

# **When is philosophy intercultural?**

## **Outlooks and perspectives**

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### **1. When is philosophy intercultural?**

I think philosophy is intrinsically intercultural and that means it is always intercultural. One is always in dialogue with a 'different' culture, whether an American is reading eighteenth-century German philosophy or an Italian is reading twenty-first-century Italian philosophy. But even when we read texts from 'our own' culture, this is, in the broad sense, intercultural. The reason is that no one has intellectual dominance or control over the culture from which the texts and the ideas they engage with emerge. Culture is always 'beyond', 'in alterity', even fluctuating and perpetually shifting, whether it is the culture to which I consider myself to belong or another one.

### **2. What does 'interculturality' stand for, from your point of view?**

Above all, it stands for intellectual and ethical humility, for the realisation that one's own perspective – necessarily in flux as it is anyway (see above) – is only one of myriad other perspectives, none of which has a privilege over any of the others; secondly, it means a dialogue that explicitly understands itself as being in dialogue with all manner of otherness; thirdly, it means an active and inquisitive engagement with the other, however it shows itself.

**3. Interculturality has a variety of meanings. What do you think is the reason for this?**

I think this is precisely a function of the multi-perspectival nature of interculturality mentioned above. That there is no consensus as to its meaning is, moreover, an asset, by which it precisely affirms its intrinsic nature, rather than a weakness, due to lack of identity.

**4. The present global encounter of cultures also leads to clashes of cultures. Do you think this makes intercultural philosophy an urgent need today?**

Yes, I think so, but I also think that it is an entirely unavoidable effect of the opening up of previously closed horizons between different cultures.

**5. What do you think about the scope of intercultural philosophy? What about its role with regard to political discourses?**

Just as I think that the ethical dimension belongs to intercultural philosophy from the start, so do I think does its political aspect. Beyond that, if you're implicitly asking whether intercultural philosophers should intervene in political discourses, I'm not so sure. It depends on how it's done. It might be very productive and beneficial for both sides but it could also be problematic, especially if philosophers allow themselves to be instrumentalised by political discourses or interests of the day. I'd like to know more about what you have in mind in this question...