Introduction

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There are many ways of understanding cosmopolitanism and transnationalism as terms, theories and experience in academia. Although originally referring to quite different phenomena, the issues and questions they address increasingly overlap today. Given the current situation of the debate about cosmopolitanism and transnationalism and the rapid growth in the literature on both of them, no one writing on the topic can claim to occupy a privileged position to give either of them a definite, fixed meaning. Instead, there are multiple perspectives on both topics and they have raised several intriguing questions. Are we to understand cosmopolitanism and transnationalism in terms of individual identity and difference, border-crossing and post-national communities or in terms of world citizenship or global justice? What are the values, ideas and ideologies associated with the cultural, social and political meanings of cosmopolitanism and transnationalism? What are the ideological implications of using discourses of cosmopolitanism?

This volume seeks to conduct a critical discussion about the content and various meanings of cosmopolitanism and transnationalism and to develop a shared, yet varied, understanding of the issues raised by it. The contributions focus on the social sciences, ethnographic work in anthropology and on research on transnational practices in literature and social media. Building on insights drawn from the research data, they aim to shed light on the interpretive and contextual framework of both concepts. The wealth of different approaches, definitions and the sheer number of research publications make it difficult to give an overview of the ‘main’ topics or place. It is in the nature of this discussion that scholars have diverging views of the contents and meaning of cosmopolitanism and transnationalism.
The papers dealing with cosmopolitanism in this volume draw on the mapping out of cosmopolitanism studies by Vertovec and Cohen (2002), Delanty (2009) and Rovisco and Nowica (2011). These studies endeavour to summarize a group of perspectives on, or interpretations of, cosmopolitanism in the vast body of works on the topic in the social sciences. What characterizes these efforts is that they differ from each other in terms of how many perspectives they offer. For Vertovec and Cohen there are six in the social sciences, for Delanty four, and for Rovisco and Nowicka three. Though there are plenty of new positions and approaches in the existing literature, the classifications established by these studies remain a sound basis for further, more recent taxonomies. Similarly, authors in this volume refer to different numbers of perspectives within the field of the social sciences and anthropology.\(^1\) There is also some overlapping and reordering of the same perspectives in the papers, as some perspectives are categorized slightly differently, depending on the approach the author takes on cosmopolitanism and transnationalism.\(^2\) Fundamentally, it is the choices that the authors make in selecting the perspectives among the existing taxonomies as the starting points to their discussion that characterizes their own take on the concepts and helps define their own arguments. In what follows, I offer an overview of the contributions and themes and discuss the questions related to the topics of the volume.

### Differing views of cosmopolitanism

*Elisa Pieri* opens the discussion with her critical review of a broad range of contributions to the debates over cosmopolitanism in sociology and cultural studies during the past twenty years. Pieri draws together some key propositions made in some of the most relevant literature on the topic. She regards the revival of cosmopolitanism and the call for reforming the humanities and social sciences as linked above all to the process of globalization, the effects\(^3\) of which have influenced the resurgence of a spirited debate over conceptualizations and renewed theorizing about cosmopolitanism in general and the figure of the cosmopolitan in particular. She proceeds to examine the various agendas

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1. See Pieri’s, Leinius’s and Korpela’s discussions of the interpretations identified by them as the main perspectives on cosmopolitanism and transnationalism.
2. Leinius identifies four perspectives which are conflated with and reorganized in light of the perspectives proposed by Vertovec and Cohen (2002), Delanty (2009), and Rovisco and Nowica (2011).
3. The transnational mobility of people and goods, the global cities and the alleged demise of the nation-state mentioned by Beck and Sznaider (2006); Delanty (2006, 2012).
and arguments in favour of cosmopolitanism in order to show that interpretations and evaluations of cosmopolitanism depend in part on whether scholars are identifying cosmopolitanism with a progressive, political agenda addressing global injustices, an epistemic and analytical project, or a mode of practice or competence. Through her survey of the literature, Pieri questions the idealism with which cosmopolitanism is celebrated and points out the potential dangers of cosmopolitanism’s universalizing stance, especially with reference to its Western bias and utopian outlook as well as its hegemonic tendencies, which are seen by its critics as the continuation of the history of cosmopolitan imperialist and colonial visions. Finally, given the fragmentary and discordant nature of the debate and the lack of a common intent behind the different agendas and images of cosmopolitanism, she argues for an interpretation of cosmopolitanism based on governmentality and an understanding of cosmopolitanism as a cultural and aesthetic phenomenon. They might serve as productive perspectives of cosmopolitanism and be more likely to avoid the pitfalls of the exaggerated optimism in the cosmopolitan imagination.

**Ethics and dialogue: feminist transformative dialogues and ‘conversation across borders’**

The volume contains two papers on dialogical practice that deal with a theme that is one of the core issues of cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism’s openness, according to Hannerz’s (1990, 239) formulation, “an orientation, a willingness to engage with the Other”, becomes, as Johanna Leinius’s article on activism at the World Social Forum and Jonathan Mair’s paper on Fo Guang Shan Buddhism show, an ethical principle in its own right that, ideally, should serve as the guiding principle for Fo Guang Shan’s “ethical conversations across borders” and the critical, self-transformative dialogues proposed by post-colonial feminists at the World Social Forum.

Before proceeding further, it is important to reflect, first, on the question of the meaning of the phrase ethics of dialogue, and, second, on whose ethics we are talking about, especially in a volume that is exploring cosmopolitan ideas. The following reflections do not concern the technique or structure of dialogue, but the ethical foundation and orientation of dialogical practice as a precondition for authentic encounters. In this approach to the ethics of dialogue, the content is not of primary importance (although it is, necessarily, important), instead, the emphasis lies on the conversation as an ‘event of encounter’. Dialogue, as an ethically sensitive practice, moves
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the focus away from one's own world view in order “to create space where multiple (and often diverse) understandings can co-exist” (McNamee 2013, 3). The relational ethic in dialogue is an important issue that academics and professionals with backgrounds in communication studies, psychology, comparative religious studies, intercultural relations and the social sciences – to name just a few – are concerned with. It opens the door for self-transformation and one’s attentiveness to the diversity of locally situated beliefs and values: “Genuine dialogue depends less on self-expression and other transmisional aspects of communication than upon responsiveness ... [that] arises out of and is made possible by qualities of thought and talk that allow transformation in how one understands the self, others, and the world they inhabit” (Wood 2004, xvi).

Instead of engaging in the debate for or against the argument concerning the existence of a universal system of ethics whose essence is valid in cultures and societies worldwide, I limit myself to referring to the ethical system of thought that was born and developed in the West by philosophers such as Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas. Both Buber and Levinas have significantly contributed to the formulation and development of a philosophy that focuses on the relationship between ethics and dialogue. It is a question proposed by the philosophy of dialogue that not only addresses the questions related to conversation but also describes being human itself as relational, that is, being in relationship with others (in-Beziehung-stehen), according to Martin Buber, and described by Emmanuel Levinas (1981, 27) as “the intersubjective nexus, deeper than the language” that precedes the factual dialogue.4

Both Levinas's and Buber's view of dialogue is built on three important concepts – alterity, intersubjectivity and responsibility – which are the main constituents of their ethics. It must be noted that ethics is not understood in the classic sense of the word as an entirety of values and norms that are applied via universal reason to actions: “ethics as subordinated either to prudence, or to universalization of the maxim of action [Kant], or to the contemplation of a hierarchy of values communicated like a Platonic world of ideas” (Levinas 1998, 149–150). In contrast to that, ethics is understood as a dimension of the intersubjective encounter itself that is internal and entirely woven into it. In this regard, it is a question of an ethics as foundation before ethics as application. Hence the ethical ‘essence’ of the encounter should not be conceived as static, like a pre-given

4 Although Levinas and Buber drew from similar religious, existentialist and phenomenological traditions, they also differed in many ways in their philosophical projects and in their approach to dialogical ethics. However, in this introduction, I refer to their view of dialogue as an example of philosophical inspiration for multidisciplinary research of the ethical dimension of conversation / dialogue.
and permanent substance. On the contrary, it realises itself as an interactive event that develops as direction and conversation – as speaking and listening and responding, or as ‘contra-diction’ and answering differently – in an infinitely dynamic manner.

This kind of approach strives to define the characteristics of a “genuine dialogue” that is ethical. The kind of a dialogue Levinas and Buber are talking about is one that depends on mutual responsiveness, curiosity and respect of the partners in the dialogue. One should, however, be aware of the potential dangers in the dialogical situation and consider carefully whether it does justice to the differences and nuances of the encounter. Further, does it preserve the identities and special characteristics of various understandings of ethics and a good life? There is the danger that an interlocutor of the dialogue imposes philosophical and moral meanings and interpretations on the other. In an inclusivist approach that seemingly embraces the “truth” of all moral values and ethics, one may assume that all other meaning systems can be translated into his or her own meaning system. Adherents of certain moral values or a religion who enter into a cross-cultural dialogue should be aware of the imminent danger underlying their practice that they, albeit inadvertently, colonize the religious or spiritual world of those who are not supporters of the same values and religious doctrines. In order to conduct a dialogue that respects a dialogical partner’s worldview, an interlocutor in a transnational dialogue needs to use an approach that is attentive to the difference between the unique ethical, spiritual and existential meaning systems and practices that each person constructs out of her or his various relational matrices. Creating conditions for dialogue means not imposing one’s own moral or philosophical world view on others, and, by recognizing the otherness of the world view of one’s dialogical partners, one opens oneself to the alterity of the other’s world view.

The cosmopolitan agenda has frequently been criticized for its hegemonic aspirations and Eurocentric parochialism, which tends to exclude decolonial or subaltern versions of cosmopolitanism. An acknowledgement of the ethics of alterity in cosmopolitan thinking opens up the possibility of transforming the abstract appreciation of global connectedness into concrete social practices and the adoption of an affirmative stance towards intercultural communication. In her paper dealing with feminist self-transformative dialogues, Johanna Leinius describes a specific instance of social practice and shows what kinds of problems intellectuals and activists face when trying to enact self-transformative ‘critical cosmopolitanism’ (Delanty 2006, 2009) and facilitate dialogue across differences. Leinius starts with an overview of the tensions and contradictions of the debates around cosmopolitanism. She introduces the insights of post-colonial feminist critiques into the debates on cosmopolitanism and takes on
the often voiced charge against the cosmopolitan project that it displays hegemonic tendencies and is inherently Eurocentric and universalizing. The core of Leinius's contribution is a theoretically grounded exploration of the Inter-Movement Dialogues, a workshop methodology developed by transnational feminist organizations such as Articulación Feminista Marcosur in the context of the World Social Forum. It is offered as an example of what a self-reflective and transformative dialogical cosmopolitanism could mean in practice. Most importantly, it is an embodied and enacted practice formed and filled with meaning through real encounters with otherness on both sides of the difference, as well as an acknowledgement of the limits of such encounters. As Leinius suggests, the conclusion that can be drawn from this is that cosmopolitanism conceived as an emancipatory and self-transforming practice might provide a way of transcending binary polarization between cosmopolitanism as the privileged position of an elite or as a marker of subaltern identity.

Jonathan Mair's article explores how the Taiwan-based Buddhist organization Fo Guang Shan (FGS) spreads its message to different target groups by “sowing seeds of affinity”. The practice in question is investigated in terms of what the author calls “the ethical conversation across borders” or simply Conversation. What characterizes Conversation is that it offers individuals the space and opportunity to engage with ethical ideas, practices and activities with regard to Fo Guang Shan teachings. Fo Guang Shan, as portrayed by Mair, takes the problem inherent in an encounter between people from different cultural backgrounds seriously. As a result, it tries to find effective ways of marketing its message (the truths of Buddhism) to its potential recruits. The movement seeks to adapt Buddhist culture and make it “convenient” in the hope that people with diverging abilities, tastes and habits might find something interesting in it, which would encourage them to adopt at least some of the ethical values and practices of Buddhist ethics. Fo Guang Shan states that it undergoes continual self-transformation as its own ethical practices are constantly being revised and that it seeks to learn from other cultures and traditions. It must be taken into account that,

In this regard, the use of marketing vocabulary as regards Conversations is not out of context, since the movement openly states that its teachings are inspired, among other things, by managerial capitalism. Master Hsing Yun, the spiritual leader of the Fo Guang Shan, teaches that the fundamental truths of Buddhism are similar to the principles (or the “virtues”, as Fo Guang Shan call them) of contemporary business culture (advancement through hard work, stimulation of growth, for instance). The conclusion that one draws from this is that FGS's interpretation of the business management culture is of a general nature. Another interesting topic for further investigation would be Fo Guan Shan's relationship to the international human rights culture and its connections to the political elite in China, both of them mentioned in Mair's paper. Mair (p. 78) notes that Ma Ying-Yeou, President of the Republic of China, is “a firm ally of Hsing Yun”.

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despite the movement’s adaptability, its teachings as well as its practice of *Conversation* are based on the idea of universalism: the primacy of a universal ethical principle and its secondary manifestations, which are culturally and geographically diverse. Moreover, Mair’s theoretical argumentation is founded on a theory of cross-cultural communication that posits a universal or shared essence that must be separated from contingent cultural conventions. Mair argues that what is needed for a successful cross-cultural dialogue, that is, “a genuine recognition of the ethical in the other” (Mair, p. 68), to take place is identification of one or more points of similarity, or affinities, and an account of difference that provides a conceptualisation of the borders across which the conversation is taking place (Mair, pp. 70, 86). Thus, the real challenge for a conversation across borders and indeed all cross-cultural ethical dialogue is whether people with different backgrounds believe in the existence of something shared and universal, be it a spiritual truth or a set of ethical values. As the article shows, Fo Guang Shans’s confidence in the universality of fundamental moral truths that apply to all has occasionally weakened as it has faced realities in its efforts to engage with different cultures and traditions.

In both Leinius’s and Mair’s contributions, the question of ethics is central. As Leinius’s description of transformative dialogical practice shows, it is based on both emancipatory politics and an ethical imperative that informs the process throughout: to open the dialogue to the actual Other – for “those not present”, “those not easily fitting into the categorical schemes of counter-hegemonic politics” (Leinius, p. 55), and those who remain silenced and unheard. Mair’s approach to ethics is different. For him, the ethics involved in the *Conversations* is not a qualifying aspect of the practice itself, the nature of which could be investigated. Nor does his research focus on discovering the specific ethical principles held by the interlocutors while carrying out the *Conversations*. Instead, he seeks to identify the methods or criteria that enable a cross-cultural consideration of transnational ethics.

**Not engaging with the Other – but still enacting a version of cosmopolitanism?**

*Mari Korpela* reflects on the essence of cosmopolitanism by examining ‘Western’ families in Goa, India, as measured against the degree of exposure to the Indian Other and to their non-cosmopolitan peers in their native countries. She discusses cosmopolitanism as an enacted practice performed by children, youth and their families
who come from Western industrialized countries and live transnationally mobile lives, which means that they spend part of the year in Goa, India, and the rest in the parents’ countries of origin. Theoretically, Korpela addresses the same point in the debate as Pieri’s, Leinius’s and Mair’s discussion of cosmopolitanism’s encounter with the Other: if cosmopolitanism is to be understood to be either “an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences” (Hannerz 1990, 239; 1996, 103) or a form of openness towards the Other (“the ethical conversation across borders” or the enacted activism of Inter-Movement Dialogues at the World Social Forum), it requires critical reflection about what kind of cosmopolitanism the children of ‘Western’ families who live a significant part of their lives in Goa are enacting?

The article draws on ethnographic fieldwork in Goa, and the research material consists of interviews with the children of transnational parents, along with some occasional comments from their parents. Some details about the lives of the families who live in Goa are also provided. Korpela defines them as lifestyle migrants: they are not tourists that occasionally visit Goa, instead, the families usually spend several months there and travel around two or more Western countries for the rest of the year. Then they come back again, mostly for economic reasons, because there is a considerable difference in living costs between Goa and their countries of origin. The economic and material circumstances that make lifestyle migration possible also reveal an interesting aspect of the lifestyle migrant’s life that has to do with the social class to which they belong: they can swap their class status depending on whether they are in their native countries (middle class, working class) or in Goa (elite). This is to say that their class is defined in Korpela’s study largely in terms of economic position and profession, a survey on their cultural tastes and preferences is not conducted as part of the fieldwork. But it emerges from Korpela’s description of the Western visitors during their stay in Goa and from their own accounts of their travels in the West that they are a rather privileged group of people. They are doing quite well and can afford a lifestyle that is defined by consumerism and leisure activities: they consume goods and entertainment wherever they travel to and, because of their mobile lifestyles, they can be defined as consuming places as well, although the number of places is rather limited, consisting of locations that are already familiar to them.

Korpela’s study reveals that these transnationals are not exposed to local Indians and cultural practices in their everyday lives. Consequently, although they are aware of the Other, they are not engaged with it. Nevertheless, as Korpela notes, their horizons are clearly not mono-cultural or narrowly national either. It is characteristic of her own understanding of cosmopolitanism as a phenomenon divided between progressive,
ethical ideals in the cosmopolitan imagination on the one hand and lived practice (“reality”) on the other hand that she notes, with reference to Fechter (2007), that “cosmopolitanism demands so much” (Korpela, p. 110) and there are terms that describe the empirical reality better. Her preferred terms for defining lifestyle migrants in Goa are “internationally-oriented” or “Western international” and she argues that their lifestyle reflects “cosmopolitanism on Western terms” (ibid.). Korpela concludes that the cosmopolitanism of these lifestyle migrants may be limited, that is, it may be narrowly Western-oriented, but it is cosmopolitanism nonetheless.

**Border-zone activities and border-crossings in transnational and translocal spaces**

In various academic fields of concerned with the dynamics of mobility, migration and socio-spatial interconnectedness, transnationalism is seen as a useful concept to overcome the limitations of methodological nationalism and to challenge existing concepts of nationhood and citizenship (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1995; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). As a term, translocality has its origin in transnationalism studies. Building on the insights drawn from this already established field of study, the difference between translocality and transnationalism is that translocality as a research perspective tries to overcome some of the limitations of the transnational approach. As such, translocality is used to describe socio-spatial dynamics and processes of simultaneity and identity formation that transcend boundaries – including, but also extending beyond, those of nation states. Sometimes, translocality (or translocalism) is used as a synonym for transnationalism.

In recent years, the term transnational (and translocal) has gained popularity and prominence in literature studies, with academics attempting to find new ways of categorizing literatures and research that does not fit into old historical or national models. A transnational literary framework offers a space for literatures with narratives that cut across national borders and the received time frames, or periods, of literary history or that are built on imaginations that interlace localities and nationalities with one another (Ramazani 2009, ix–xii). Generally, transnational models of literary analysis enable one to conduct research on texts without being restricted to geographical, national or continental boundaries.

*Heidi Grönstrand* addresses the issue of transcending national borders through self-translation, a process of investigation which traditionally belongs to the domain
of translation studies. Grönstrand brings her topic into the field of literary studies. Self-translation takes place when the author translates his or her own texts. As a result of this, there are two (or more) distinct works speaking to two (or more) different audiences. She suggests that self-translation provides a useful insight into transnationalism and border-crossings, which are phenomena that operate outside the national, monolingual paradigm. Transnationalism is understood in her study not as the crossing of the geographical borders of a nation state but as a kind of border-zone activity that reorganises the relationships between the languages and literary traditions of Finland’s two distinct national cultures, where the literary institutions and traditions have been defined by language despite the fact that Finland has two national languages, Finnish and Swedish. After describing the phenomenon of self-translation in this context, Grönstrand provides close readings of selected excerpts from self-translations by two Finnish authors, Kersti Bergroth (1886–1975) and Henrik Tikkanen (1924–1984). The authors did not belong to the same generation of writers nor did they favour the same literary genres in their writing. But both move fluently between languages and literary traditions, and the point of convergence between them is their works and self-translations that depict war. Building on her argument about their twin-texts, as well as other self-translations that depict war, Grönstrand states that the depiction of war might indicate a more general phenomenon concerning self-translation whereby the self-translator then becomes an interpreter of national crises and conflicts.

Henna Jousmäki shows in her contribution how a subculture can transcend physical (geographical and national) boundaries through the use of the World Wide Web. While more or less rooted in their native countries, people with different nationalities form social networks and become members of translocal communities that provide companionship, information and a sense of belonging in the virtual realm. A central topic in Jousmäki’s discussion is the question, what kind of activities people engage in while using social media as a translocal space where certain shared interests, such as music and religiosity, become points of identification in a situated, non-institutional popular-culture context. Her example is drawn from the sphere of religious popular music (Christian Metal) where online file-sharing sites like YouTube serve as virtual spaces, or loci, for enthusiasts and everyone interested in performing (sharing) various kinds of activities. Performing these activities constructs and strengthens the users’ identities as members of both a translocal virtual online community and a religious subculture. Jousmäki shows that virtual translocality is, for most of the time, constructed independently from a geographical locality. At times, however, the members of virtual communities index their geographical location in relation to that of HB, a Christian Metal band (Jousmäki,
p. 147), which shows that, at least momentarily, the physical location of internet users still counts: it can still set up real boundaries to some of their activities that cannot be performed in the virtual realm. A border is also an important concept for Jousmäki’s discussion, for the terms ‘border’ and ‘border crossing’ has a double meaning in her analysis: Christian Metal music is still a border (sub)culture which transcends not only national but also the traditional cultural borders of Christianity and of metal music culture.

**Conclusions**

In this overview, one can see that the contributions on cosmopolitanism in this volume advocate approaches that are critical of the epistemic hegemony of Eurocentric universalism and that they question the all too prevalent celebratory tone reserved for the term. Instead, they put forward interpretations that reflect current concerns in the debate on cosmopolitanism, namely, theories of social differentiation, of self-styling, of governmentality and of multiple mobilities. As is suggested in several contributions, a variety of situated and divergent political projects motivate calls for a new form of cosmopolitanism, and therefore one should promote a critical awareness of the hegemonic tendencies and Western-centric bias in the cosmopolitan agenda.

As several papers in this volume demonstrate, cosmopolitanism and transnationalism share common characteristics. One example of a phenomenon that is to some extent comparable to cosmopolitanism is border-crossing through self-translation. It can be seen as similar to cosmopolitanism in that it operates outside the national paradigm, the difference being that self-translation crosses cultural and linguistic borders within a nation. A subculture that transcends national borders as well as the cultural borders of traditional religion and a specific music culture is another example of border-crossing with a cosmopolitan orientation towards an international community with a multicultural and multilingual membership.

Most importantly, cosmopolitanism and transnationalism are closely interlaced in many actual instances where a version of cosmopolitanism is enacted through transnational practice. Examples of such practices include feminist self-transformative dialogues as the enactment of ‘critical cosmopolitanism’ and the Buddhist practice of *Conversations* as an instance of cross-cultural dialogue conducted and promoted by a movement that describes itself as a global organization. In addition, a version of cosmopolitanism that could variously be called “internationally-oriented” or “Western
international” or “cosmopolitanism on Western terms” is presented in a bottom-up approach to everyday practices that people with multiple nationalities and consumerist lifestyles perform in their mobile transnational lives between Goa and their country of origin. Although these people have the economic resources to pursue a cosmopolitan lifestyle, this does not necessarily translate into a cosmopolitan orientation, “a willingness to engage with the Other”, as defined by Hannerz (1990, 239).

Ethical considerations are an integral part of cross-cultural encounters with others. However, the ethical principle of openness is difficult to put into practice. Fundamentally, what is needed is a readiness to engage in a critical reflection of one’s own practices and belief-systems in order to bridge differences. But, as is suggested in the papers dealing with this question, the most difficult thing to overcome is one’s own resistance to otherness, be it a cultural, geographic, gendered or ethnic Other that may appear in different regions of the world. The conclusion that has been drawn from this – especially in Leinius's paper – suggests a moderate approach to the ethical principle and by showing its limitations, promotes a patient pursuing of the transformation of subjectivities towards cosmopolitan reflexivity and practice on both sides of the difference as the only thinkable way of overcoming cosmopolitanism's elitism as well as its subaltern identifications.

References


