Do pluriversal arguments lead to a 'world of many worlds'? Beyond the confines of (anti-)modern certainties

Katsu Masaki[1]

[1] Hirao School of Management, Konan University, Japan

Email: masakik101@gmail.com

Abstract

The notion of pluriversality has entered development studies in reaction to the one-world metaphysics universalising Western modernity as the pinnacle of progress. The proponents of pluriversality explore a pathway towards the attainment of a pluriverse, or a 'world of many worlds', that values diversity, autonomy, oneness with nature, non-hierarchy and non-violence. In doing so, however, its proponents uphold a linear idea of progress similar to that of their rival modernists, albeit in the opposite direction, away from Western modernity. This stance is flawed in failing to ascertain that transformative initiatives for advancing pluriversality are implicated in modern institutions of the state and capitalism. Transformative initiatives and Western modernity can cross-fertilise each other for a common cause. A non-dualist stance is called for which cultivates their relationality, in order to examine how transformative initiatives are enacted in concrete practices in sites where different worlds are entangled with each other.

Keywords

JEL Codes

Acknowledgements

1. Introduction

There has been a worldwide surge of movements in support of a pluriverse, or a 'world of many worlds' (Blaser & de la Cadena, 2018), set against the Western-centric global coloniality in the form of universalism and one-way diffusionism, positioning Western modernity at the pinnacle of progress (Dunford, 2017, p 383). Western modernity has failed to lead humanity to a brighter 'one-world world' and has instead given rise to the ongoing multiple planetary crises, which are manifested in intolerable climate change, rising inequalities, growing hostilities dividing humanity, and the recent global pandemic.

Decolonial projects are therefore called for to fracture the Western-centric global coloniality in pursuit of attaining a pluriverse, namely, a "more just co-existence of worlds that exceeds what is possible" (Rojas, 2016, pp 369–370). For this purpose, it is crucial to advance 'border thinking', which positions subaltern worlds as potential producers of theory and knowledge (Dunford, 2017, pp 387–389). By protecting subaltern worlds in this way, new conceptions of "what is possible" can be nurtured beyond the confines of Western modernity, which works to delegitimise such movements (Escobar, 2020).

The idea of pluriversality has entered development studies and gathered momentum with the publication of *Pluriverse: A Post-development Dictionary* (Kothari et al, 2019a). As indicated in its subtitle, pluriversal discussions have arisen from the strand of postdevelopment,[1] which problematises the dominant perception of development as being a linear, unidirectional path towards the promulgation of Western modernity. Postdevelopment approaches have contributed to enriching development studies by bringing in decolonial ethics, with recourse to postcolonial and post-structural criticism of social theory (Peet & Hartwick, 2015, p 240). Although these approaches gained international acclaim in the 1980s and 1990s, it had become apparent by the end of the 1990s that they had failed to dislodge mainstream strands of development studies (Payne & Phillips, 2010, p 143).

This has given rise to an increasing recognition among postdevelopment thinkers of the pitfalls of earlier studies. "What has been missing is a broad transcultural compilation of concrete concepts, worldviews, and practices from around the world, challenging the modernist ontology of universalism in favour of a multiplicity of possible worlds", as the editors of the *Pluriverse* dictionary noted (Kothari et al, 2019d, p xvii). Earlier writings tended to lambast development without clarifying what kind of theory or practice should be put in its place (Payne & Phillips, 2010, pp 141–142).

Accordingly, the *Pluriverse* dictionary was published in 2019, while Arturo Escobar, one of its editors, had already published another landmark work, *Designs for the Pluriverse:*

---

[1] In this study, the term 'postdevelopment' is used without a hyphen, drawing on Elise Klein and Carlos Ecuardo Morreo (2019, pp 8–9), who distinguish it from 'post-development' connoting a clear 'after'. I follow their stance of thus highlighting that alternative movements proceed alongside and are interspersed with mainstream development projects.

Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds (Escobar, 2018).[2] The advocates of pluriversality put forth concept-tools for "holding traditional and modern certainties and universals at bay in our personal and collective lives" (Kothari et al, 2019b, p xxxv). This implies that our endeavours to turn a 'world of many worlds' into reality should "move ahead uneasily – without confidence that any particular approach is the 'right' one" (Ireland & McKinnon, cited in McKinnon et al, 2019, p 192).

However, the proponents of pluriversality tend to harbour 'certainties and universals' in a different sense, in that they seek to locate transformative initiatives outside Western modernity. This is illustrated by the stated objective of the *Pluriverse* dictionary, namely, "reaching from the current globalizing development model to non-modern and self-defined alternatives" (Kothari et al, 2019b, p xxiii). "Said differently, there is a glaring gap between what most Western theories today can glean from the field of social struggles" and "transformative practices actually going on in the world", according to *Designs for the Pluriverse* (Escobar, 2018, p 68).

While the advocates of pluriversality consider Western modernity incommensurable with transformative initiatives for protecting alternative worlds, their stance is not the only approach to pluriversality. There exist two broad sets of routes to a 'world of many worlds', the other approach shedding light on how mainstream and alternative worlds are entangled with each other and cultivating their coexistence and relationality (Hutchings, 2019, pp 117–118). The advocates of pluriversality do acknowledge that transitions "cannot be predicted in advance" (Escobar, 2018, p 152) and are "not about applying a set of policies, instruments and indicators", but "about recognizing the diversity of people's views on planetary well-being and their skills in protecting it" (Kothari et al, 2019d, p xix). And yet these advocates do not opt for this second approach, as attested to by the stance of the *Pluriverse* dictionary of "distinguish[ing] mainstream or superficial initiatives from 'radical, transformative' ones" (Kothari et al, 2019b, p xxv).

The second route to a pluriverse is explicitly pursued in a book entitled *A World of Many Worlds* (de la Cadena & Blaser, 2018), co-authored by scholars in the humanities. This book, just like the *Pluriverse* dictionary and *Designs for the Pluriverse*, explores the possibilities of a pluriversal world but, unlike them, focuses on "the negotiated coming together of heterogeneous worlds" (Blaser & de la Cadena, 2018, p 4). This is in line with the abovementioned notion of border thinking, which points to "the importance of sites where different worlds are already entangled for developing alternatives to colonial modernity" (Hutchings, 2019, p 118).

With these two approaches in mind, this study scrutinises the pluriversal arguments put forth in the *Pluriverse* dictionary and *Designs for the Pluriverse*. To this end, the

---

[2] Escobar's more recent publication, *Pluriversal Politics: The Real and the Possible* (2020) has not been chosen for discussion here, as it is a compilation of his earlier essays written in Spanish. The gist of the book's argument is equivalent to that of *Designs for the Pluriverse* (2018), although it gives a glimpse of Escobar's more recent stance on how best to move towards the attainment of a pluriverse, a point to be taken up in the Conclusions section.

following section examines how the two books fall short of fully shedding the binary logic entailed in Western modernity, which separates itself from alternative worlds. The advocates of pluriversality similarly uphold the binary logic in that they likewise propose a one-way shift, albeit in the opposite direction, away from Western modernity. The study then assesses the feasibility of the advocates' interpretations of 'radical interdependence' and 'autonomy', namely, the key concepts that they draw on to contrast Western modernity with transformative initiatives for protecting alternative worlds. It concludes by arguing for the exploration of a pathway towards a pluriverse, focusing on how transformative initiatives are enacted in concrete practices in sites where Western modernity and alternative worlds are entangled.

2.   Pluriversal arguments and (anti-)modern binary logics

Humanity presently harbours an unprecedented level of "fear that life prospects are shrinking and that children and grandchildren will be less well off", in the words of a noted postdevelopment theorist, Wolfgang Sachs (2019, p xv). It is therefore vital that, by "changing the way we think about change", the centrality of Western knowledge, founded on the linear idea of progress, be downplayed in favour of the diversity of knowledge (Escobar, 2018, p 148). For this purpose, the time is ripe for postdevelopment scholars to draw on the proliferation of alternatives emerging from the political peripheries, and the surge of assertions from 'other' worlds (Kothari et al, 2019b, pp xxiv, xxxiii).

The notion of pluriversality questions the universalism integral to Western-centric global coloniality (Kothari et al, 2019b, p xxxiii). It calls for a 'civilizational transition' away from the current Western-centric order towards a "pluralistic co-existence of various 'civilizational projects' through inter-civilizational dialogues" (Escobar, 2019, p 123). Such a transition is hampered by the sway of the idea of a 'one-world world', as Escobar (2018, p 66) has pointed out with reference to John Law's work (2015). In the latter, Law problematises the prevailing Western one-world metaphysics, which reduces the multiplicity of reality to a matter of beliefs, instead of a matter of different reals; we all are presumed to share "one single container universe" (Law, 2015, p 126).

2.1 The downside of the binary logics entailed in Western modernity

The one-world metaphysics is founded on the 'division of labour' separating the world into the realm of nature (reality) and that of cultures (beliefs), which originated in the rise of modern science in Europe in the 17th century (Law, 2015, pp 131–132). This 'division' leads us to the hierarchical classification of differences between the human/civilised and the nonhuman/uncivilised (Escobar, 2018, p 94); the former are accorded the status of subjects who exercise sovereign powers over 'one single universe', while the latter are subjugated as objects or resources. In this way, the 'division of labour' has given rise to the iniquitous traits of Western modernity, namely, domination, hierarchy, control, power and the negation of others (Kothari et al, 2019b, p xxxiv).

More concretely, the one-world metaphysics has nurtured the following common-sense ontological assumptions (Escobar, 2012, p xxvii): the belief in science as a valid mode of knowing about a singular reality (scientism); the primacy of humans over nonhumans (anthropocentrism) and that of some humans over others (Western superiority over the rest); the construction of the economy as an independent sphere of social life (economism); and the separation of the autonomous individual from the community (the primacy of the individual). The one-world metaphysics is a failure, spreading worldwide the ills of Westernisation, such as environmental destruction, the loss of local lifestyles and values, and patriarchal structures of domination and exploitation.

Pluriversal arguments propose to go to the roots of the dichotomous fault line of the Western-centric global coloniality, with recourse to non-dual and relational logics (Kothari et al, 2019b, p xxix). These value diversity and pluriversality, autonomy and self-reliance, solidarity and reciprocity, commons and collective ethics, oneness with and rights of nature, interdependence, simplicity and enoughness, inclusiveness and dignity, justice and equity, non-hierarchy, and non-violence and peace (Kothari et al, 2019b, p xxix). Accordingly, the entries in the *Pluriverse* dictionary illuminate imaginative ways of controlling economic production and social reproduction, relating humans and nonhumans in mutually enhancing ways, according meaningful livelihoods to all, ensuring an intergenerational distribution of bads and goods, erasing gender, class, ethnic, racial, caste and sexuality discrimination, and infusing community life with peace and non-violence (Kothari et al, 2019d, p xix).

Societies of the Global North suffer from the effects of industrial growth and its underlying notion of a linear path to progress, while those of the Global South are increasingly captivated by dazzling materialistic lifestyles that bring about ever more social and environmental problems (Kothari et al, 2019c, p 42). According to Escobar (2018, p 140), transformative visions and practices are oriented towards postgrowth, postmaterialist, posteconomic, postcapitalist and posthuman ideals in the Global North, while in the case of the Global South, they are geared towards postdevelopment, nonliberal, postcapitalist/noncapitalist, biocentric, and postextractivist causes. The *Pluriverse* dictionary contains information on more than 100 initiatives, including those arising from the Global North (such as ecovillages, transition towns, degrowth and the slow movement) and those originating in the Global South (such as *Buen Vivir*, Islamic ethics, liberation theology, *Swaraj* and *Ubuntu*).

2.2 Pluriverse arguments distinguishing transformative initiatives from Western modernity

Contrary to the developmentalism founded on Western modernity, the advocates of pluriversality consider that there exist "no blueprints valid for all times and places" (Kothari et al, 2019b, p xxix). This stance should usher in multiple ways of making the world, and thus facilitate a "transition from the hegemony of modernity's one-world ontology to a pluriverse of socionatural configurations" (Escobar, 2018, p 4). "The ways towards a pluriverse are multiple, open, and in continuous evolution", and "differences,

tensions, even contradictions, will exist, but these can become a basis for constructive exchange" (Kothari et al, 2019b, p xxxv).

However, pluriversal arguments fail to fully shed light on the multifaceted nature of transformative initiatives. This is attested to by the *Pluriverse* dictionary, which devotes one of its sections to downplaying "reformist solutions" as "the ghost of modernity reincarnated in infinite ways" (Kothari et al, 2019b, p xxiv), or as "distinguish[ing] mainstream or superficial initiatives from 'radical, transformative' ones", as noted earlier. A question thus needs to be posed to assess whether such arguments contravene the abovementioned goal of seeking a "pluralistic co-existence of various 'civilizational projects' through inter-civilizational dialogues".[3]

One of the 'mainstream or superficial initiatives' often taken up in pluriversal discussions is sustainable development, presently global in its reach with the promulgation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The advocates of pluriversality regard it as a greenwashing of conventional development: under sustainable development aimed at turning all nations into industrialised, consumerist societies, the growth ideology is not seen as the cause of, but is presented as a remedy for environmental degradation (Gómez-Baggethun, 2019). Sustainability is relegated to a managerial task of transferring monetary and technological resources to the Global South without redressing the capitalist logic of the Global North to exploit nature: the SDGs are a "semantic deception" which "should really be called SSGs – Sustainable Survival Goals" (Sachs, 2019, p xiii).

This critical stance helps development scholars to reflect on whether and how best they can get closer to socio-environmental justice. On the other hand, the downside is that the stance overlooks the potentiality of fostering a 'dialogical virtuous circle' between mainstream and transformative initiatives, as noted in an article co-authored by one of the editors of the dictionary (Beling et al, 2018, p 304). It fails to offer "promising ideational and pragmatic avenues to advance conversations, complementarities, and

---

[3] The *Pluriverse* dictionary supposedly deals with multiple pluriverses rather than one single pluriverse, according to a review article (Panayotakis, 2020, pp 380–381). As pointed out in another review article, the dictionary accordingly embodies several unarticulated points of contention (Dasgupta, 2020, p 206). One of the entries that could arouse contention is Bhutan's policy of Gross National Happiness (GNH); integral to GNH is the pursuit of economic growth, contrary to the dictionary's assertion that "the analysis is clear: development-as-growth leads to unsustainability of the planet Earth for humans" (Kothari et al, 2019b, p xiii). The editors of the dictionary avoid delving into the divergence between their stance and that of GNH; the latter downplays a growth-for-growth's sake approach but avoids rejecting economic growth of all kinds (Masaki, 2021). This stance of the policy is accordingly denigrated as 'commercial GNH' in the dictionary's entry on GNH (Gerber, 2019, p 194).

alliances" (Beling et al, 2018, p 312), a point to be reiterated in the Conclusions section.

Should we not engage in 'inter-civilisational dialogues' with those promoting mainstream 'reformist solutions', rather than relegating them to 'ghosts of modernity'? The Western understanding of the world is certain to continue to exist, and thus has to be included in dialogue with assertions from 'other worlds', as conceded by Escobar (2007, p 187). This is in line with border thinking, which poses "not just a question of changing the contents [or replacing mainstream initiatives with transformative ones] but the very terms of the conversation [by fostering a 'dialogical virtuous circle']" (Escobar, 2007, p 187).

Unless border thinking is embodied in pluriversal discussions, the latter lapse into yet another linear, unidirectional idea of progress. Contrary to the intention of abandoning a linear story of Western modernity taking over the rest, they end up likewise proposing a one-way shift, albeit in the opposite direction, from the Western-centric world to a pluriverse. The proponents of pluriversality supposedly call for relational logics to uproot the dichotomous fault line of Western modernity, as noted above. In this spirit, they should seek to grasp how subaltern peoples experience the intermingling of Western modernity and alternative worlds (Querejazu, 2016, pp 12–13).

As Escobar (2018, p 210) acknowledges, "A common strategy by critical scholars is to pluralise modernity". The editors of the *Pluriverse* dictionary similarly argue that some aspects of modernity, such as human rights and feminist principles, are emancipatory for humanity (Kothari et al, 2019, p xxii), thus implicitly acknowledging plural modernities. At the same time, they opine that "the risk is to reintroduce, through the back door..., the universality of dominant modern ways of seeing" (Escobar, 2018, p 210), and that "the expansive modern age has got stuck and it is time to exit" (Kothari et al, 2019, p xv).[4]

In the following sections, these issues relating to the anti-modern unidirectional outlook are scrutinised with attention to two key organising principles attributed to transformative initiatives: 'radical interdependence' and 'autonomy'. These two principles appear in the subtitle of Escobar's book (2018). It is crucial to do away with the unidirectional stance, for the advocates of pluriversality to dispel one of the major

---

[4] Not every proponent of pluriversality downplays modern institutions *a priori*. For example, J.K. Gibson-Graham (whose essay 'Community Economies' appears in the *Pluriverse* dictionary) proposes to allow for "empirical encounters and creative expressions of the new, the unthought" to dislocate the hegemony of capitalism (2006, p 60). Among the model cases taken up by Gibson-Graham is that of an entrepreneur who runs an organisation in Massachusetts to allocate portions of surpluses earned by its member corporations to local community projects (Gibson-Graham, 2006, pp 181–183). The idea is to rectify the growth treadmill of maximising profits, "all within a predominantly capitalist economic environment" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p 182).

criticisms levelled at earlier postdevelopment advocates, namely that they are lapsing into anti-modernist romanticism; they are seen to have "romanticized local traditions and movements, ignoring [that] the local is also embedded in power relations", as Escobar (2012, p xvi) admits.

3. 'Radical interdependence' of transformative initiatives and Western modernity

'Interdependence' is one of the values to be harboured by transformative initiatives, according to the *Pluriverse* dictionary (Kothari et al, 2019b, p xxix). It denotes "the break away from the ideal of *totality* [conjured by the one-world metaphysics] and brings about the idea of *networks* [advanced in a pluriverse]" (Mignolo, cited in Escobar, 2007, p 188). This resonates with "the nondualist and relational forms of life" upheld in *Designs for the Pluriverse* (Escobar, 2018, p x) to problematise the 'division of labour' separating the human/civilised and the nonhuman/uncivilised.

Accordingly, the 'radical interdependence' of all human and nonhuman entities is to be nurtured, while avoiding the civilised/uncivilised classification. The advocates of pluriversality thus propose to do away with the hierarchical 'division of labour' that has brought about the iniquitous traits of Western modernity, including domination and the negation of others. Instead, they promote a collective sense of solidarity and reciprocity for promulgating 'the idea of *networks*'.

A question should be posed at the same time of whether the notion of 'radical interdependence' thus conceived fully sheds the downside of Western modernity that distinguishes itself from alternative worlds. This is because the advocates of pluriversality merely flip the modern/nonmodern binary on its head and are not 'radical' enough to abandon the binary logics entailed in Western modernity. By locating transformative initiatives outside Western modernity, pluriversal arguments put forth a linear pathway towards a 'world of many worlds', as noted above.

3.1 Peruvian Andean communities

To address this issue, it is helpful to shed light on Escobar's take on Marisol de la Cadena's (2015) ethnography of Peruvian Andean communities; these are inhabited by "indigenous peasants who defend mountains and lakes on the basis that they are 'sentient beings'" (Escobar, 2018, p 217). For Andean peasants, mountains and lakes are earth-beings that must be fed with rituals, sacrifices and ceremonies. Moreover, earth-beings and humans "form *ayllu*, the relation from where, inherently related, they make the place that they are": the two cannot be disentangled from each other (de la Cadena, 2014, p 255).

The Western notion of the primacy of humans over nonhumans (anthropocentrism) is thus foreign to Andean peasants' 'nondualist and relational forms of life' founded on the 'interdependence' of humans and nonhumans. They distance themselves from the prevailing 'division of labour', which differentiates the realm of cultures (beliefs) from

that of nature (reality), or human subjects from nonhuman objects. Mountains and lakes are "not mere objects or independently existing things", but serve to suspend the moderns' act of translating this argument into 'beliefs', as noted by Escobar (2018, p 217) in accordance with de la Cadena's stance.

On the other hand, Escobar and de la Cadena diverge from each other as follows. In the words of Amaya Querejazu interpreting the stance of de la Cadena, "even though criticism refers to modernity, the idea is not to work against it" or "not to advocate a new ontological hegemony [in favour of non-modernity], but to eliminate any ontological hierarchy" (Querejazu, 2016, p 12). Contrariwise, Escobar "works against" Western modernity and sees a 'glaring gap' between it and transformative initiatives, as noted earlier. There exists "the irrefutable need to confront the design disaster that development is" (Escobar, 2018, pp 6–7). Development is one of the main "institutional apparatuses structuring unsustainability and defuturing" (Escobar, 2018, p 147).

In contrast to Escobar, Andean peasants do not "work against" Western modernity but "want what the state includes in its notion of development" (de la Cadena, 2015, p 158). They are acutely aware of the limits of the state's recognition of their predicament concerning material survival. This manifests itself in the continued absence of road networks, irrigation facilities for dry pastures and adequate school buldings (de la Cadena, 2015, pp 156–162). At the same time, the long-standing policy of state abandonment is not immutable, but has at times been bent under the influence of multiculturalism. It has oriented the state to acknowledge Andean peasants' 'cultural' diversity and their 'customs', albeit superficially, as well as to assist them in acquiring voting rights, literacy, land and direct access to the wool market.

In addition, the rise of multiculturalim has prompted the capitalist economy to promote tourism, banking on Andean peasants' ways of life (de la Cadena, 2015, pp 162–169). This has enabled some to earn extra incomes by showing their 'unique indigenous culture' to international tourists. According to a key informant of de la Cadena, who worked as an an 'Andean shaman' performing rituals for tourists, the newfound opportunity "gave him a peace of mind", although this "did not cancel his awareness of the limits of state recognition" of the peasants' predicament (de la Cadena, 2015, p 178). The appreciation offered by multiculturalism has not resulted in the development of road networks, irrigation facilities for dry pastures or adequate school buldings. In this respect, multiculturalism is indifferent to their plight, which arises from long-standing state abandonment.

Accordingly, de la Cadena's idea is "not to work against" Western modernity *per se*, but to put forth "a proposal for a partially connected commons achieved without canceling out the uncommonalities among [their and modern] worlds because the latter are the condition of possibility" for improving their livelihoods (de la Cadena, 2015, p 286). Andean peasants' involvement with the state and the capitalist economy, or with Western modernity more broadly, does not excuse the limits of state abandonment policies, yet it also offers possibilities for redressing the limitations. In this regard, it is imperative to heed the "kaleidoscopic simultaneity of similarity and difference" giving

rise to partial connections between their "nondualist and relational forms of life" and Western modernity (de la Cadena, 2015, p 33).

Moreover, while Andean peasants engage in anti-mining struggles, these are not necessarily directed at the capitalist market economy *per se*, given that mining has historically been part of their livelihoods since the European conquest (de la Cadena, 2010, p 355). The issues lie in the Western-centric ontological stance founded on the 'division of labour'. In line with this ontological stance, in the eyes of the state and companies, mountains represent mineral resources to be exploited for economic benefit, while they are seen by environmentalists as important sources of water (de la Cadena, 2010, p 356). For Andean peasants, mountains cannot be instrumentalised for either wealth accumulation or natural conservation.

Andean peasants challenge the view that mining in itself can "translate into the violation of networks of emplacement that make life locally possible" (de la Cadena, 2010, p 357). More concretely, it is rather the open-cast mining technologies presently used by corporations, *vis-à-vis* earlier methods of digging tunnels that indigenous communities oppose for fear of seeing the destruction of the surrounding earth-beings. For them, the presence of mountains disavows the anthropocentric 'division of labour' that privileges humans over nonhumans and thus relegates the latter to resources in the hands of the former (de la Cadena, 2010, p 342).

De la Cadena's ethnography seeks to "eliminate the conventional ontological hegemony", but not to "advocate a new ontological hegemony" rejecting capitalism and the state or, more broadly, developmentalism promulgated under these modern institutions. Unlike Escobar's anti-developmental stance, it ascertains transformative potentials in sites where modernity and non-modernity are entangled with each other, in line with the notion of border thinking that heeds the interfaces between different worlds.

3.2 Partial connections: towards the attainment of 'radical interdependence'

The divergence in the stances of Escobar and de la Cadena *vis-à-vis* developmentalism and modernity can be elucidated with recourse to the notion of partial connections. This notion has been put forth by Marilyn Strathern to problematise the Western-derived perception of plurality (2004, p xvi). Under the sway of the perception, scholars tend to believe that the 'entirety' is composed of distinctive 'parts': the latter are seen as bounded entities with marked boundaries, which require separate treatment.

For the advocates of pluriversality, who uphold the Western view of plurality, the 'entire' debate on social transitions consists of two distinctive 'parts', that is, "transformative practices actually going on in the world" and "what most Western theories today can glean from the field of social struggles". As noted already, Escobar sees a 'glaring gap' between the two 'parts' on the grounds that the latter lapses into 'mainstream or superficial initiatives'. Making this clear-cut distinction between the two analytical

categories should pave the way for a comparative analysis and thus serve to amplify information about the 'entire' debate on social transitions.

However, information is prone to be lost in the face of ostensibly new information gained with recourse to such a clear-cut distinction between 'parts' (Strathern, 2004, p xv). This is because, on close inspection, it becomes clear that each 'part' does not have any fixed essence or internal coherence (Strathern, 2004, p xv). There exists fertile ground for forging a "working compatibility" between different 'parts' or analytic categories (Strathern, 2004, p 35).

This leads Strathern to argue for the need to explore partial connections across different analytic categories. In the case of pluriversal arguments, efforts should be made to explore partial connections between Western modernity and transformative initiatives, while drawing on the "kaleidoscopic simultaneity of similarity and difference" between them. In this way, the advocates of pluriversality can become 'radical' enough to liberate themselves from the Western-centric view of plurality.

The notion of partial connections is referred to in *Designs for the Pluriverse* and the *Pluriverse* dictionary. However, these books do not fully grasp it, and regard it merely as an explanation of how those involved in transformative initiatives are ineluctably part of Western modernity. The notion is seen to designate "the ontological complexity of 'really existing' partially connected worlds" (Escobar, 2018, p 216), or of "multiple partially connected, if radically different, worlds" (Kothari et al, 2019b, p xxxv).

As stated above, the advocates of pluriversality interpret 'radical interdependence' merely as a conceptual means of abandoning the 'division of labour' privileging Western modernity at the expense of alternative worlds. Their interpretation should be extended to encompass "relations among divergent worlds [both modern and alternative ones] as a decolonial practice of politics" (de la Cadena, 2015, p 281). This allows them to avoid neatly separating transformative initiatives from Western modernity. Unless they expel the binary logic, they remain bound by the Western-centric view of plurality and fail to ascertain how "partial connections create no single entity; the entity that results is more than one, yet less than two", and is thus not a "pure one" (de la Cadena, 2010, pp 347–348).

"A good life...to live without hatreds" in which those immersed in the Western-centric global coloniality "would listen to us, [and] we would respect them" is what de la Cadena's key informant longed for (2015, p 285). It is "not only an economic and ecological alternative to development; it also includes the proposal to open up life to a cosmos of worlds that would be intra-connected through respect" (de la Cadena, 2015, p 285). Andean peasants do not necessarily seek to reside in a protected enclave detached from the state and capitalism. They hope to forge partial connections conducive to improvements to their livelihood.

4. 'Autonomy' entangled with Western modernity

The term 'autonomy' denotes "the conditions for changing the norms from within", according to Escobar (2018, p 172). To avoid lapsing into the Western notion of plurality, at the same time, care should be taken not to contrast the 'autonomy part' with the 'heteronomy part'. This pitfall manifests itself in the *Pluriverse* dictionary and *Designs for the Pluriverse*, which distinguish 'autonomy' from 'heteronomy'; the two books define the latter as norms and rules established by others under the sway of Western modernity (Escobar, 2018, p 172; Esteva, 2019, p 99).

Accordingly, 'autonomy' is viewed as leading those involved in transformative initiatives to an emancipatory horizon beyond Western modernity, according to the relevant section in the *Pluriverse* dictionary (Esteva, 2019, pp 100–101). Pluriversal arguments thus situate transformative initiatives outside the purview of Western modernity, or its attendant institutions of capitalism and the state.

In this respect, de la Cadena's dictum – referred to in the preceding section – is called for, to the effect that a transformative initiative is not a 'pure one'. It is not necessarily feasible or desirable to seek to create an enclave detached from 'heteronomous' elements, although the advocates of pluriversality attach importance to "defending and reconstituting communal ways of being and place-based forms of autonomy" (Kothari et al, 2019b, p xxxiv).

4.1 Zapatista movement

In probing this issue, it is useful to examine how the Zapatista movement is presented in terms of the 'autonomy/heteronomy' divide in *Designs for the Pluriverse* and the *Pluriverse* dictionary. The former sees it as a model of indigenous groups' place-based struggles for autonomy (Escobar, 2018, p 172), the latter as a model in which "indigenous people and small peasants became the frontrunner" (Pleyers, 2019, p 89). The movement has its base in the communities who reside across five regions of Mexico's southernmost state of Chiapas, with a population of roughly 300,000. It manages its own decision-making bodies as well as self-provisioning economies and social services, including health and education. Moreover, it runs the Indigenous National Congress, comprised of delegates from different communities.

Zapatista autonomy is not only about rejecting state support and interference, but also about severing attendant domination practices (Forbis, 2016, p 370). The European conquest of the Americas and the subsequent formation of the Mexican nation-state are linked to indigenous peoples' ongoing marginalisation and exclusion (Forbis, 2016, p 366). In this regard, the Zapatistas' notion of revolution is distinct from those of many other Latin American movements in that it not only refuses to vie for state power but also deconstructs the prevailing logic of power with the slogan "command by obeying" (Kroll-Bryce, 2017, pp 233–234). The slogan demands that those in command of governing bodies obey the interests of their communities.

Another distinctive feature is that the movement has forestalled the full imposition of neoliberal economic globalisation (Forbis, 2016, p 379). It was no coincidence that the movement started on 1 January 1994, when the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came into effect. On that day, the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) took up arms to capture major towns in the eastern half of Chiapas. This revolt has evolved to create the movement's self-provisioning economies, exempting the Zapatistas from capitalist appropriation and control that might otherwise threaten their communities' languages, cultures and identities. The movement is the first and largest decentralised, horizontal struggle, and has catalysed a surge of worldwide resistance to neoliberal globalisation (Kroll-Bryce, 2017, p 218).

"In lieu of state-driven development based on imputed needs and market-based solutions, autonomía [Zapatista autonomy] builds on ways...that are freer from heteronomous commands and regulation", according to Escobar (2017, p 181). It is erroneous, however, to ignore the critical function that centralised, disciplined organisational forms have played in enabling the Zapatistas to establish and manage their decentralised, horizontal networks (Gunderson, 2018). The EZLN has "constituted itself as a state within the Mexican state with all attendant capacities for tax collection, law enforcement, adjudication of disputes, and so on" (Gunderson, 2018, p 548). Moreover, its political–military vanguard organisations have enabled the movement to survive state repression directed at the communities (Gunderson, 2018, pp 549–551).

In a round table discussion by the editors of the *Pluriverse* dictionary, the following is noted in relation to the Zapatista movement: the state and capitalist institutions "do have a lot of power and a lot of competencies, which are of some use for change", and "while we have to change these institutions eventually, we also have to take them along till we're able to do that" (Federico Demaria, quoted by Radical Ecological Democracy, 2017). "As long as the grass roots initiatives are tinkering with small changes, capital does not have any issue with them...but the moment you start talking about systemic change they come down on you with force, as it's happening in Mexico" (Demaria, quoted by Radical Ecological Democracy, 2017). As a result of the intensification of the state oppression of indigenous peoples' lives, resulting in disappearances, violence and impunity for the perpetrators of these acts, the movement put forward a candidate for the 2018 presidential election to publicise their predicament, as noted by Escobar in the round table (Radical Ecological Democracy, 2017).

It is not necessarily in the best interest of or feasible for the movement to proceed independently of the state or, more broadly, of Western modernity. In this respect, it is useful to turn to a study comparing the Zapatista movement with the case of Cherán in Western Mexico (a non-Zapatista locality) with about 14,000 indigenous inhabitants who have been accorded autonomy by the federal government (Orozco Fernández, 2019). In Cherán, indigenous people managed to take control of the area by expelling municipal functionaries who were complicit with organised crime, and filed a lawsuit to subsequently win the right to choose local representatives based on their traditional

system. Unlike the Zapatistas, people in Cherán aspire to improve their relations with federal and state agencies. They have gone beyond constituting a self-government to opening a door for getting their voices heard in governmental decision-making processes (González Hernández & Zertuche Cobos, 2016).

While it would be premature to assess the outcomes of Cherán's engagement with the state, there are signs of livelihood improvements resulting from the enhanced accountability of governmental agencies to the needs of the area (Orozco Fernández, 2019, p 69). This is thanks to the benefits that people in Cherán have derived from governmental assistance for reforestation, a cash transfer programme for housing improvements, and the development of physical infrastructure, among others (Orozco Fernández, 2019, p 69).

From the viewpoint of the Zapatistas, making a comparison between their movement and Cherán leads to a misinterpretation of the former's material underpinnings, which should be seen to lie in collective labour and land to ensure food security, rather than in standards of living in the conventional sense (Zibechi, 2020, p 208). At the same time, whether this stance of the movement can in itself usher in a flowering of self-provisioning local economies should be examined. This is because "many communities and families have abandoned Zapatismo" and "one of the reasons...is precisely the decision to reject government programmes" (Zibechi, 2020, p 209). The government has been delivering food and construction materials in areas under the influence of the movement, intending to draw people away from it (Zibechi, 2020, p 208).

To conclude, Zapatista autonomy cannot merely be equated with the spontaneous generation of revolutionary consciousness. It has necessitated placing the EZLN as the centre of command, which has been indispensable to the cause of severing capitalist appropriation and state control. Moreover, the movement participated in the 2018 presidential election, as noted above, albeit not for the seizure of state power. It cannot entirely avoid engaging with the state as part of its endeavours to create conditions for autonomous communities to thrive in Mexico (Zibechi, 2020, p 200).

This contravenes the abovementioned 'autonomy/heteronomy' divide seen in pluriversal arguments to discredit modernistic institutions established by others. "While it is understandably seductive to see the distributed networks [with no centre of command] as virtuous and forward-looking...such judgements need to be checked against a close examination of the historical development of the respective forms in the context of particular concrete conditions" (Gunderson, 2018, p 551).

4.2 Political ontology: beyond the 'autonomy/heteronomy' divide

To encourage pluriversal arguments to overcome the 'autonomy/heteronomy' binary, it is useful to reflect on the interpretation of political ontology made in the *Pluriverse* dictionary and *Designs for the Pluriverse*. According to the former, political ontology is a conceptual means to "resist ontologies, founded on domination, hierarchy, control, power, the negation of others, violence, and war" (Kothari et al, 2019b, p xxxiv). In the

latter, similarly, it designates "a problematization of the universalizing ontology of the dominant forms of modernity" (Escobar, 2018, p 66). Once again, the proponents uphold a unidirectional move away from 'the universalising ontology' founded on Western modernity.

"The core problem here is...the modernist assumption...of what I call reasonable politics", to paraphrase Mario Blaser (2016, p. 549), one of the editors of *A World of Many Worlds*. Reasonable politics defines in advance what kinds of difference exist between different worlds, and ranks them according to their degrees of equivalence with the ostensibly 'factual' world (Blaser, 2016, pp 549–550). The advocates of pluriversality implicitly engage in reasonable politics and distinguish 'the universalising ontology' from 'other ontologies' conducive to transformative initiatives in line with the Western view of plurality.

Instead, it is crucial to postulate "factuality as an always emergent enactment of heterogenous assemblages" (Blaser, 2016, p 551) while exploring partial connections between 'the universalising ontology' and 'other ontologies'. Transformative proposals may be "many and diverse" because "they can come from rivals, and at times they involve strange alliances" (Blaser & de la Cadena, 2018, p 3). Political ontology should be directed at "heterogeneous worlding practices that come together around dissimilar interests in common" (Blaser & de la Cadena, 2018, p 6).

The advocates of pluriversality should refrain from waging ontological struggles solely between 'the universalising ontology' and 'other ontologies' and from privileging the latter on the grounds that they reside outside Western modernity. It is vital instead "to ask *ontological* questions without taking [any particular] *ontology* as an answer", and to ascertain how multiple forms of ontologies are enacted in concrete practices, as noted by Holbraad and Pedersen (2017, p 11), who expound the related move called the 'ontological turn'. This resonates with Querejazu's dictum, referred to above, concerning the need not "to advocate a new ontological hegemony". In this way, social analysts can allow their study materials to dictate the terms of their analyses and adhere to "a manifold of potential for *how things could be*" (Holbraad & Pedersen, 2017, p 293).[5]

As illustrated by the case of the Zapatistas, transformational initiatives should not be equated merely with voluntarist and spontaneous movements. Transformative initiatives for creating autonomous space cannot be compartmentalised into the 'anti-heteronomy camp' detached from Western modernity. To subvert the Western notion of

---

[5] The ontological turn is taken up in *Designs for the Pluriverse* as a key to breaking away from the dichotomous fault line of Western modernity (Escobar, 2018, pp 63–64). The notion, however, is not fully grasped, as attested to by Escobar's stance in distinguishing 'the universalising ontology' from 'other ontologies'. The ontological turn should assist in neutralising the danger of one's own presuppositions constraining social analyses (Holbraad & Pedersen, 2017, p 5), and in "finding ways to overcome what one already grasps in order to better be grasped by it" (Holbraad & Pedersen, 2017, p 7).

plurality, it is crucial to avoid rejecting the state and market economies *a priori*, and instead to accord those involved in transformative initiatives leeway to define the terms of their own movements. A pathway towards a pluriverse "cannot be predicted in advance", and those involved "know what to do better than anybody else", in the words of Escobar (2018, pp 153, 224).

The following statement by Escobar should therefore be problematised: "in lieu of state-driven development based on imputed needs and market-based solutions, autonomía [autonomy] builds on ways...that are freer from heteronomous commands and regulation". On the contrary, neither 'state-driven development' nor 'market-based solutions' should be ruled out, so as to avoid imposing another form of 'commands and regulation'. To paraphrase de la Cadena's dictum concerning 'more than one, yet less than two', an autonomous transformative initiative can never be a 'pure one' free from heteronomous entanglements with Western modernity. Rather, it should be seen to take place in partial connection with the state and market economies.

5. Conclusions

"Given the diversity of imaginative visions across the globe, the question of how to build synergies among them remains open", according to the *Pluriverse* dictionary (Kothari et. al, 2019b, p xxxv). *Designs for the Pluriverse* similarly proposes not proselytising but the offer of a working hypothesis (Escobar, 2018, p 152). For the advocates of pluriversality to adhere to these assertions, it is crucial to practise border thinking to ascertain the 'radical interdependence' of transformative initiatives and Western modernity or its attendant institutions of the state and capitalism. Transformative initiatives should not be squarely distinguished from reformist solutions founded on Western modernity. Neither transformative initiatives nor reformist solutions are discrete categories with marked boundaries.

In Escobar's more recent publication (2020, p xvii), it is accordingly acknowledged that "the pluriversal politics involves an entanglement of forms, inhabiting a spectrum from the radically relational to the modernist liberal". At the same time, according to his book, transformative initiatives "must take on an explicitly political ontological character" (Escobar, 2020, p xviii). This attests to Escobar's insistence on differentiating 'radically relational' from 'modernist liberal' ontologies, thereby proposing a unidirectional path from the latter to the former.

To enable the proponents of pluriversality to 'move ahead uneasily' in line with the dictum stated in the Introduction, it is useful to turn our attention to the abovementioned article, co-authored by one of the editors of the *Pluriverse* dictionary (Beling et al, 2018). This is referred to in the dictionary as one of its forerunners (Kothari et al, 2019b, p xxxv, note 1). Unlike the dictionary, this article explores the cross-fertilisation between reformist solutions and transformative initiatives.[6] Its authors argue that it is

---

[6] For this purpose, de-growth (DG) and human development (HD) are taken up to highlight how they can "potentially fertilise and be articulated with each other", while drawing on their respective strengths and weaknesses (Beling et al, 2018, pp 308–310). First, HD potentially

plausible to create a 'dialogical virtuous circle' between the two, to open a pathway toward the attainment of a pluriverse (Beling et al, 2018, p 304).

For the advocates of pluriversality to genuinely envision 'radically relational' ontologies, it is crucial to ascertain that "there are no intrinsically existing entities to be found, since nothing preexists the relations that constitute it" (Escobar, 2020, p xiv). Western modernity may operate at cross-purposes and can therefore be brought to bear on the advancement of a pluriverse. A nondualist stance is called for to cultivate the relationality between reformist solutions founded on Western modernity and transformative ones defying the modernistic binary fault line. This enables the advocates of pluriversality to examine 'nondualist and relational forms of lives', while ascertaining how the pluriversal politics is enacted in concrete practices.

In this way, it becomes plausible to make an ideational and pragmatic articulation for a fully-fledged transition to pluriversality (Beling et al, 2018, p 312). This is because "reality is relational through and through" (Escobar, 2020, p xiv) at a time when Western modernity sprawls across the globe, and because of the importance of setting off on "a journey towards a Global Tapestry of Alternatives...by learning from each other" (Kothari et al, 2019d, p xix). Thus, by practising their own dictums, the advocates of pluriversality should be able to overcome their ostensibly anti-modern but *de facto* Western-modernity-derived stance of plurality, which leads them to distinguish transformative initiatives from reformist solutions.

---

facilitates DG being laid on the table of mainstream discussions, and may, on the other hand, benefit from DG's paradigmatic proposition downplaying the ongoing order of growth-for-growth's sake. In this way, the two may compensate each other for their respective drawbacks, that is, HD's inability to envision a macro-structural transition and DG's failure to gain access to mainstream deliberations. Second, DG serves to rectify HD's propensity to overemphasise negative freedom (leaving people free from interference): DG's emphasis on positive freedom (enabling people to acquire knowledge and skills to attain fulfilment) may facilitate HD's attainment of its goal of enabling people to pursue the type of lives that they have reason to value. Further, DG can build on HD's liberal values such as freedom and individuality, to counter a major criticism that DG imposes voluntary simplicity.

www.gdi.manchester.ac.uk

References

Beling, A.E., Vanhulst, J., Demaria, F., Rabi, V., Garballo, A.E. and Pelenc, J. (2018). 'Discursive synergies for a "Great Transformation" towards sustainability: pragmatic contributions to a necessary dialogue between human development, degrowth, and *Buen Vivir*'. *Ecological Economics 144*, 304–313.

Blaser, M. (2016). 'Is another cosmopoltics possible?'. *Cultural Anthropology 31*, 545–570.

Blaser, M. and de la Cadena, M. (2018). 'Pluriverse: proposals for a world of many worlds'. In de la Cadena, M. and Blaser, M. (eds), *A World of Many Worlds* (pp. 23–52). Durham NC: Duke University Press.

Dasgupta, A. (2020). 'Book review: in search of post-development futures'. *Ecology, Economy and Society–The INSEE Journal 3*, 203–207.

de la Cadena, M. (2010). 'Indigenous cosmopolitics in the Andes: conceptual reflections beyond "politics"'. *Cultural Anthropology 25*, 334–370.

de la Cadena, M. (2014). 'Runa: human but not only'. *Journal of Ethnographic Theory 4*, 253–259.

de la Cadena, M. (2015). *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice across Andean Worlds*. Durham NC: Duke University Press.

de la Cadena, M. and Blaser, M. (eds) (2018). *A World of Many Worlds*. Durham NC: Duke University Press.

Dunford, R. (2017). 'Towards a decolonial global ethics'. *Journal of Global Ethics 13*, 380–397.

Escobar, A. (2007). 'Works and knowledges otherwise: the Latin American modernity/coloniality research program'. *Cultural Studies 21*, 179–210.

Escobar, A. (2012). *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (with a new preface by the author). Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.

Escobar, A. (2018). *Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds*. Durham NC: Duke University Press.

Escobar, A. (2019). 'Civilizational transition'. In Kothari, A., Salleh, A., Escobar, A., Demaria, F. and Acosta, A. (eds), *Pluriverse: A Post-development Dictionary* (pp. 121–124). New Delhi: Tulika Books.

Escobar, A. (2020). *Pluriversal Politics: The Real and the Possible*. Durham NC: Duke University Press.

Esteva, G. (2019). 'Autonomy'. In Kothari, A., Salleh, A., Escobar, A., Demaria, F. and Acosta, A. (eds), *Pluriverse: A Post-development Dictionary* (pp. 99–101). New Delhi: Tulika Books.

Forbis, M.M. (2016). 'After autonomy: the Zapatistas, insurgent indigeneity, and decolonization'. *Settler Colonial Studies 6*, 365–384.

Gerber, J-F. (2019). 'Gross National Happiness'. In Kothari, A., Salleh, A., Escobar, A., Demaria, F. and Acosta, A. (eds), *Pluriverse: A Post-development Dictionary* (pp. 194–197). New Delhi: Tulika Books.

Gibson-Graham, J.K. (2006). *A Postcapitalist Politics*. Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Gómez-Baggethun, E. (2019). 'Sustainable development'. In Kothari, A., Salleh, A., Escobar, A., Demaria, F. and Acosta, A. (eds), *Pluriverse: A Post-development Dictionary* (pp. 71–74). New Delhi: Tulika Books.

González Hernández, A. and Zertuche Cobos, V.A. (2016). *Cherán: 5 Years of Self-government in an Indigenous Community in Mexico*. Open Democracy (ISA RC-47: Open Movements, 2 December) [online resource available at https://opendemocracy.net/ alejandra-gonz-lez-hern-ndez-v-ctor-alfonzo-zertuche-cobos/cher-n-5-years-of-self-government-in-indi]. Accessed: 28 December 2020.

Gunderson, C. (2018). 'Autonomist Marxist interpretations of the Zapatista uprising: a critique'. *Science and Society 82*, 531–554.

Holbraad, M. and Pedersen, M.A. (2017). *The Ontological Turn: An Anthropological Exposition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hutchings, K. (2019). 'Decolonizing global ethics: thinking with the pluriverse'. *International Affairs 33*, 115–125.

Klein, E. and Morreo, C.E. (2019). 'Introduction'. In Klein, E. and Morreo, C.E. (eds), *Postdevelopment in Practice: Alternatives, Economies, Ontologies* (pp. 1–17). New Delhi: Tulika Books.

Kothari, A., Salleh, A., Escobar, A., Demaria, F. and Acosta A. (eds) (2019a). *Pluriverse: A Post-development Dictionary*. New Delhi: Tulika Books.

Kothari, A., Salleh, A., Escobar, A., Demaria, F. and Acosta A. (2019b). 'Introduction: finding pluriversal paths'. In Kothari, A., Salleh, A., Escobar, A., Demaria, F. and Acosta, A. (eds), *Pluriverse: A Post-development Dictionary* (pp. xxii–xl). New Delhi: Tulika Books.

Kothari, A., Salleh, A., Escobar, A., Demaria, F. and Acosta A. (2019c). 'Pluriverse: why we need alternatives to development'. *Chain Reaction 137*, 42–430.

Kothari, A., Salleh, A., Escobar, A., Demaria, F. and Acosta A. (2019d). 'Preface'. In Kothari, A., Salleh, A., Escobar, A., Demaria, F. and Acosta, A. (eds), *Pluriverse: A Post-development Dictionary* (pp. xvii–xx). New Delhi: Tulika Books.

Kroll-Bryce, C. (2017). 'The inconvenience of revolution: Zapatismo, cynicism and memory'. *A Contra Corriente: Una Revista de Estudios Latinoamericanos 15*, 216–239.

Law, J. (2015). 'What's wrong with a one-world world?'. *Scandinavian Journal of Social Theory 16*, 126–139.

Masaki, K. (2021). 'Exploring the "partial connections" between growth and degrowth debates: Bhutan's policy of Gross National Happiness'. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Economics* (Online First), 1−18. [doi: 10.1177/02601079211032103].

McKinnon, K., Healy, S. and Dombroski, K. (2019). 'Surviving well together: postdevelopment, maternity care, and the politics of ontological pluralism'. In Klein, E. and Morreo, C.E. (eds), *Postdevelopment in Practice: Alternatives, Economies, Ontologies* (pp. 190–202). New Delhi: Tulika Books.

Orozco Fernández, D. (2019). 'Two forms of indigenous autonomy in Mexico'. In Institute of Development Studies (IDS) (ed.), *Ideas from IDS: Graduate Papers from 2017/18* (pp. 64–71). Brighton: IDS.

Panayotakis, C. (2020). 'Reviews: Ashish Kothari, Ariel Salleh, Arturo Escobar, Federico Demaria, and Albert Acosta (eds), Pluriverse: A Post-development Dictionary'. *Environmental Values 29*, 379–381.

Payne, A. and Phillips, N. (2010). *Development*. Cambridge: Polity.

Peet, R. and Hartwick, E. (2015). *Theories of Development: Contentions, Arguments, Alternatives* (3rd edn). New York: Guilford Press.

Pleyers, G. (2019). 'Anti-globalization movement'. In Kothari, A., Salleh, A., Escobar, A., Demaria, F. and Acosta, A. (eds), *Pluriverse: A Post-development Dictionary* (pp. 89–92). New Delhi: Tulika Books.

Querejazu, A. (2016). 'Encountering the pluriverse: looking at alternatives in other worlds'. *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional 59*, 1–16.

Radical Ecological Democracy (2017). *Red Conversation Series: Towards a Radical Pluriverse* (a dialogue between Ariel Salleh, Arturo Escobar, Alberto Acosta and Federico Demaria, moderated by Ashish Kothari) [online resource available at https://www. radicalecologicaldemocracy.org/red-conversations-series/]. Accessed: 8 January 2021.

Rojas, C. (2016). 'Contesting the colonial logics of the international: toward a relational politics for the pluriverse'. *International Political Sociology 10*, 369–382.

Sachs, W. (2019). 'Forward: the development dictionary revisited'. In Kothari, A., Salleh, A., Escobar, A., Demaria, F. and Acosta, A. (eds), *Pluriverse: A Post-development Dictionary* (pp. xii–xvi). New Delhi: Tulika Books.

Strathern, M. (2004). *Partial Connections* (updated edn). Walnut Creek CA: Alta Mira Press.

Zibechi, R. (2020). 'The decolonising Zapatista revolution'. In McGee, R. and Pettit, J. (eds), *Power, Empowerment and Social Change* (pp. 199–212). New York: Routledge.