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# DIALOGIC COSMOPOLITANISM AND GLOBAL JUSTICE

*Eduard Jordaan*

## INTRODUCTION

Use of the term ‘cosmopolitan/communitarian debate’ to organise philosophical disagreements over global justice never really caught on, presumably because it exaggerated the contrast between the two sides and was unable to pick up on the nuance and qualification in the writing concerned. It is a hard contrast to maintain when communitarian authors argue that obligations of justice extend beyond national borders and cosmopolitans accept the value of local cultures and of special affective and political relationships (Tan, 2004; Miller, 2007). Nevertheless, the moral priorities of participants in debates about global justice are generally clear enough for us to say that a national-global dichotomy remains the most prominent line that mark their disagreements. Those on the cosmopolitan side of the debate hold the advantage of promising a quicker route to global justice, whereas those who see justice as largely a national matter enjoy the advantage of being closer to the way things presently work. Given their greater distance from the current reality, the onus has been on cosmopolitans to defend the tenet that all human beings are deserving of equal moral concern in the face of the fact that we tend to be more concerned for members of our personal circle, our community and our nation. Cosmopolitans further have had to contend with arguments that justice is an expression

of the choices, values and institutions of a specific political community and that a political community in this sense cannot exist at the global level; that the aspirations of cosmopolitans are not as universal as they think, given an intellectual ancestry that lies with Western thinkers such as the Stoics, Marcus Aurelius and Immanuel Kant; that cosmopolitanism does not take differences between people seriously enough; that it overestimates the individual's ability to cast off his or her socio-cultural baggage; and that it tends to universalise the views of a lone (white, male, Western) interpreter.

Categorising these objections is difficult; suffice to say that a national-global fault line remains prominent. One approach that seems able to reduce the alleged national-global contrast and therefore promises to advance the debate is 'dialogic cosmopolitanism'. Dialogic cosmopolitans aim to bridge the alleged national-global divide by starting from premises that come close to being 'communitarian' – I continue to use the term for want of a better one – and from there working to a cosmopolitan position. Dialogic cosmopolitans try to lay the foundation from which to theorise just global arrangements – they do not offer a substantive vision of global justice – with the added burden of having accepted much of the criticism that has been levelled against cosmopolitanism from the communitarian side. Following a 'communitarian path to cosmopolitanism' (Shapcott, 2001:31) involves viewing the current boundaries of our moral concern as serious obstacles, while stressing that moral loyalties can be reshaped and expanded in ways that do not necessarily coincide with the boundaries of political community; treating the values and cultures of other societies with greater respect, while simultaneously insisting on a commitment to dialogue across cultural frontiers; steering clear of a monologically

asserted view of what is just and instead seeing justice as what derives from open discussion among differently situated persons; and recognising that our views of justice and of who deserves our moral concern are shaped by our socio-political environment, but insisting that views can be reshaped.

Leaving aside the tricky matter of how to organise the various streams of cosmopolitan thought (see Pogge, 2002:168-177; Tan, 2004:40-61; Caney, 2005:102-147), the cosmopolitan writings of Andrew Linklater, Richard Shapcott and Fred Dallmayr have enough in common to be grouped together, have enough in common with cosmopolitanism to remain within its fold, yet are distinct enough from other cosmopolitan texts to be regarded as a separate approach, namely dialogic cosmopolitanism. My principal aim is to critically present the central elements of the dialogic cosmopolitan approach to justice for these elements are intended to absorb some of the criticism that has been levelled against cosmopolitanism as well as to reflect some recent developments in political philosophy. Dialogic cosmopolitanism contains four central elements: a respect for difference; a commitment to dialogue; an open, hesitant and self-problematizing attitude on the part of the individual; and an undertaking to expand the boundaries of moral concern to the point of universal inclusion.<sup>1</sup> To be sure, some of these elements are detectable in other cosmopolitan texts, but only in dialogic cosmopolitanism do all four elements feature prominently. It will be concluded that despite the inclusion of many welcome elements, dialogic cosmopolitanism is weighed down by problems of inclusion and a lack of attention to matters of distributive justice.

The rest of this article will discuss the four elements that characterise dialogic cosmopolitanism and indicate points of agreement and disagreement within this cosmopolitan approach. Disagreements among dialogic cosmopolitans stem primarily from Linklater's reliance on Habermas's discourse ethics, as opposed to Shapcott and Dallmayr's reliance on Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics.<sup>2</sup> Discussion of Habermas and Gadamer's own writings will be drawn upon only in so far as these illuminate the arguments of dialogic cosmopolitans. Significantly, Habermas's own theoretical writings on international affairs will not be considered as these tend to focus on matters of legitimacy, the impact of globalisation on democratic states, international law, and the creation of a public to match the economic and political integration that has occurred in Europe (Habermas, 1998, 2001, 2006a, 2006b). Habermas's contributions in this regard are significant and has been a topic of discussion in International Relation literature (Fine and Smith, 2003; Anievas, 2005; Diez and Steans, 2005; Haacke, 2005), but his writings say little about justice to difference and the role of dialogue in situations of value pluralism, two matters on which he has written influentially in his national-level political theory and which are of central importance to dialogic cosmopolitans.

The 'dialogic cosmopolitanism' of Dallmayr, Linklater and Shapcott has received individual attention in the literature (Elshtain, 1999; Geras, 1999; Walker, 1999; Reus-Smit, 2000; Connolly, 2001; Rengger, 2001; Schneck, 2006), but dialogic cosmopolitanism on the whole has received little more than passing mention. A partial exception has been some of Andrew Dobson's writing in which he divides cosmopolitanism into distributive and dialogic camps and raises a number of objections

against dialogic cosmopolitanism (Dobson, 2003, 2005, 2006). Dobson (2006:168) admits that his distinction between the two forms of cosmopolitanism is a 'brutal' one. Significant for my purposes, the components that make up the dialogic form of cosmopolitanism remain unspecified, apart from the obvious centrality of dialogue. Some of the problems Dobson identifies with dialogic cosmopolitanism will be addressed below.

## **FOUR ELEMENTS OF DIALOGIC COSMOPOLITANISM**

### **A Commitment to Dialogue**

For dialogic cosmopolitans, deep cultural differences do not present a fundamental obstacle to our engagement of others as equal conversational partners. Equality as conversational partners manifests itself in genuine dialogue, that is, in which there is no presumption about the outcome of the conversation and about who might learn from whom (Dallmayr, 1996:97; Linklater, 1998:85). The commitment of dialogic cosmopolitans to engage the other as an equal conversational partner stems from at least three sources: the influence of the view that disagreements on what is just cannot be settled through access to an impartial, free-standing point of view; ambivalence about the moral authority of the West; and respect for difference.

By holding the view that justice stems from the choices, cultures and circumstances of specific groups, dialogic cosmopolitans come closer to the communitarian side than to the abstraction and ahistoricism characteristic of cosmopolitanism. A view of justice as deeply reflective of a specific socio-historical context has gained increasing currency in recent years, especially after Rawls (1985) clarified his conception of justice as ‘political, not metaphysical’. However, where dialogic cosmopolitans part ways with communitarians is in their willingness to consider not only the voices of those within the boundaries of one’s political community, but to also enter into dialogue about justice with those beyond its borders. In other words, for dialogic cosmopolitans, the boundaries of moral community extend beyond those of political community. Indeed, the socially constructed character of moral truth and justice means that there is no intrinsic reason why these cannot be reshaped to include the views of outsiders, a process that would be helped along by a widening of political boundaries. Moreover, Linklater, in particular, frequently points to the moral resources in modern societies that hold the potential to be harnessed for transformative purposes. These include the Kantian belief that extending legal rights to members of other societies is inherent to liberal societies and a conception of citizenship that includes ‘support for collective action to improve the conditions of the unfairly excluded’ (Linklater, 1998:4; 2007:75).

Dialogic cosmopolitans are very careful not to proclaim the moral superiority of the West, given the West’s history of presumed cultural and racial superiority, even though occasional claims that Europe is an example of how to live alongside ‘otherness in a

narrow space' (Dallmayr, 1998:53) and that the 'modern West represents a major advance in the development of moral-practical rationality' might count as such (Linklater, 1998:121). Dialogic cosmopolitans further recognise that despite the growing influence of non-Western societies, the West by and large continues to shape global moral discourse and to dominate the most significant international institutions (Dallmayr, 1996:ix). Weary of the dark side of Western civilisation, dialogic cosmopolitans stress the 'non-domineering' potential in the cultural and political practices of the West (Dallmayr, 1998:xix). The expanded use of open dialogue – which is characteristic of Western societies – when interacting with outsiders is one important way to counteract Western prescriptiveness.

Cosmopolitan theory has frequently discarded human difference in an attempt to distil what all people have in common so as to derive principles of justice that would hold across time and place. However, if one respects the difference of the other, then one cannot presume to speak on her behalf or know what is in her interest. In fact, the other's interests can only be revealed through questioning, which means that recognition of the other and her difference is a dialogic task (Dallmayr, 1998:7). Moreover, just agreement or compromise among different persons can only be achieved through dialogue, for one does not know in advance what would be agreed to (Shapcott, 2001:39). Viewed from another perspective, a commitment to dialogue is intended to prevent the suppression or neglect of marginal voices (Linklater, 1998:41).



Despite concurring on the centrality of dialogue, there is some disagreement among dialogic cosmopolitans over its purpose. For Linklater, strongly influenced by Habermas's discourse ethics, the goal of dialogue is to achieve universal consensus. Linklater's is a universalism that emphasises the primacy of answerability to other people; 'norms cannot be regarded as valid unless they have, or could command, the consent of all those who stand to be affected by them' (Linklater, 1998:96). Only through dialogue with people from other cultures can we figure out which norms have mere parochial acclaim and which have wider validity (Linklater, 1998:79). Moral progress entails a movement away from parochial forms of life towards a commitment to using discourse as means of investigating 'the possibility of an agreement about the principles of coexistence' (Linklater, 1998:96).

Shapcott and Dallmayr are very concerned about the limited view of conversation apparent in discourse ethics. According to them, Habermas, and Linklater, by implication, regard conversation simply as a means to resolve moral disputes (Shapcott, 2001:128). Against its own commitment to respect the situatedness of persons, Habermasian discourse becomes 'a quasi-transcendental platform predicated on idealised conditions of speech' in which participants need to have momentarily suspended their 'ordinary actions' in order to participate (Dallmayr, 1998:257). The Habermasian emphasis on rational discourse sidelines other types of speech (for example, narration), whereas the emphasis on universalisation unnecessarily limits the topics of conversation by excluding from dialogue problems that might be understood as moral in everyday terms, but that might not aspire to universal validity (Dallmayr, 2001:343). Certainly, what ought to be

done in a heavily contextual setting can be subjected to reasoned discussion, even though the accepted solution might not have universal validity. The Habermasian emphasis on consensus thus leads to conceptions of reason, moral action and dialogue that are too restrictive (Shapcott, 2001:112-13).

A dialogic approach based on Gadamer's writing does not discount the possibility of agreement, but is most committed to conversation aimed at the less demanding goal of 'understanding' (Shapcott, 2001:147). To explain: Our perspective on the world is dominated by the influence of 'what is nearest to us' (Gadamer, 2004:304). We acquire a 'horizon' when we look beyond what is near and familiar, 'not in order to look away from it, but to see it better, within a larger whole and in a truer proportion' (Gadamer, 2004:304). However, the term 'horizon' suggests that our view from a particular point remains limited (Gadamer, 2004:301). Conversation with others (as well as an engagement with texts) helps us to see beyond our own horizon and further helps to make the ideas of another person intelligible, without us necessarily agreeing with his point of view (Gadamer, 2004:301; Shapcott, 2001:143, 171). Understanding, 'a fusion of horizons', is the result of dialogue and entails the sharing of a new and expanded perspective that neither conversational partner could have achieved alone (Gadamer, 2004:305; Shapcott, 2001:131).<sup>3</sup> The Gadamerian emphasis on dialogue is particularly relevant for addressing moral uncertainty. For Gadamer (2004:311), 'the task of moral knowledge is to figure out what is required in a concrete situation in light of what is required of one in general'. Gadamer distinguishes between technical and moral knowledge. While the concern of both is application to specific situations, technical

knowledge is particular and focused on specific ends, whereas moral action asks about and orients itself to the good *in general* (Gadamer, 2007:231, 311-313). Much of what is regarded as good is handed-down tradition, yet no tradition is truly closed and hence we can break off and reformulate parts of it through dialogue to form a new horizon (Gadamer, 2004:282, 303). Indeed, one is spurred into dialogue and an effort to understand ‘when one comes up against something that is strange, challenging, disorienting’ (Gadamer, 2007:92).

While few would object to the general desirability of dialogue across social boundaries, Dobson argues that dialogic cosmopolitanism’s constant insistence on the use of dialogue to understand the other or to find out what she needs is misguided for it is often plainly obvious what the other needs. As a case in point, Dobson mentions the submergence of two islands that used to be part of the Pacific island nation of Kiribati as a result of global warming. ‘The Small Island States do not want to talk any more. What they want is for net contributors to global warming to reduce their impact on the global environment’ (Dobson, 2003:23-24). Yes, it is obvious that we should reduce carbon emissions to protect the people of Kiribati and others. However, the point that dialogic cosmopolitans would make is that for states at different levels of economic development to achieve a *fair* solution to the problem of global warming a reliance on dialogue would be unavoidable. Another example of an obvious problem with a not-so-obvious solution is global poverty; its intractability is nicely captured by the title of a book by William Easterly (2001), *The Elusive Quest for Growth: Economists’ Adventures and Misadventures in the Tropics*. There is plenty of evidence that development projects have

failed as a result of not including the intended beneficiaries in the planning and decision-making process, an arrogance dialogic cosmopolitans seek to avoid. Whereas Dobson accuses dialogic cosmopolitans of a preoccupation with engaging victims in dialogue when the material injustices they have suffered are obvious, I think it is more accurate to say that dialogic cosmopolitans tend to overlook matters of material/distributive injustice on the whole in favour of a focus on doing ‘justice to difference’, a matter that will be discussed further in the next section. In defence of dialogic cosmopolitanism, it should be said that a commitment to doing justice to difference is more dependent on dialogue than distributive justice, as the former type of injustice is often subtle and its perpetrators sometimes well-intentioned and unaware of the harm they have caused.

### **Respect for Difference**

The commitment of dialogic cosmopolitans to doing justice to difference reflects recent developments in social theory. In addition to the writings of Habermas and Gadamer, Iris Young and Charles Taylor’s arguments about the significance of not giving due respect to forms of life that differ from ours have also had considerable impact on dialogic cosmopolitans (Young, 1990; Taylor, 1994).<sup>4</sup> For Taylor (1994:25),

our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer

real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being.

Young's writing is additionally important for its criticism of a preoccupation with distribution when thinking about justice, given that injustice often has no apparent distributive dimension, a shift in focus that Shapcott (2001:10) firmly endorses. At a minimum, justice to difference requires treating people with identities different to ours with equal respect and enabling them to maintain and express as much of their heterogeneity in the face of necessary homogenising pressures.

Dialogic cosmopolitanism's concern with justice to difference stems not only from recent theoretical developments, but is also a response to our globalised era in which there is much more contact with people and cultures that are different, an interdependence that has been marked by the growing influence of non-Western societies (Dallmayr, 1996:ix). Linklater (1998:32) further argues that globalisation has encouraged the politics of identity as communities have tried to resist the homogenising pressures of globalisation, although it need not be suppressive of difference. Instead, the global political order can and should be transformed towards one in which there are 'significant advances in universality' *and* increased respect for cultural differences (Linklater, 1998:3). Dialogue is a mechanism through which to achieve universality and to protect those who are

regarded as different from marginalisation or oppression (Linklater, 1998:41; 2007:55). Moreover, dialogically derived solutions to problems of coexistence would reduce the tension between the two seemingly opposite goals of universality and difference. Note that Shapcott, compared to Linklater, sees a stronger tension between universality and difference and prefers to stand closer to the difference side of this tension and to settle for 'understanding', rather than the more demanding goal of (universal) consensus.

Although we are told that 'the politics of recognition is far from unconcerned with the redistribution of wealth' (Linklater, 1998:187), it is not clear (or even addressed) how distributive issues are to be dealt with dialogically. To be sure, dialogic cosmopolitans make reference to the need for greater material equality and some have even written longer pieces on this matter (Dallmayr, 2006). For the most part, however, dialogic cosmopolitans deal with issues pertaining to justice of recognition and those pertaining to distributive justice as unrelated, not the muddle Fraser, Honneth, and others have been trying to untangle (Fraser and Honneth, 2003). One sees evidence of such a dichotomisation in Shapcott's book in which he defends a focus on recognition by arguing that 'in many societies today the concern with class discrimination has been replaced by or overshadowed by debates on how to recognise the place of various cultures or groups' and in which he cites Australia, Canada and the United States as examples of places where such a shift has occurred (Shapcott, 2001:11). If recognition is to be the focal point at the expense of distribution, it is surprising that one finds no reference to the argument that distributional injustices must be understood in terms of recognition, or the lack thereof, as Honneth has argued (Honneth and Fraser, 2003:114).

When dialogic cosmopolitans do bring issues of distribution and recognition into contact, it amounts to little more than assertions of a ‘duty to create the social and economic conditions which will ensure that participation within appropriate frameworks is meaningful for the largest possible number of the world’s population’ (Linklater, 1998:205-06). Problematically, Linklater here seems to rely on a type of monological cosmopolitanism that dialogic cosmopolitans have criticised for its levelling of difference and the particularity of situations (Dallmayr, 1998:254; Linklater, 1998:48; 2007:51; Shapcott, 2001:36-42). Ironically, and despite their commitment to difference, in dialogic cosmopolitanism one finds no engagement with Walzer’s (1983) argument that distributive arrangements and the goods that are up for redistribution themselves are deeply reflective of time and place and should be understood as such. More importantly, by leaving matters of distribution so far to the side, dialogic cosmopolitans burden their approach with questionable priorities. The deadly urgency of global poverty,<sup>5</sup> firstly, cannot wait for the construction of a dialogic community of global scope; secondly, seems mostly to be a problem of distribution rather than recognition; and thirdly, far exceeds the number of deaths in which matters of identity play a greater role (for example, civil war or ethnic violence) (Pogge, 2001:8-9). The marginal place of distributive justice in dialogic cosmopolitanism restricts the usefulness of this approach to thinking about global justice. While fixable, this problem is compounded by the argument that will be made in the final section, namely that certain premises in dialogic cosmopolitanism are likely to hamper the entry of the world’s poor into a larger moral community characterised by open dialogue.

## **The Uncertain Self**

Dialogic cosmopolitanism shares with communitarians a conception of the self as a situated being, a person whose values and scope of moral concern have been shaped by history, social context and political boundaries. But, whereas communitarian writers are committed to preserving the context and the boundaries in which an individual's moral outlook was formed, dialogic cosmopolitans aim to include outsiders in a genuine conversation about matters that affect them. Dialogic cosmopolitans write as if the expansion of a dialogic community will always involve the West, typically at the centre of this expanding moral universe. Nevertheless, dialogic cosmopolitans are sensitive to the Western legacy of colonialism, racism, and so on, and therefore imbue their conception of the conversing self with a certain reticence, someone careful not to impose, prescribe or dominate. Such reticence is important if the goal is genuine conversation with others, for the 'conceit of superiority, the complacent assumption of holding the key to justice and ethical truth, obstructs (or may obstruct) learning on the part of Western culture' (Dallmayr, 1998:268). Put differently, the moral self dialogic cosmopolitans have in mind is decentred, exhibits good will towards the excluded, and is willing to open his moral beliefs to questioning and to reconfigure these in light of criticism. However, disagreements among dialogic cosmopolitans about the status of agreements reached



through dialogue seem to translate into theoretically different levels of willingness of the self to open its moral beliefs and priorities up for questioning.

Drawing on Habermas, Linklater locates our willingness to question the consequences of our actions on outsiders in the post-conventional capacity of moral selves to recognise moral norms as parochial. Whereas pre-conventional moral agents obey norms out of fear of sanction and conventional moral agents act in conformity with the norms of their social group, post-conventional moral agents 'stand back from authority structures and group membership to ask whether they are complying with principles that have universal applicability' (Linklater, 2007:50). At the post-conventional stage, traditional norms lose their authority upon being recognised as parochial (Habermas, 1990:162, 178). The detachment of norms from the implicit stock of cultural assumptions that lubricate our social interaction moves in tandem with the increased rational organisation of society, which is necessary for societies to grow and become more complex (Habermas, 1987:173). While the rationalisation of society has mostly been associated with purposive action in which actors pursue success through means-end calculations, it also enables communicative action whereby actors are less concerned with their egocentric success but rather pursue and orient their individual goals on the basis of an articulated understanding with others (Habermas, 1984:285-86). Yet Habermas is interested in more than mere intersubjective agreement; for him it is also important to determine the worthiness of a norm to be recognised (Habermas, 1990:61). The standard against which to judge the worthiness of a norm is its universality, which stems from the (real or

potential) approval granted by ‘all affected in their capacity as participants in a practical discourse’ (Habermas, 1990:66).

Gadamer locates moral self-questioning and openness to the ideas of others in the ‘experienced’ person, someone who has had her generalisations ‘continually refuted by experience’ and who has become ‘radically undogmatic’ as a result (Gadamer, 2004:347-50). What is ‘experienced’ is ‘human finitude’, the recognition of one’s fallibility and ignorance (Shapcott, 2001:151-152). Our ignorance is partly the result of the horizons that surround us as situated beings. It is an awareness of our historicity that gives rise to the desire to know and therefore to engage others in conversation – a person trying to understand is prepared to be told something (Gadamer, 2004:354, 271). Although no horizon is truly closed, it is nevertheless difficult to become aware of the parochial nature of our views and values, since being situated means not being able to move to a point from where to obtain an objective and total perspective on our situation (Gadamer, 2004:301-03). Unlike Habermas, Gadamer has little to say about the social factors that make the questioning of our own truth claims and entry into dialogue with others more likely (Shapcott, 2001:187). At most, Gadamer considers such self-questioning to be most likely in *gebildete* (cultured) societies, that is, societies in which people have acquired norms that are more defensible to outsiders as well as the ability to acquire such norms (Warnke, 1987:174).

According to Shapcott, the barriers to entry into conversation with the other are much lower on the Gadamerian account. This benefit of the Gadamerian approach stems from

its view of conversation, which does not necessarily require giving up one's own beliefs but merely gaining insight into the other's point of view. However, when agreement becomes necessary – and Gadamer is ambiguous on consensus as a goal for conversation (Warnke 1987:169) – then it would seem as though entry into conversation is at least as demanding, if not more, for the Gadamerian 'experienced' self as compared to the Habermasian post-conventional self. For the post-conventional self, the burden of moral self-questioning is made lighter by the assurance that she has reached the highest stage of moral development and that her parochial moral views will be replaced by ones based on a wider consensus. By contrast, claims that Gadamer's 'experienced' person represents a moral advance are much more muted. More significantly, Gadamerian writers do not claim for consensual arrangements the firmness and solace of universality, firstly, because such agreements remain tied to and reflective of historical conditions, and secondly, because another understanding is always possible as 'any understanding necessarily ignores certain features of a text, culture or situation of action in its very focus on and clarification of others' (Warnke 1987:130). The lesser promise that awaits the self-questioning 'experienced' self suggests that the Gadamerian subject's leap into self-questioning and conversation with the other requires greater courage when compared with the assurance of progress and relative certainty offered to the post-conventional self, hence the frequent association of dialogue with risk by Gadamer and his interpreters. In the words of Dallmayr, entering into dialogue with the other 'requires a willingness to "risk oneself", that is, to plunge headlong into a transformative learning process in which the status of the self and other are continuously renegotiated' (Dallmayr, 1996:xviii).

## **Expanding and Deepening Community**

Dialogic cosmopolitans have much sympathy with the communitarian insistence on the meaningfulness and perpetuation of communal life. However, as with all forms of cosmopolitanism, dialogic cosmopolitans fear that communitarians attach ‘more moral significance than is justified to the differences between fellow-nationals and aliens’ (Linklater, 1998:3). Excessive loyalty to fellow citizens creates the danger that we ‘acquire indifference to, and may become enemies of, the rest of the human race’ (Linklater, 1998:25). To counteract this danger, dialogic cosmopolitans stress the need for engaging outsiders in dialogue. Moreover, dialogic cosmopolitanism parts ways with a more communitarian approach by seeking to expand the boundaries of moral community to a universal level, leaving no social boundary ‘automatically beyond question and reproach’ (Linklater, 1998:100). One could question whether thinking of moral concern for outsiders in terms of community – as opposed to, say, ‘network pluralism’ (Connolly, 2001) or a multiplicity of non-territorial affiliations and overlapping identities (Erskine, 2002) – is the right approach. Be that as it may, the aspiration of dialogic cosmopolitans to global communality is smoothed by the light definition of community as ‘the act of inclusion in the moral world’ (Shapcott, 2001:3).<sup>6</sup> Dialogic cosmopolitans recognise that to translate the universalistic trajectory of moral concern into justice would require, firstly, capable supranational political institutions, and second, a bond stronger than mere moral regard.

Dialogic cosmopolitanism requires supranational institutions to open channels of transnational discourse and to turn universal normative agreements into policies with tangible consequences. Shapcott (2001:213) follows theorists of global deliberative democracy in seeing international institutions, international non-governmental organisations and states as sites for increased communicative contestation. Linklater (1998:167), in turn, argues for the ideal of a post-Westphalian order that no longer presupposes 'the commitment to sovereignty, territoriality, nationality and citizenship which differentiates the modern form of political community from all previous forms of political organisation'. Instead of tying citizenship to the state, loyalties and governance are to be exercised at different levels, specifically, the province, the state, the region and the world (Linklater, 1998:198). Pluralist and solidarist arrangements of international society are capable of doing justice to the concerns of outsiders, but a Westphalian international society would strengthen this likelihood through the additional 'commitment to widen the boundaries of the political community so that insiders and outsiders can be associated as equal members of a transnational citizenry' (Linklater, 1998:175). While Europe certainly is a good example of a transition to a post-Westphalian arrangement, it remains hard to imagine, and Linklater offers little clarity, how the European 'experiment in close political cooperation' could be globalised.

Authors with a communitarian bent have long argued that justice – fair solutions to problems that stem from human interaction – requires a significant amount of we-feeling among those who participate in a scheme of justice. Although dialogic cosmopolitans are

very uncomfortable with the communitarian tendency to confine justice to the national level, they share the communitarian view that solidarity is necessary among people to whom justice is to apply. In Shapcott's terms, '[b]ecause philosophical hermeneutics is universalistic in its claims this means that it is concerned ultimately with the creation of universal solidarity as the necessary condition for the exercise of practical reasoning on a global scale' (Shapcott, 2001:159). So, to turn transnational moral conversations into justice and to address the motivational deficit that has plagued cosmopolitanism, dialogic cosmopolitans identify actual and potential sources of transnational solidarity. Many of these sources have no obvious connection to the communicative aspects of their cosmopolitanism. According to Shapcott, solidarity could be based on as little as 'the acknowledgement of a shared historical predicament, situation or of a common future' (Shapcott, 2001:159), whereas Linklater cites the emotional identification with the suffering of outsiders as a potential source of solidarity with them (Linklater, 2007:182-88). Linklater (1998:105; 2007, pp. 129-190) also mentions concerns over causing transnational harm as an impetus for expanded solidarity, an approach Dobson (2005) recommends over attempts to base moral progress on trying to expand empathy for outsiders. What is somewhat surprising about Linklater's discussion of solidarity is the absence of any mention of Habermas's arguments about the integrative effects of communication. Habermas points out that communicative action enables the deepening and expansion of solidarity by giving participants the opportunity to develop and affirm their shared identities (Habermas 1987:139). By contrast, Shapcott does mention the importance of creating solidarity through conversation (Shapcott, 2001:128, 176).

Unfortunately, the precise mechanisms through which dialogue is to be turned into solidarity – that is, more than ‘understanding’ – remain unspecified.

This brings us to a major problem with dialogic cosmopolitanism. Despite the aspiration to an expanded solidarity, both forms of dialogic cosmopolitanism are hamstrung at an earlier point. For Linklater (2007:50), the moral orientation that motivates the aspiration to a more inclusive moral community requires the post-conventional ability to ask whether the consequences of our actions would be dialogically agreed to by all who stand to be affected. A problem appears in Linklater’s ability to include everyone in dialogue, for, as the term suggests, a *post*-conventional morality ‘reflects a particular stage in moral development’ (Linklater, 2007:51).<sup>7</sup> According to Shapcott (2001:98), this means that a ‘truly moral relationship between modern and pre-modern agents appears impossible because those outside of the discourse of modernity are seen, like children, as not mature enough for reasoned discussion’. Thus, despite its aspiration to universal inclusion, Linklater’s discourse ethics in effect restricts the types of agents who can practically participate in the conversation (Shapcott, 2001:98).

As we have seen, Shapcott is very critical of the restrictions discourse ethics places on who may participate in moral dialogue and proposes a ‘radically inclusive’ approach in its place. However, it would appear that the barriers to participation in the Gadamerian dialogic community are not as low as Shapcott seems to think. For Gadamer, participation in dialogue requires the ability of language, an attitude of ‘good will’ on the part of participants and the motivation to find the ‘truth’. An attitude of openness to the

truth derives from an admission of one's 'finitude', one's 'not-knowing', the questioning of one's truth claims (Dallmayr, 1996:44; Shapcott, 2001:151-52, 169).<sup>8</sup> The exclusionary aspect of the Gadamerian approach comes to the fore if we note that not all persons and groups are equally willing or likely to question their own truth claims. Not counting fundamentalists (who wilfully refuse to question their truth claims), awareness of one's finitude is by definition least likely to occur in the world's more traditional societies (Giddens, 1990:36-45).

The Habermasian and Gadamerian approaches therefore both exclude from dialogue those persons who have not acquired a sufficient level of reflexivity, an inability disproportionately found among the world's most traditional or least modernised societies. However, and this is the key point, the world's most traditional societies also tend to be the world's poorest. It goes without saying that a 'cosmopolitan' approach that includes criteria that leave many of the world's poorest outside its moral ambit is of very limited use.

## **CONCLUSION**

Dialogic cosmopolitanism shares with other forms of cosmopolitanism an aspiration to increasingly move issues of justice to a global level. Dialogic cosmopolitans, however, remain weary of decontextualised and unilateralist articulations of justice, disregard of



cultural difference, and the motivational deficit that plagues most other forms of cosmopolitanism. Dialogic cosmopolitanism shares with the communitarian critics of cosmopolitanism the view that who we regard as worthy of moral concern and the depth of such concern are deeply shaped by historical and social circumstance, that some ‘we-feeling’ is necessary for justice to be possible, and that people’s differences from others are crucial to their self-understanding. However, dialogic cosmopolitans worry that these views tend to translate into a disregard of those outside one’s national political community. By navigating through these points of agreement and disagreement with cosmopolitan and communitarian texts, dialogic cosmopolitanism seeks to construct a basis from which to derive the more substantive content of justice. The four components discussed in this article – a commitment to dialogue, respect for difference, a self-problematizing subject, and a commitment to expand the boundaries of moral concern to the point of universal inclusion – were presented, when combined, as distinctive of the dialogic approach to cosmopolitanism, but more importantly, as central to navigating many of the pitfalls on various sides of the debate about global justice.

However, it was also argued that large swathes of the world’s poorest would be among the last to be included in the universal moral community that dialogic cosmopolitans seek to construct, a problem that is amplified by dialogic cosmopolitanism’s relative disregard for matters of distributive justice. A way out for dialogic cosmopolitanism might reside in jettisoning all prerequisites for participating in cross-border conversation (such as an awareness of one’s finitude), although this would put those who enter such dialogue in good faith in a more vulnerable position. Thus far, dialogic cosmopolitans have shown

themselves to be cagey about ‘placing the other at a height’ (Shapcott, 2001:104-05; also Dallmayr, 1998:139). However, demanding less of our potential conversational partners, especially insofar as they constitute the very poor, reflects the impulses of self-denial and generosity that animate cosmopolitanism, albeit impulses that cosmopolitan theorisation tends to suppress.

This article skirted various problems and questions that might be addressed in future research, such as the following: To what extent are dialogic cosmopolitans able to address matters of cross-border distributive justice while at the same time remaining committed to a respect difference and cultural specificity? What are concrete and detailed examples of the poor from beyond our national borders being included in our moral community (and remaining in it)? It also seems as though cosmopolitans are very eager to dodge accusations of selflessness and sacrifice, despite it being an approach that holds very demanding implications. Perhaps it is time for a study that compares the levels of sacrifice required by various versions of cosmopolitanism. Finally, in light the above argument that dialogic cosmopolitanism has difficulty including large proportions of the world’s poorest while at the same time requiring some level of solidarity and interaction, there seems to be a need to map global patterns of moral concern.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> While the cosmopolitan writings of David Held (1995) and Paul Healy (2000, 2006) profess a commitment to dialogue, the four elements that characterise dialogic cosmopolitanism are not readily visible in their writing.

<sup>2</sup> Dallmayr (2001) has, to a very limited extent, sought to supplement his broadly Gadamerian approach with the idea of friendship found in Oakeshott's view of conversation.

<sup>3</sup> Dallmayr (1996:41), who relies more heavily on Gadamer's later writings, has expressed the concern that an emphasis on the fusion of horizons implies an end to dialogue, an assimilation of the other, as well as an overestimation of the ease with which harmony with others can be achieved.

<sup>4</sup> Considering that 'recognition' is so important for dialogic cosmopolitans, it is surprising that they make hardly any reference to Axel Honneth's influential writings on the politics of recognition (Honneth, 1995, Fraser and Honneth, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> Ten million people die every year from hunger and hunger-related diseases, according to the World Food Programme (2009)

<sup>6</sup> Such a definition leaves aside other possible requirements for inclusion in a community, such as mutual recognition, shared culture, or citizenship. Shapcott's definition also means that my dog is a member of my community I are members of the same community, as he is included in my moral world.

<sup>7</sup> Elsewhere, Linklater (2007:36) is explicit in identifying the willingness to subject oneself to universalisable norms and to expand the scope of who counts as a moral person as two characteristics of 'the more advanced moral codes'.

<sup>8</sup> It is therefore contradictory for Shapcott to claim that philosophical hermeneutics 'does not necessarily involve a praxis oriented towards the expansion of the realm of individuals who share the consciousness of

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finitude or effective historical consciousness. Practical reasoning does not require a community of hermeneuts in order to function' (Shapcott 2001:176).