



Response

Author's reply

Current Sociology

2015, Vol. 63(1) 121–125

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DOI: 10.1177/0011392114563661

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To me, the collection of articles gathered here is really exciting. What we have here are five fresh, challenging and inspiring contributions to the discussion of the idea of cosmopolitan theorizing by practising it. All ‘dialogue papers’ point out substantial problems and develop theoretical innovations that refer to historical experiences related to different parts of the world, i.e. to different path-dependencies of modernity. That puts me in a position of listening and learning. I feel enriched and see myself challenged to further develop my ideas on ‘metamorphosis of the world’ and ‘emancipatory catastrophism’.

Ana María Vara starts by asking the key question: Are we really witnessing a ‘metamorphosis’ of neocolonialism to cosmopolitization? What kind of processes and steps do we have to distinguish, and what criteria do we have to answer this question? What does ‘enforced inclusion of global others’, the definition of cosmopolitization, exactly mean? Who is enforced by whom to do what? Where did the power go?

My idea of metamorphosis of postcolonialism, so far, is underdeveloped. I actually have three arguments:

1. Metamorphosis starts with the distinction between dependency (theory) and cosmopolitization (theory). Both describe global forms of historical transcontinental inequalities and asymmetrical power relations. But their social and political quality is changing because cosmopolitization creates *normative horizons of equality and justice*, thereby generating pressure for inclusive change on the existing structures and institutions of global inequality and power. This first process of metamorphosis does not necessarily relate to a decrease of asymmetries (there could even be an increase of global inequalities), but to the implementation of global norms of equality. This is happening through the human rights regime, its institutionalization and the global advocacy around it. They transform existing

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global hierarchies from (what was perceived by the colonializer as) ‘naturally given (“goods”)’ into ‘political bads’, violating the normative order of the world.

2. The second process of metamorphosis refers to global risks intensifying and (trans-)shaping worldwide social relations, however uneven and sporadic, thereby creating moments of *shared fate*. The metamorphosis produced by global risks transforms unidirectional imperialism into the global spread of manufactured uncertainties – a shared problem that cannot be solved nationally or by referring to the old dualism of the ‘colonial’ and the ‘postcolonial’.
3. Both – the normative horizon of equality and the shared problem of manufactured uncertainty – produce reflexivity: the ‘entangled histories’ (Randeria) produced by colonialism are being remembered and redefined in the light of endangered futures.

Vara goes an important step further. She argues that the metamorphosis of neocolonialism into cosmopolitization depends fundamentally on the structures and resources of power in a very specific way. There have to be strong elements of *reversed* dependencies. This means ‘*Umwertung der Werte*’: reverse valuation of naturally given asymmetries into ‘political bads’ is a necessary but not sufficient condition. Additionally, there has to be what one could call the ‘emancipation of power’. This implies that the ex-colonizer depends on the growing power of the ex-colonized. One can argue that the process of metamorphosis further depends on facts demonstrating that the (post-)colonially excluded are included in the negotiations on world affairs because of the emancipation of power. All this implies new landscapes of hope.

On the national layer, regarding electric cars, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina are expected to provide, as usual, the natural resources, lithium, while Japan, Germany or South Korea are expected to industrialize it, and to provide the technology, the batteries and/or the cars – and, in turn, to buy the cars. What does it imply? Where is a metamorphosis here? This is precisely what Bolivia, Chile and Argentina are currently working on and negotiating. Maybe, cosmopolitization has to do with the *current power* for negotiating the terms of the relationship, and a *future horizon of some kind of symmetrization* of the relationship. Let’s imagine the nationals of the three nation-states are saying: ‘We are not equal. But we have the right to aspire to be equals. And so be recognized as having this right.’

From this, Vara argues that cosmopolitization, seen as creating a normative horizon, implies the politics of possibility to transform the power relationship: ‘Not reversing it, not inverting it, but something else, as metamorphosis implies.’

But this is not the end of the story. Metamorphosis, in principle, is unfinished, unfinishable, open-ended, and may be reversible. Even if the power relations have been opened up, even if there is more (anticipation of) equality and symmetrical distribution of dependencies, does this imply that the cosmopolitan relationships *cannot* again be instrumentalized by neo-imperialistic strategies? No, definitely not. Cosmopolitization is not unidirectional. It therefore includes the possibility of reinforcing imperialistic power structures. There are two examples of this today. The first is ‘German Europe’ which is a kind of ‘accidental imperialism’, answering the Euro-crisis by implementing specific financial regulations technocratically. This demonstrates that cosmopolitization

may be instrumentalized by a (powerful) nation-state. The second example is the 'digital freedom risk'. All citizens of the world are the objects of US surveillance. Other nation-states are forced into 'unidirectional cooperation'. This kind of 'imperialistic appropriation' of cosmopolitization could happen in climate change politics as soon as climate change starts hurting powerful national interests.

In his article, Shinichiro Asayama introduces the distinction between apocalyptic and emancipatory catastrophism. He connects apocalyptic catastrophism with geoengineering or climate engineering, which is a set of technologies to cool the planet's temperature. There are at least two important points he is making. First, the perception of global risk does *not* imply and equal a common response. In fact, there are at least two opposite responses which are possible and observable – an emancipatory catastrophism, or a technocratic one, which he calls 'apocalyptic catastrophism' (I suggest possibly rethinking the naming to perhaps 'technocratic catastrophism', which would be a better term pointing to the technocratic nature of the response to climate change).

His second point is that there is a great temptation to ignore emancipatory catastrophism by taking 'the easy way' of technocratic catastrophism. He argues that the fear of abrupt, non-linear and irreversible climate change (namely climate 'tipping points') constitutes a strong advocacy discourse of geoengineering. By framing potential threats of abrupt climate change as 'climate emergency' and mitigation not sufficient to alleviate such danger, geoengineering is justified as a *necessary* option.

In both scenarios he finds similar elements: the anticipation of catastrophe; pessimism towards today's climate politics; and the acknowledgement that catastrophe might be necessary for a paradigm shift, etc.

There is no doubt that the technocratic neo-optimism is powerful; it might even win the battle on future climate politics. But from the sociological point of view it is important to realize the following points of differences: (1) It negates the production and distribution of 'bads' of geoengineering and thereby the power of resistance against this technological fix. (2) It negates the common 'goods' produced by both the climate change risk and the 'bads' of climate engineering. (3) It does not realize that technocratic catastrophism is a normative project, or that emancipatory catastrophism is happening – it is an empirical fact. The technocratic vision of finding a technological answer to the climate risk stands against the empirical facts.

The global climate risk to humanity has (despite all the pessimism in the face of the failure of adequate political answers and actions) already invested the postmodern everything-goes with a new – if not utopian, then dystopian – meaning. Paradoxically, global climate risks have given us new orientations, new compasses for the world of the 21st century. It does not mean that the side effects of 'bads' create a better world with no need for political action. But it means that we have a different way of looking at climate change, thus creating an alternative for new forms of action.

Of course, there is a huge difference between claiming 'change is happening, but not being recognized' and the claim 'there is much talk about change, but not much is happening'.

I agree with Anders Blok's idea of cosmopolitan social theory as middle-range theorizing. I do think this is an important step towards methodological cosmopolitanism. When I first heard his argument, I thought, 'great!' Blok made me realize that I am more

German than I thought I am! Systematization is *the* criterion of theorizing in the German tradition of philosophy and social theory.

If we take Blok's argument, what does theorizing the metamorphosis of the world demand? It demands a *new understanding of social theory*, which replaces the self-understanding of universal theories of the social and the political with a new self-understanding of time-diagnostic theories. Theories of the reproduction of order and social change have been universalistic in their aims. With that, they rule out the very possibility of grasping metamorphosis. Theorizing metamorphosis demands a metamorphosis of theory.

Universalistic theory distinguishes between theory and time diagnosis. Implied in this distinction is a value judgement according to which time diagnosis is theory-less. As such it is perceived to be arbitrary. And indeed, many time diagnoses tend to over-generalize single events or observations. But the idea of time-diagnostic theorizing as it is suggested here means something different. It means the *theorizing* of time diagnosis. And this metamorphosis of theory turns the relationship between universal theory and theorized time diagnosis upside down. It argues that theoretical universalism, which has so far shaped sociology, is a *false* universalism because it simply does not grasp the reality of metamorphosis of the world.

'Zeitdiagnosen' usually are *presentist* – they are about capturing the present. But what is needed is 'diagnostic theory', which is about 'time', but in the sense of past, present and future horizons. Today, in times of global risks, the dominance of future interrupts extrapolations from the past. Therefore understanding metamorphosis implies: *history is back!*

We have to go with Merton beyond Merton, in that cosmopolitan theorizing is about composing different concepts into an architecture of interrelated concepts to understand the metamorphosis of the world (i.e. emancipatory catastrophism, risk-class, conditions of definition, etc.).

Zhifei Mao, picking up this challenge creatively, identifies three dimensions of metamorphosis: unpredictability, unintentionality and inclusiveness. The way she explains and uses these notions referring to different experiences of disaster in East Asia is very instructive. Inclusiveness, she argues, 'does not mean that the notion of "nation" has been "conquered" ... in an exclusive way. Chinese investors' attention still focused on how the MH17 disaster would influence China's market, directly or indirectly. In this sense the idea of "China" is embraced rather than torn down in the face of global risk, which echoed with the inclusiveness of metamorphosis.'

Social change always contained elements of directionality – from a firm belief in mobility to quasi-teleological fantasies (communism, hyper-rationality, etc.) – metamorphosis does not. In other words: even when the 'critical' social sciences were not preoccupied with reproduction and did address the importance of change – it was rarely in the transformative sense, but rather in the sense that social change was inching towards the promise of progress (more mobility, more justice, more democracy).

Young-Hee Shim connects emancipatory catastrophism with the case of transnational marriage in Korea. Her argument has a wonderful illuminating point: metamorphosis by cosmopolitization happens where no one really could imagine it – rural bachelors marrying foreign women.

Let me summarize my perspective. There are three axes of metamorphosis:

First, '*categorical metamorphosis*' refers to the metamorphosis of seeing the world, that is, how global risks and cosmopolitan situations change the meanings of basic concepts of sociology – for example, from class to 'risk-class', 'risk-nation', 'risk-region'.

Second, '*institutional metamorphosis*' refers to the metamorphosis of being in the world. It is about the paradox how working institutions fail: metamorphosis in the face of global risk produces a gulf between expectations and perceived problems, on the one hand, and existing institutions, on the other. Existing institutions might, in the best case, work perfectly within the old frame of reference. Yet, within the new frame of reference, they fail. Hence, a key characteristic of metamorphosis is that institutions simultaneously function and fail.

Third, '*normative-political metamorphosis*' refers to the metamorphosis of imagining and doing politics. It refers to the hidden emancipatory side effects of global risk. The main point is that talking about 'bads' may also produce common 'goods'. This means the factual production of normative horizons. But it does not come from universal value. It is grounded in empirical reality.