-encompassing notion of belonging or being, cosmopolitanism is by definition anti-essentialist, an important consideration for how we defend translation against its critics. Fourth, as we saw above, cosmopolitanism leaves room for complex repertoires of allegiance (cosmopolitanism and multiple subjects); this is crucial in accounting for the multiplicity of factors which can affect translation and translators in any one situation. Fifth, there is the emancipatory thrust of a theory which does not see self as wholly bounded by a community of origin. In other words, just as there is more to the community than self, there is more to the self than community.

This does not mean, however, that the self can only triumph when pitted against community. What Calhoun says about democracy applies equally well to cosmopolitanism: ‘it must empower people in the actual conditions of their lives. This means to empower them within communities and traditions, not in spite of them, and as members of groups not only as individuals’ (2002: 92). The project of freedom cannot simply be the concern of any one individual but must also take cognizance of a community’s capacity for change, if only because tradition itself is a dynamic rather than a static concept. Finally, cosmopolitanism sets itself apart from forms of identity politics whether defined as pluralism, multiculturalism or postmodern relativism. Though identity politics have often been a powerful alibi for the vindication of the translation rights of communities, it is doubtful whether they can ultimately function as an enabling frame for thinking about the porousness and the capacity for dissent of translation and the role it plays in the lives of individuals, communities and larger polities.

### **Global hybrids**

It is crucial in reworking the conceptual basis for translation that we bear in mind the necessity to move beyond conventional divisions or distinctions in human inquiry. One of these distinctions is between the social and the physical or the cultural and the material. John Urry has pointed out that

most significant phenomena that the so-called social sciences now deal with are in fact hybrids of physical *and* social relations, with no purified sets of the physical or the social. Such hybrids include health, technologies, the environment, the Internet, road traffic, extreme weather and so on.

(2003: 17–18)