Response

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Andrew Chesterman's discussion of universalism in Translation Studies conceptualizes universalism primarily in opposition to relativism, but in responding to his thought-provoking piece, I would like to foreground another of universalism's potential oppositions, namely particularism. Particularism stands most clearly in counterpoint to universalism when the latter is conceptualized as an ethos, or prescriptive norm. This kind of conceptualization finds one of its most familiar articulations in the CUDOS principles which set out the norms for sound scientific research, and which are derived from Merton's 1942 sociology of science. Universalism, as the second element in the acronym, refers to the principle that "the personal attributes and social background of a person are irrelevant to the scientific value of the person's ideas" (Godfrey-Smith 2003, 122). Particularism, in the sense outlined by Mitroff (1974, 592), emerges as a kind of reality-check to this ideal: "The social and psychological characteristics of the scientist are important factors influencing how his work will be judged. The work of certain scientists will be given priority over that of others".

While Chesterman (2014, 85) argues in favour of this universalist ethos ("it matters not a hoot where these competing conceptualizations come from"), he skirts over its counter-norm, acknowledging that matters of "institutional power and democracy" (88) come into play in the development of standardized terminologies, but otherwise ignoring the current structures of power – linguistic, institutional, economic, political – that play a crucial role in determining the groups that, in reality, contribute to mainstream Translation Studies. This situation has been summarized and commented on very cogently by Șebnem Susam-Sarajeva (2002). Preferring the terms 'centre' and 'periphery' to 'Western' and 'non-Western', she sums up the 'periphery' researcher's situations as follows:

> those periphery researchers who could be heard after all – at least, to an extent – are those who write in dominant languages, and preferably, who manage to be published by well-known publishers […] Others who write mainly in their own languages and in their home countries are bound to be heard only by their local audience, however important and useful their work might have been for the rest of the world. (202)

Concurring with Sarajeva, I would argue that, while I agree in principle with the universalist ethos put forward by Chesterman, such a view needs to be combined with a proper acknowledgement of global inequalities. Once that acknowledgement has taken place, there are three avenues open to us: firstly, we can work actively to counter the tendency for voices coming from less globally powerful institutions/nations/languages to go unheard; secondly, we can 'provincialize' translation theory, along the lines suggested by Kothari (2014), drawing on Chakrabarty (2007), recasting 'translation theory' as 'Western translation theory', or even 'Anglo-American translation theory'; thirdly, we can assert, explicitly or implicitly, that such global inequalities do not matter.

The first response is arguably the one that is emerging most clearly within TS, and was presumably the impetus behind the choice of topic for this forum. Chesterman's (2014, 82) opening statement is formulated against this backdrop ("there is a view in contemporary translation studies that our field is too Eurocentric, or too Western, and therefore needs to expand to incorporate non-Western approaches"), and the responses by Tymoczko and Kothari name some of the specific attempts to open up TS to traditions that currently lie outside the mainstream. Whether these concerns are characterized as an "international turn" (Tymoczko 2014, 104) or as a "moment of churning" (Kothari 2014, 98), and whether they are driven primarily by a desire to uncover further data, the better to test hypothetical general principles, or by a desire to assign greater value to place and context, they are generally viewed positively by the academic community. The key issue, if this is our response, is the extent to which particularism, which is rooted in global hegemonies, can ever be overcome, and if it cannot be overcome, the point at which such counter-efforts might be deemed

sufficient. A number of respondents voice concerns along these lines: Wakabayashi (2014, 102), for example, notes the imbalance in keynote speakers at three conferences in 2013, and cautions that "although this surge of interest in re-envisioning TS is welcome, without greater representation from "minor" cultures it risks smacking of trendiness or even appropriate of the 'Other'". Our response to the question of what might be deemed a sufficient opening up to alternative voices will depend on the overall framework within which we situate our translation studies research. If we adhere to the translation-as-science view promoted by Chesterman, then we might, for example, adopt a Popperian view that a theory can only ever be said to have not yet been falsified; the drive to further test a given theory will in this sense never be satisfied, although it may be deemed appropriate to put our energies into testing other theories at a given point (but who will decide that point, and which minor cultures will have been included or excluded by then?).

The second response, which is also finding a certain level of expression with TS, is arguably more radical than the first, since it entails, as Kothari (2014, 98) suggests, not simply an incorporation of other approaches into mainstream paradigms, but potentially the uncovering of "another philosophy equivalent to what the West considers as 'translation'", or indeed multiple such philosophies. In contrast to the openness to a substantial rethinking expressed by Chesterman, this second type of response does not have existing dominant models as its starting point: it is not a case of testing mainstream theory against a wider spectrum of contexts, but rather of countering the false universalism associated with dominant models by relabeling those dominant paradigms as paradigms that belong to specific times and places and languages, and exploring other paradigms and ideas on their own terms. Once this has been done, some level of comparison will undoubtedly follow, and the "universalizing urge of theory" (Chesterman 2014, 84) will be allowed to find some level of expression: but the search for general principles will come from many directions, not just one, and no one site of theoretical origin will be assumed to have primacy over the other. This kind of response has its precedent – in vision if not in reality – in non-scientific disciplines, such as postcolonial studies, and this is perhaps the moment to highlight one of my major points of

disagreement with Chesterman. As Wakabayashi (2014) also points out, Chesterman's article is based throughout on the assumption that TS is a scientific discipline; it is only in the final section, in the context of debates over the desirability or undesirability of a standardized TS terminology, that Chesterman (2014, 88) acknowledges that the perception of TS as an "empirical human science" is not shared by all within the discipline. Chesterman's rather reluctant acknowledgement of this fact appears to be linked to his concern that a clearer acknowledgement of the differences in perception between the empirical scientists and the hermeneuticists may lead to "even more of a split in the field" (88); in my view, however, acknowledging the interdisciplinarity of our field is crucial to clear thinking around questions of research aims and methodology, not least in the way in which these relate to universalism, both as a concept and as an ethos.

Within these non-scientific fields, scholars such as Alain Badiou, Etienne Balibar and Judith Butler have sought to think through and problematize the notion of universalism itself, and many of their insights hold considerable relevance for TS. Judith Butler's (2000) attempt to articulate universality within a theory of hegemony, for example, addresses many of the issues around power and cultural positioning that are also key to debates in TS. Her suggestion that universality might be "restaged in terms of cultural translation" (14) indicates – paradoxically, perhaps – that some of the answers to the complexities surrounding the concept of universalism might be found not by looking outside the discipline of TS but deeper within it, particularly at the work that has been done in relation to translation and appropriation, or to translation and ideology. Another example of the ways in which discussions taking place within non-scientific fields may be of use to TS can be found in Etienne Balibar's underscoring of the equivocity of the discourses of universalism. Balibar (2007) stresses the importance of investigating the "dominant and subordinated aspects" of universality, rather than simply adopting any given discourse. In TS, this might mean investing less of our energy into testing the validity of hypothetical universals, and paying more attention instead to the exclusions on which our universalist categories are built, or through which our universalist discourses are legitimized.

The third type of response to particularism outlined above may be one that few of us would advocate, and yet it deserves a moment's attention here, for it has its precedent in the very field with which Chesterman aligns TS most closely, namely science. In an article debating multiculturalism's place in science education, for example, Harvey Siegel (2002) demonstrates a clear awareness of the issue of particularism and its relevance for scientific research when he argues:

> Universalists generally agree that funding mechanisms (and economic conditions and decisions more generally), and the gender, racial and ethnic make-up of the research community – like other dimensions of culture – exercise enormous influence on the actual conduct of research, and so the shape of scientific theorizing and the content of scientific theories (807)

Siegel goes on to acknowledge both the socially constructed nature of Western Modern Science (WMS) *and* its superiority over other models:

> Universalists agree [… that] WMS is socially constructed and "only one among many ways of describing the natural world". However, universalists also believe that, from among the variety of possible ways of understanding the world, WMS is the most successful way of understanding it extant, when success is measured in terms of the production of the testable, predictive, and explanatory theories which mark science at its best. (ibid.)

Opponents of Siegel's view are likely to point out that this statement in essence argues that WMS is most successful when measured against WMS's conceptualization of what "mark[s] science at its best", but this overall view is nevertheless one which holds wide currency among the scientific community. For Siegel (810) to conclude that, with regards to science education, "we have no realistic alternative to the privileging of WMS in the science curriculum" and that "we embrace multiculturalism […] because it is in doing so that we meet our fundamental obligation to treat

students with *respect* as students and persons" would provoke strong disagreement among only among certain subsections of the scientific community.

I doubt very much that Western TS would be happy to claim a parallel level of superiority for what might be termed WMTS (Western Modern Translation Science): those who operate within the translation-as-science framework would probably agree with Tymoczko (2014, 105) that "translation studies is a young discipline and still needs to broaden its data base", while hermeneuticists would presumably disagree on principle. And yet there are indicators that a belief in the superiority of WMTS underlies the current make-up of the field, and even our efforts to open up the field to other traditions. Kothari's (2014, 98) observation that "despite a fundamental difference in what may be the first principles, translation scholars in India and China are found paying […] continuous homage to fixed ideas of 'source' 'text' 'language' and equivalence", Susam-Sarajeva's (2002, 201) argument that translation theory originating in the periphery tends to "be classified under the heading 'postcolonial theories of translation', which itself occupies an as yet marginal position within the discipline as a whole", and Tymoczko's (2014, 105) comments on resistance to the international turn by some of those within positions of institutional authority could all be construed simply as evidence of the strength of the drive towards particularism in TS research, linked to the entrenchment of global power dynamics. It would also be feasible however, to take them as signs that the international turn in TS, like the embracing of multiculturalism in science, is seen primarily as a "moral imperative" (Siegel 2002, 810) rather than as a marker of true openness to serious epistemological challenge. True openness, or a true decentring of the discipline would, as Tymoczko has argued elsewhere, lead to a "revamp[ing]" of "the entire system of research […] from data collection through the generation of hypotheses to the articulation of theory", impacting on "all levels of research and all paradigms of research in the field" (2007, 176). Its range of impact would also undoubtedly include our conceptualizations of universalism itself, leading to a greater awareness of the contradictions that inhere in its articulation, reinforcing its identity as a "site of contest" (Butler 2000, 38), whose "meaning and promise" (ibid.) are yet to be fully explored.

Note on Contributor

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