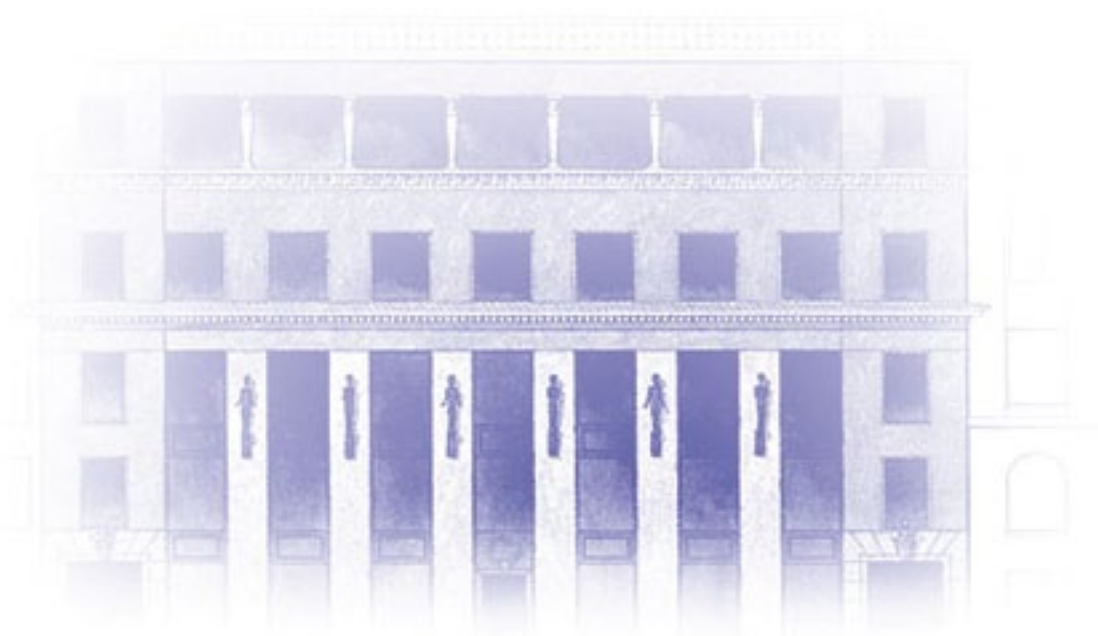


# Cosmopolitanism and Transnationalism: Visions, Ethics and Practices

Edited by Leena Kaunonen



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Edited by Leena Kaunonen

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# Acknowledgements

The articles in this volume derive mainly from an international multidisciplinary symposium, “Foreign Impulses, Local Responses: Transcending National and Cultural Borders”, held in April 2012 at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies. Researchers from Europe, North America and Canada gathered together in Helsinki to discuss the issues and questions related to cosmopolitanism and transnationalism. A few more papers were added to the selection of conference papers, which were submitted to peer review and revised in the light of referees’ comments. I thank the anonymous referees for their efforts.

My thanks go to the Collegium for generously offering the conference venue, to the HCAS Writer Programme for financial support and to Sari Kivistö for being a helpful and co-operative partner in organizing the symposium. Thanks also to the Editors-in-Chief of COLLeGIUM Sari Kivistö (again) and Turo-Kimmo Lehtonen, and to Managing Editors Antti Sadinmaa and Maija Väättäminen.

# Introduction

Leena Kaunonen  
University of Helsinki

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.

Leena Kaunonen (ed.)

Cosmopolitanism and Transnationalism: Visions, Ethics, Practices

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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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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<sup>3</sup> 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

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 transmissional 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.<sup>4</sup>

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

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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.<sup>5</sup> 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,

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5 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".

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.

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# Contested Cosmopolitanism

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*A growing body of literature is accumulating around theories of cosmopolitanism. The concept is hotly debated within a number of disciplines, and similar debates circulate beyond academia, among national and transnational actors. This paper aims to critically appraise some of the current competing discourses and agendas around cosmopolitanism and their implications.*

*The recent emphasis on cosmopolitanism is not without its detractors, and this paper engages with some of the key critiques of the current cosmopolitan turn. These touch on multiple dimensions of the cosmopolitan project, its essentialising and reductionist features, its western-centric bias and its post-colonial inflection. While some scholars mobilise the concept of cosmopolitics to contest the political nature of cosmopolitanism rhetoric and agenda, others historicise its political and economic context. Still others flesh out the figure of the cosmopolitan, offering alternative readings of the current postmodern condition, or undoing the cosmopolitan project from within.*

*Through an exploration of the discrepancies between competing accounts of cosmopolitanism, and of contested understandings of who can or cannot aspire to be considered 'cosmopolitan', the paper sets out to highlight the situatedness of specific political projects associated with cosmopolitanism and to discuss the ramifications of privileging specific views of cosmopolitanism over others.*

## Introduction

This paper argues that competing and contested claims are currently being made under the banner of cosmopolitanism, and that unpacking the situatedness of these disparate and conflicting claims matters. It matters because behind what at first glance might appear as a shared and unified call to embrace cosmopolitanism, different implications are entailed about what needs to be done, who needs to be doing it and why. Ultimately,

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it matters because the benevolent and emancipatory discourse of cosmopolitanism may, as the paper sets out to illustrate, unwittingly or intentionally advance regressive and hegemonic projects.

The paper is articulated around a reflection on the re-emergence of the cosmopolitanism debate (the current “cosmopolitan moment” which is the focus of this analysis), followed by an unpacking of the competing definitions of cosmopolitanism and key agendas formulated (primarily, though not exclusively) within the social sciences. It then proceeds to engage with critiques of cosmopolitanism(s), and the figure of “the cosmopolitan”.

## **The re-emergence of Cosmopolitanism**

Debates over cosmopolitanism have re-emerged and gained momentum (Vertovec and Cohen 2002; Delanty 2012). A growing body of literature is rapidly accumulating around theories of cosmopolitanism, and the concept is currently hotly debated within a number of disciplines, ranging from law, philosophy and anthropology to other social and political sciences (Delanty 2012; Latour 2004; Beck 2012; Fine and Cohen 2002; Lu 2000; Valentine 2008; Werbner 2008; Cheah 2006).

The reasons for its current revival merit some consideration, given that debates over cosmopolitanism have captured the imagination of a number of social and political theorists over the centuries. In the West these debates date back to antiquity with the Cynics and the Stoics, but have re-emerged with great intensity at different times, most notably during the Enlightenment. In emphasising the current cosmopolitan turn, some scholars seek to extend the traditional canon of cosmopolitanism by re-examining the work of authors previously not perceived to have engaged with theories of cosmopolitanism. In this vein, it has been argued (Turner 2006) that cosmopolitan concerns can be recovered in the work of various classical social theorists, including Durkheim (in his study of the moral consequences of a social global world), Giddens (his theory of globalisation), Weber (his methodology and its relation to an ethics of care), Marx (his political economy of international capitalism), Parsons (the work on international system of societies) and Habermas (his communicative theory of democracy), amongst others.

Other scholars prefer to highlight the discrete nature of cosmopolitan thought and seek to recover common features that recur within the discrete periods in which cosmopolitan concerns flourish. Fine and Cohen (2002) take four historical contexts

or ‘moments’ in which cosmopolitan ideas are debated – the ancient world, the Enlightenment, the period of the post-totalitarian/Nuremberg Trials period and a recent North American debate on patriotism – to tease out the reasons and anxieties behind the contemporary interest in cosmopolitanism. They link this interest to a desire to tackle a variety of issues and note that “while cosmopolitanism has many virtues it is unlikely to provide an all-embracing solution or a total antidote to the problems of extreme nationalism, racism, ethnic conflict and religious fundamentalism” (Fine and Cohen 2002, 137).

Vertovec and Cohen, instead, hypothesise that the present resurgence of interest might be understood as arising from a proposed new politics of the left, embodying middle-path alternatives between ethnocentric nationalism and particularistic multiculturalism (Vertovec and Cohen 2002, 1).

Most commonly, however, scholars see the current resurgence of cosmopolitanism as linked to various processes, including most notably the process of globalisation (Vertovec and Cohen 2002; Beck and Sznaider 2006; Delanty 2006; Soysal 2010; Turner 2006). While some scholars explicitly seek to avoid conflating the two phenomena (Beck and Sznaider 2006; Delanty 2006, 2012), they stress the large-scale and far-reaching effects of globalisation<sup>1</sup> – on transnational migration and flows, ‘global’ cities, the alleged demise of the nation-state – that have catalysed the current debate over cosmopolitanism.<sup>2</sup> These phenomena, though present before, are seen as having undergone a step change under the process of globalisation and as having become defining features of our time and of life in neoliberal post-industrial societies.

## Issues of definition

The debate over cosmopolitanism highlights various modes of being, ways of thinking and enacting cosmopolitanism. As Beck and Sznaider suggest “[c]osmopolitanism is ... a contested term; there is no uniform interpretation of it in the growing literature” (2006, 2).

In their edited book entitled *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism*, Vertovec and Cohen (2002, 9) map out the variety of interpretations and understandings of cosmopolitanism

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1 Used here to refer to a compression of space and time, an uneven intensification of (economics and other) links, and an expansion of a capitalist world economy and ideology.

2 Delanty for instance sees the relationship between cosmopolitanism and globalisation as one of tension, and cosmopolitanism as an implicit critique of globalisation (2012, 2).

that are circulating in the literature, and subsume these under six perspectives. This has become a prevalent taxonomy that continues to be widely referenced (Rovisco and Nowicka 2011, 2).<sup>3</sup>

The first of these perspectives sees cosmopolitanism as a socio-cultural condition. Highlighting the rapid changes in transport, communications and tourism pattern, the rapid increase in flows of goods and people (including intensified migration flows), this view of cosmopolitanism celebrates the diversity produced, and challenges traditional paradigms based on ethnocentric, national and gendered views (Ibid., 9–10).<sup>4</sup>

The second perspective sees cosmopolitanism as a kind of philosophy or worldview. This is the citizen-of-the-world philosophy, which can result in a variety of stances in relation to justice, including a commitment to universal rights and standards, a rejection of nationalism as parochial, an attempt to balance cosmopolitanism with patriotism, or to reject the national scale altogether (Ibid., 10–11).

Cosmopolitanism can then be understood to be a political project towards building transnational institutions.<sup>5</sup> This view of cosmopolitanism is seen as promoting frameworks and institutions beyond the nation-state, such as the UN and the EU on one side, or social movements that are transnational, such as environmental movements (Ibid., 11–12).

Alternatively, cosmopolitanism can be seen as a political project for recognising multiple identities. This understanding of cosmopolitanism underpins the legitimacy of plural affiliations and the performance of various loyalties, as it acknowledges that individuals belong to various networks and are able to (simultaneously) embrace different identities (Ibid., 12–13). This is often evidenced by work on diasporic groups, although the claim holds more generally. Vertovec subsequently coined the term *super-diversity* to highlight that ‘significant new conjunctions and interactions of variables have arisen through patterns of immigration to the UK over the past decade’ which

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3 Even as new critiques continue to refine the categories further, as discussed later on in the paper.

4 Although celebrated by some as overcoming these limitations, cosmopolitanism is seen by others as bringing its own biases, including a gender bias (Nava 2007; Vieten 2012; Nava 2002). The alleged demise of the national (Gilroy 2005) and the extent to which cosmopolitanism might overcome it is also questionable (Cheah 2006), as discussed later on in the paper.

5 Vertovec and Cohen claim that the work of Kaldor and Held can be read in this light, for instance, whereas that of Smith illustrates a take on cosmopolitanism as a project to build different types of transnational entities, such as social movements.

elude the way diversity is commonly articulated in policy, and in public and academic discourses (Vertovec 2007, 1025).<sup>6</sup>

The fifth perspective on cosmopolitanism identified by these scholars (Ibid., 13) refers to an attitudinal or dispositional orientation, and, as such, is a characteristic of the individual. This perspective sees cosmopolitanism as an outlook, as a mode of managing meaning and as an aesthetic and intellectual appreciation of (and even a desire for) diversity.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, the sixth perspective on cosmopolitanism conceives it as a mode of practice or competence (Ibid., 13–14), an ability to navigate different cultures and competently operate within different systems of meaning. Again, Vertovec and Cohen alert us to the danger of confusing cosmopolitanism with consumerist cosmopolitanism, “the massive transfer of foodstuffs, artworks, music, literature and fashion. Such processes represent a multiculturalization of society, but also the advanced globalization of capitalism” (Ibid., 14). Moreover, while intuitively appealing, the assumption that exposure to diversity may produce changes in attitude (in terms of greater openness, understanding, appreciation of difference) remains an untested assumption (Ibid., see also Valentine 2008, Yeoh and Lin 2012, Vertovec 2007).<sup>8</sup>

So a feature of the current debates on cosmopolitanism remains the lack of a unified vision of what cosmopolitanism might be and what it might entail (Delanty 2012). The common denominator, instead, is a celebration of cosmopolitanism as evident in some of the definitions above and the agendas described below (see also Yeoh and Lin 2012, Valentine 2008), and the belief that we are witnessing important step changes globally that demand the adoption of a cosmopolitan outlook and approach.

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6 Country of origin, migration channel, legal status, human capital, access to employment, locality, transnationalism, the uneven responses of local authorities, service providers and local residents are all factors affecting these complex formations (Vertovec 2007, 1045), and the resulting alliances confound the ethnicity groupings used in policy and service provision.

7 Running through the work of Waldron, Hannerz and Taguieff (Vertovec and Cohen 2002). Recent critical reformulations of this take – by Nava, Werbner and Vieten – are discussed later on in the paper (pages 30–31 and footnotes 23 and 12, although see also pages 32 and 22).

8 Valentine (2008)’s research shows that contact and small civilities in everyday encounters may not necessarily signal a respect for difference, nor a lack of (racial or other) prejudice or hostility. The civilities she studied did not amount to a convivial sociability (Gilroy 2005), nor indicated that diversity had become unremarkable. Vertovec stresses that “regular contact can entrench group animosities, fears and competition” (2007, 1045), while Yeoh and Lin (2012) critique the assumption that ‘cosmopolitan cities’, and urbanity more generally, foster cosmopolitanism.

## Cosmopolitan agendas

In calling for the adoption of a cosmopolitan outlook strong programmatic claims are put forward. In 2006 Beck and Sznaider edited a special issue of *The British Journal of Sociology* that was dedicated to Cosmopolitan Sociology. In their opening paper entitled *Unpacking Cosmopolitanism for the Social Sciences: a Research Agenda* they “call for a re-conceptualization of the social sciences by asking for a cosmopolitan turn” (2006, 1). The same paper describes the scope of the changes envisaged:

[a]t this point the humanities and social sciences need to get ready for a transformation of their own positions and conceptual equipment – that is, to take cosmopolitanism as a research agenda seriously and raise some of the key conceptual, methodological, empirical and normative issues that the cosmopolitanization of reality poses for the social sciences. (Beck and Sznaider 2006, 2)

The approach that they advocate is transdisciplinary and based on operating “a distinction between cosmopolitanism as a set of normative principles and (really existing) cosmopolitanization” (Ibid., 7). Through a focus on “the cosmopolitan condition of real people” (Ibid., 9), the authors conceive of cosmopolitanism as an heterogeneous set of lived practices, which can emerge as unintended, even as side-effects of other phenomena (see also Beck 2012, Rovisco and Nowicka 2011). Beck and Sznaider propose to set aside the moral and normative project of ideal cosmopolitanism, exemplified by the Enlightenment philosophy, and pursue instead an epistemic and analytical project (2006, 3) to develop a form of methodological cosmopolitanism:

[n]ational spaces have become denationalized ... This entails a re-examination of the fundamental concepts of ‘modern society’. Household, family, class, social inequality, democracy, power, state, commerce, public, community, justice, law, history, memory and politics must be released from the fetters of methodological nationalism, re-conceptualized, and empirically established within the framework of a new cosmopolitan social and political science. (Beck and Sznaider 2006, 6)

Perhaps unsurprisingly, those who have never considered society as coinciding with national borders see the rejection of methodological nationalism at the core of this approach as nothing revolutionary:

[L]et me make clear from the beginning that I am not debating the usefulness of a cosmopolitan social science that, beyond the boundaries of nation-states, would try to look at global phenomena using new types of statistics and inquiries. I accept this point all the more readily since for me, society has never been the equivalent of nation-state (Latour 2004, 450).

Interestingly, in the new agenda for the social sciences that Beck and Sznaider envisage, the paradigm of risk and the risk society<sup>9</sup> are promoted as the lenses through which we can explain the poignancy of the debate around cosmopolitanism, the reshaping of the role of state actors, and ultimately the reconfiguration of entire fields of enquiry (2006, 11). The fact that these authors are able to stake their claim on the theoretical framework for cosmopolitanism in the social sciences, together with the open challenges that this framework invites from other scholars of cosmopolitanism (see for instance Soysal 2010, Glick Schiller 2010), illustrates the extent to which the current debate over cosmopolitanism may still be seen as emergent and its agenda still in the making.

In the same special issue on Cosmopolitan Sociology, Delanty (2006) argues for a different and more sociological approach to cosmopolitanism. He too envisages a situated cosmopolitanism that is post-universalistic and that, while linking political and social dimensions, does not presuppose the existence of a single world culture (2006, 27). Delanty seeks to move away from moral cosmopolitanism, with its strong universalistic ethics and lack of sociological grounding, and critiques political conceptions of cosmopolitanism – both the strong version aspiring to transnational democracy, and the weak version focusing around citizenship.

To Delanty, cosmopolitanism needs to be more self-problematising, and more sensitive to the tensions between the global and the local, the universal and the particular. In arguing the case for a *critical cosmopolitanism*, Delanty does not see this as an alternative to previous social theory but conceives it as a “more reflexive kind of understanding” (Ibid., 42), in that it would require an

analysis of cultural modes of mediation by which the social world is shaped and where the emphasis is on moments of world openness created out of the encounter of the local with the global. (Delanty 2006, 27)

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9 Characterised by an increased interdependence and exposure to a range of global (economic, ecological, security and other) risks, and accompanied by allegedly weakened nation-states (Beck 2006).

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Delanty's *cosmopolitan imagination* is his reflection on the potential to transform the present through recourse to an imagined future. As the author puts it, "the cosmopolitan imagination entails a view of society as an on-going process of self-constitution" (Ibid., 40). This notion of cosmopolitanism bears resemblance to the constructivist take favoured by Latour (2004) in his call for *Cosmopolitics* as a project of reflexive and wilful construction of a Cosmo, which will be discussed in the next section.

The transformative potential of cosmopolitanism remains central to determining an agenda for it. Beck and Sznaider prefer a focus on methodological cosmopolitanism and caution that

[i]t is at least conceivable ... that the shift in outlook from methodological nationalism to methodological cosmopolitanism will gain acceptance. But this need not have any implications for the prospect for realizing cosmopolitan ideals in society and politics. (2006, 7)

Others however read their work as advancing a transformative agenda that goes far beyond the scholarly debate and practices of the social sciences (Soysal 2010). For Soysal the agenda for cosmopolitanism needs to deliver both a methodological (empirical and analytical) strategy and a commitment to a transformative project. Soysal reads Beck and Sznaider's agenda as heralding a renewed interest in critical theory:

[t]he 'surplus value' of cosmopolitan turn is not so much in its guidance in practicing research ... The real surplus value of cosmopolitanism offered in Beck and Sznaider's intervention is in its transformative ramifications. (2010, 7)

Glick Shiller, by contrast, takes Beck and Sznaider's stance as an illustration of the potential (its emphasis on politics of perspectives, for instance) and the limitations (its inadequate theorisation of power) that their agenda for cosmopolitanism has "for those who might desire to build a theory that can empower struggles for social justice" (Glick Schiller 2010, 417). Reflecting on their agenda, she concludes that

[w]e need a concept of cosmopolitanism that deploys a critique of methodological nationalism to research and theorize conditions within which people come to recognize

injustice and its causes and build on situated subaltern difference to openness to all struggles against oppression (2010, 419).

Similarly, others highlight the need for a *subaltern* cosmopolitanism (Santos 2002, 460, see also Vieten 2012), that is of an oppositional variety, by and for the socially excluded.

As noted earlier, Vertovec and Cohen also hypothesise a political agenda for cosmopolitanism – to redress the misgivings of multicultural policies at least within the UK (Vertovec and Cohen 2002, Vertovec 2001). For these authors, cosmopolitanism bypasses the flaws of multicultural politics – including the essentialism of “minority cultures” and their communities, the reification of a “national culture” and the de-politicisation of cultural diversity. Vertovec and Cohen support Clifford’s claim that

[i]n contrast to multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism is now increasingly invoked to avoid the pitfalls of essentialism or some kind of zero-sum, all-or-nothing understanding of identity issues within a nation-state framework (Clifford 1998, quoted in Vertovec and Cohen 2002, 3).

Notwithstanding the fact that the shortcomings of multiculturalism (see also Vertovec 2007) map perfectly onto those that some critics attribute to cosmopolitanism (widely criticised for its essentialism, its reproduction of rigid notions of culture and group belonging, the ‘normalisation’ of certain types of difference to the exclusion of others, as we discuss in the following sections), what is worth noting here is the aspiration to identify an agenda for cosmopolitanism that may bring about a more authentic recognition of difference in policy and politics.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, Fine and Cohen (2002, 161) point to the engagement that the current cosmopolitan agenda presupposes, suggesting that

those who advocate cosmopolitan solutions can no longer escape the burden of social responsibility for their ideas ... to advocate, delimit and develop cosmopolitanism in the global age has become an urgent moral necessity.

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<sup>10</sup> Vertovec has introduced the term super-diversity to critique the limitations of previous understandings of diversity within multicultural policy and debate (particularly as constructed along ethnicity lines), highlighting instead the variety of factors (and their multi-layered interaction) that result in complex configurations and alternative alliances (see also discussion on page 6, and in footnote 6). The work on subaltern cosmopolitanism, for instance, and that on migrants and diasporic groups also supports this understanding of diversity and of the complex alliances forged.

Even when advocating a “non-idealist, non-alienating, and non-coercive” cosmopolitanism (Lu 2000, 265), authors can struggle to reconcile the normative and analytical elements of the cosmopolitan project. In Lu’s work, for instance, this emerges strongly in the many attempts to delineate a *correct* interpretation of cosmopolitanism, and her paper is interspersed with caveats, such as “cosmopolitanism, rightly conceived” or “a cosmopolitan ethical perspective, rightly understood” (2000, 164–265). Again, this may indicate the malleability and relative ambiguity of notions of cosmopolitanism, and mark the debate about its agenda as still emergent,<sup>11</sup> as different authors make different demands of cosmopolitanism and the agendas envisaged can vary greatly.

While the previous section presented competing definitions of cosmopolitanism, this section argued that the agendas mobilised also vary considerably. This is evident even when considering a sample of the agendas circulating within the social sciences, whose programmatic aspirations range from methodological change to addressing global and local injustices. What these divergent agendas share, as argued, is instead a celebration of cosmopolitanism, which pervades much of the literature. The enthusiasm for cosmopolitanism, however, is not without its detractors; the body of critical literature is large and growing. The next section will discuss some of the hegemonic processes that can be enacted through an apparently benign recourse to cosmopolitanism.

## Cosmopolitanism and its discontents

The critiques mobilised against cosmopolitanism are heterogeneous and touch on multiple dimensions of the cosmopolitan project. In her paper entitled *The One and Many Faces of Cosmopolitanism* Lu (2000) provides an insightful overview of many of these critiques, as she attempts – and arguably fails – to refute them. The first criticism presented is directed at the *idealism* behind much cosmopolitan thought, and its clash with the realities of conflict and injustice experienced by many. Lu acknowledges that some notions of cosmopolitanism suffer from a utopian outlook and concedes that “ethical theories relying on a misplaced faith in human perfectibility or moral progress or natural harmony of interests are superficial and practically untenable” (Ibid., 247). Similarly, critiques of cosmopolitanism focusing on its rationalism highlight the abstraction, and possibly the hypocrisy, of a commitment to humanity at large, and of a cosmopolitanism that “does not adequately accommodate the human need to belong to

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11 The current cosmopolitanism debate has been unfolding since the nineties.

communities of meaning and purpose” (Ibid., 249, see also Appiah 2006, Nava 2007).<sup>12</sup> Such criticism can also shed light on the alleged *elitist*, privileged and intellectual origin of at least some historical incarnations of cosmopolitan thought, which, as Boehm (1932, 458) puts it,<sup>13</sup> “often exists amongst persons whom fortune has relieved from the immediate struggle for existence and from pressing social responsibility and who can afford to indulge their fads and enthusiasms” (quoted in Lu 2000, 250).

Another charge against cosmopolitanism is that it displays hegemonic tendencies and is *imperialistic*. In the words of Lu, cosmopolitanism has “a penchant for monism” (Ibid., 251), and as Latour notes,

whenever cosmopolitanism has been tried out, from Alexandria to the United Nations, it has been during the great periods of complete confidence in the ability of reason and, later, science to know the one cosmos whose existence and solid certainty could then prop up all efforts to build the world metropolis of which we are all too happy to be citizens. The problem we face now is that it’s precisely this “one cosmos,” what I call mononaturalism, that has disappeared. (2004, 453)

Whether extinct or not, such monoisms can demonstrate the coercion behind the apparently benign facade of cosmopolitanism,<sup>14</sup> as they work to ensure others recognise and embrace the same vision of the world. Mignolo, reflecting on the imperialist drive running through notions of cosmopolitanism, illustrates this point with his description and critique of three historical cosmopolitan designs:

the Spanish empire and Portuguese colonialism (Vitoria); the British empire and French and German colonialism (Kant), and U.S. imperialism (human rights). All three cosmopolitan designs shall be seen not only as a chronological order but also as the synchronic coexistence of an enduring concern articulated first through Christianity as a planetary ideology, second around the nation-state and the law as grounds for the second

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12 In contrast, Appiah (2006) argues for a rooted cosmopolitanism, and Nava for a visceral one based on empathy, emotions, the subconscious and an ‘attraction and identification with otherness’ (Nava 2007, 8).

13 For a critique of the intellectual stance, see Nava (2007).

14 As Gilroy put it, the risk may be that of circulating a wordly vision that is ‘simply one more imperialistic particularism dressed up in seductive universal garb’ (Gilroy 2005, 4). So the coercion consists in the imposition of planetary-scale visions, and all-encompassing (and totalising) value systems.

phase of colonialism, and third as the need to regulate the planetary conflict between democracy and socialism during the Cold War. (Mignolo 2000, 745)

Lu notes the easiness with which the ethical doctrine of cosmopolitanism can serve the interest of the powerful (2000, 252) and reiterates Carr's warning that "order' and 'international solidarity' will always be slogans of those who feel strong enough to impose them on others" (quoted in Lu 2000, 252).<sup>15</sup> Latour takes the argument further, applying it directly to contemporary projects of cosmopolitanism, and specifically to Beck's agenda. Once more, the face of cosmopolitanism appears deceptively benevolent, though the benevolence only masks an obstinate misunderstanding of the wide differences that separate people.<sup>16</sup> As Latour argues, "Beck appears to believe in a UNESCO koine, a sociological Esperanto, that lies hidden behind stubborn defects, whether social or psychological, in our representations" (Latour 2004, 456).

In this paper entitled "Whose cosmos, which cosmopolitics?" which the scholar dialogically addresses to Beck, Latour claims that more than culture needs to be questioned, as in his view we are not merely disagreeing about different views of the same world (Ibid., 454). Instead, he intimates that "[w]e have to choose ... between cosmopolitanism and *cosmopolitics*" (Ibid., 453). Borrowing the term from Strengers,<sup>17</sup> he uses it to capture the infinite number of entities and possible cosmos, and to highlight that a common world is a project to be achieved and negotiated with great effort, rather than something already existing out there and simply awaiting our (or more likely, other people's) acknowledgement. In doing so, he complicates and politicises the debate over cosmopolitanism, by highlighting how other scholars can gloss over the issues of whose cosmos is, and hence whose values are, being promoted.

The *western-centric* bias that cosmopolitanism can display, as highlighted in some of these critiques, can operate on different levels – ranging from more hegemonic macro-level biases (Cheah 1998, as discussed below) to the level of the individual, in terms of the characterisation of the person or type who is constructed as being cosmopolitan (discussed in the next section).

Cheah (1998) too uses the term *cosmopolitics* to politicise and historicise the economic contexts within which cosmopolitan rhetoric and programmes were previously developed

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15 Carr, E. (1946, 87).

16 As Santos noted 'a cosmopolitanism without adjectives denies its own particularity' (2002, 460).

17 Strengers, I. (1996) 'La Guerre de Sciences' *Cosmopolitiques* vol 1. Paris: La Decouverte, quoted in Latour (2004, 454).

and are currently enjoying a revival. Cheah approaches cosmopolitanism through a critique of capitalism. Although the author argues that ideas of cosmopolitanism can be thought of as historically preceding nationalism, and as in opposition to statism rather than nationalism, it is capitalism, in his view, that is seen as creating the optimal conditions for the existence of both nationalism and cosmopolitanism. The opposition between the two is therefore problematised, and the author claims that such contentious opposition is even more dubious today, with the concept of the nation being so volatile.<sup>18</sup>

Current versions of cosmopolitanism are viewed by Cheah as the expressions of current hegemonic aims. The very promotion of international regulatory bodies and transnational organisations, frameworks and networks (from the UN to NGOs), which for some constitutes part of the humanitarian project of cosmopolitanism is seen by Cheah as extensions of specific interests. For Cheah,

the staging of an international civic society of elite nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) at UN World Conferences can become an alibi for economic transnationalism, which is often US economic nationalism in disguise. (1998, 31)

More importantly, Cheah (2006) strongly critiques the celebratory emergence of cosmopolitanism, on the grounds that it conceals, and deflects from, an altogether different set of questions about *power*. By taking a governmentality angle (Foucault 1991), Cheah discredits the celebration of transnationalism for its supposed freeing of individuals from the constraints of the national framework,<sup>19</sup> and instead presents both cosmopolitanism and transnationalism as simply changing the form, not the nature, of the technologies of governance to which individuals are subject. He argues that

one should think of cosmopolitanism as grounded in an even deeper set of material processes: the globalization of biopolitical technologies of governmentality. The new cosmopolitanism is often associated with human rights. We have witnessed the increasing proliferation of human rights instruments and also NGOs advocating for human rights, and engaging in humanitarian activities. ... But what we have learned from Foucault is that civil society is not necessarily a space of autonomy in relation to the state. It is an

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18 While a cursory look at border security can dispel claims that the nation-state is in demise, the constructs of national identity and nationalism, while slippery and constantly undergoing reformulations, are certainly not extinct, as Gilroy (2005) reminds us.

19 Neither the national nor the alleged 'post-national' state are unproblematic. See footnote 17 above.

object that is produced by technologies of government. One of the primary avenues of the globalization of technologies of government is the discourse of development. (Cheah 2011)

With his sharp analysis of the implication of cosmopolitanism in the smooth functioning of a political bioeconomy, Cheah's work is diametrically opposed to that of Beck and other theorists and proponents of Cosmopolitanism (Vertovec and Cohen 2002; Glick Schiller 2010; Lu 2000; Waldron 2000), including those who claim a relatively more critical stance in their enthusiastic celebration of cosmopolitanism (Delanty 2006; Soysal 2010).

This section analysed key critiques addressed to the cosmopolitan project in order to draw attention to the problematic processes that can be enacted under the banner of cosmopolitanism. The next section will argue that the figure of the cosmopolitan too is problematic and will unpack related assumptions about who can or cannot be described as cosmopolitan.

## **Who are the cosmopolitans?**

An issue closely connected to the definition of what constitutes cosmopolitanism(s) and what its agenda(s) ought to be is that of describing the figure of the cosmopolitan (Nava 2002; Waldron 2000; Vertovec and Cohen 2002; Favell 2003; Werbner 1999; Szerszynski and Urry 2006; Skinner 2010 re-issue). Indeed, much of the critique and scepticism about the resurgence of cosmopolitanism centres on the characterisation of the cosmopolitan(s).

Vertovec and Cohen approach the issue by premising that “those who practice cosmopolitanism ... may not always be the same as those who preach it” and that they may be different (still) from “those who are labelled as ‘cosmopolitans’” (2002, 5).

It could be claimed that historically the figure of the cosmopolitan has inspired both emulation and hatred (Ibid.). As Vertovec and Cohen remind us, sometimes the very ideas of cosmopolitanism were promoted by figures that were considered outsiders and non-citizens, including some of the earlier advocates of cosmopolitanism in ancient Greece. Equally, from an historic perspective, it was mainly a wealthy elite who could travel for leisure and engage in learning languages and appreciating new cultures (2002, 5). Even then, the figure of the rootless cosmopolitan, without allegiances and strong (geographical and political) ties evoked complex feelings and often generated

suspicion. Aside from this elite of wealthy travellers, the figure of the Jew and the Gipsy also exemplify the historic resistance and suspicion that manifested itself towards those perceived as not possessing strong ties to a specific territoriality and (national) customs (Vertovec and Cohen 2002, 6).

Vertovec and Cohen suggest that a commonly circulating and stereotyped view of cosmopolitans mostly considers them to be “privileged, bourgeois ... wealthy jet setters, corporate managers, intergovernmental bureaucrats, artists, tax dodgers, academics and intellectuals” (2002, 7). Paradoxically, this globe-trotting class of “cosmocrats” are characterised by their homogeneity,<sup>20</sup> and Vertovec and Cohen suggest, along with Monaci *et al.*, that

such financial experts, corporate personnel and the like embody a bounded and elitist version of cosmopolitanism, marked by a specialized and – paradoxically – rather homogenous transnational culture, a limited interest in engaging ‘the Other’, and a rather restricted corridor of physical movement between defined spaces in global cities. (Monaci *et al.* 2001 in Vertovec and Cohen 2002, 7)

This critique of “cosmopolitan elites”, refutes cosmopolitanism’s claim that it produces a deep sensitivity, curiosity and acceptance of diversity and the “other”. The only encounters with diversity that are sought by these “cosmopolitans” are superficial and involve domesticated, easily digestible and ‘safe’ versions of the different or exotic.<sup>21</sup>

Viewing the cosmopolitan as pursuing a certain form of aesthetics also leads us to reflect on notions of taste and difference (Bourdieu 1984). It also brings us back to the possible existence of a cosmopolitan elite – whether conceived as a set of globe-trotting cosmocrats or as the transnational elite described by, for instance, Sklair (2001) – and immediately it brings to the fore issues of class and social stratification. As Bourdieu suggests,

taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar. (1984, 6)

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20 Quoted in Vertovec and Cohen (2002) as Micklethwait, J. and A. Wooldridge (2000). *A future perfect: The challenge and hidden promise of globalization*. London: Heinemann, p. 229.

21 As discussed also in the urban studies literature on cosmopolitanism (see Young, Diep, and Drabble 2006; Yeoh and Lin 2012).

Hence the pursuit of lifestyles and activities that are seen by some as cosmopolitan, including consumption of travel and performance of high mobility, can also operate as performing social differentiation through the exercise of taste – specifically, taste for ‘the exotic’ or ‘the other’.

It is in the context of the prevailing discourses about high mobility and the fluxes of ‘elite migrants’ across countries and global cities that Favell questions the extent to which cosmopolitans thus constituted actually exist. The scholar takes

a skeptical look at just how possible it is to live out the ultra-mobile global or transnational family lives predicated for these people, who are wrongly classed as ‘elites’ (Favell 2003, 2)

and sets out to investigate how Europe’s leading ultra-mobile global or transnational families live. In a paper entitled *Eurostar and Eurocities: Towards a Sociology of Free Moving Professionals in Western Europe* he presents the findings of a qualitative study looking at Brussels in relation to experiences of Europeanization and barriers to free movement. Favell’s frustration is apparent as he asks

who exactly are the *übermensch* predicated by these theorists? Do these people who populate the niche marketing of in-flight magazines and global hotel chains really exist or live out real lives? ... it is amazing that globalization theorists have been able to get away with their sweeping generalizations about the effortless mobility of highly educated professional ‘elites’. (Favell 2003, 10–11)

The author argues that beyond the normative push towards the emergence of a European citizenship, there is limited evidence of a real Europeanization, which appears confined to sport, tourism and cuisine, as well as to the cross-border activities of some regions (Ibid., 17). In contrast his research highlights the entitlements and benefits of a nationally rooted lifestyle that these movers have had to give up. The movers, Favell claims, have not turned into the rootless figures described in much literature, but experience instead varying levels of investment, identification or lingering displacement and dislocation in Brussels.

Despite Favell’s attempt to demystify the image of the cosmopolitan as a member of an elite, other characterisations of the cosmopolitan reinforce that image. Waldron (2000) celebrated the cosmopolitan as an individual who dabbles in various cultures and who does not take

identity as anything definitive, as something homogeneous that might be muddied or compromised when he studied Greek, ate Chinese, wore clothes made in Korea, worshipped with the Book of the Common Prayer, listened to arias by Verdi sung by a Maori diva on Japanese equipment, gave lectures in Buenos Aires, followed Israeli politics, or practiced Buddhist meditation techniques. (Waldron 2000, 227–228)

Again the cosmopolitan is characterised as *rootless*, individualistic and footloose,<sup>22</sup> and it is perhaps in response to the criticism of this characterisation of the cosmopolitan that some of the most recent literature emphasises “the cosmopolitan condition of real people” (Beck and Sznaider 2006, 9; Rovisco and Nowicka 2011). This approach is based on (and yet is also developed as a critique to) Hannerz’s characterisation of the cosmopolitan as someone possessing “an orientation and a willingness to engage with the Other” (Hannerz 1990, 239) and seeking an “intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness towards divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity” (Ibid., 239). Whilst this literature appears to privilege the *ordinary and everyday* expressions of cosmopolitanism, or to praise cosmopolitanism as a benevolent inclination rather than a position of detachment and rootlessness, it has been criticised for its intellectual detachment by authors who advocate a more emotionally engaged and rooted approach (Nava 2007; Appiah 2006).

The dichotomy between cosmopolitan and non cosmopolitan can be seen as further exposing the *elitist* characterisation of the cosmopolitan, as well as its gender and other biases (Nava 2002; 2007; Vieten 2012).<sup>23</sup> Hannerz, in the earlier work quoted above, is adamant for instance that tourists, exiles and refugees (with some exceptions), and the transnational class compelled by their work to travel and live abroad are not to be thought of as cosmopolitans, nor are other traders and smugglers, and his list of those excluded from this category appears to extend even further with the addition of low-paid migrant workers too.

Defining the cosmopolitan thus implies identifying those who are not (or are seen as not) being cosmopolitan. These categorisations are challenged and exposed for

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22 Kymlicka suggested that this is simply “enjoying the opportunities provided by the diverse societal culture that characterises the Anglophone society of the United States” and ought not to be considered cosmopolitan (Kymlicka 1995, 85, quoted in Waldron 2000, 228).

23 While Nava comments on Hannerz’s characterisation of the cosmopolitan as a man (2002, 2007), Vietien argues more generally that cosmopolitanism is gender biased, like nationalism, and that its more recent academic debate is unfolding mainly as a male business (2012).

bringing their own bias, as well as an element of class blindness that again ends up further tarnishing the cosmopolitan project with elitism. Werbner for instance claims that

[o]ddly, ... Hannerz lumps together migrant settlers, exiles or refugees, the formative makers of diasporas, with tourists ... Implicit in this separation of professional-occupational transnational cultures from migrant or refugee transnational cultures is, I propose, a hidden Eurocentric and class bias: transnational cultures are most often centred on the North and manned by high status professionals. ... for Hannerz, instead of a willingness to 'engage with the Other', diasporics are reluctant to step outside a 'surrogate home'. (1999, 17)

Werbner sets off to demonstrate the existence of working-class cosmopolitans using her ethnographic work with Pakistani migrant workers in the Gulf (Werbner 2008; Werbner 1999) and argues that "even working class labour migrants may become cosmopolitans, willing to 'engage with the Other'" (1999, 18). But what remains untouched throughout the discussion is the dichotomy between cosmopolitan and non cosmopolitan, although different authors fill the two positions with different groups of people. Indeed, the two categories become interdependent because the very existence of the diversity that the cosmopolitans strive for is predicated on the existence of non-cosmopolitans:

for the cosmopolitans ... there is value in diversity as such, but they are not likely to get it, in anything like the present form, unless other people are allowed to carve out special niches for their cultures, and keep them. Which is to say that there can be no cosmopolitans without locals. (Hannerz 1990, 250)

Although recent contributions to the cosmopolitan debate strive to focus on cosmopolitanism *from below*, or even to abandon this problematic dichotomy and describe cosmopolitanism as a more pervasive phenomenon (Rovisco and Nowicka 2011, 5–6), these categories and the definitions of who occupies them remain central to current debates. The only theorisations able to transcend the divide between elites and non-elites, this paper argues, and that more generally extend the category of the cosmopolitan widely across the board, are those which treat cosmopolitanism as a cultural phenomenon:

[T]he growth in the number and reach of global connoisseurs, elite or not, ... is linked to John Urry's (1995) notion of 'aesthetic cosmopolitanism'. Not only elites, but also tourists of all kinds have developed more cosmopolitan or far-reaching aesthetic tastes. This can be directly linked with (as both driving force and outcome of) the enhanced popular trend over the past few decades towards the 'consumption' of foreign places. ... It is a trend arguably based on exoticism, commodification and consumer culture. ... Aesthetic cosmopolitanism can be found at home, too, through other forms of consumption. (Vertovec and Cohen 2002, 7)

However, within this framework the cosmopolitan is likely to lack the deep sensitivity and commitment to engagement with 'the other' highlighted by Hannerz (see above), and even more so the visceral cosmopolitanism described by Nava (2007), and for that very reason 'aesthetic cosmopolitanism' is often dubbed in the literature as 'banal cosmopolitanism'.

Similarly, Giddens's (1991) notion of the primacy of lifestyle in the trajectory of the self, and the role of our spare time activities in defining who we are, are also interesting lenses through which to peer at cosmopolitanism as a pervasive condition. Skinner (2010), in his paper on *Work/Leisure Balances and the Creation of a Carnival Cosmopolitanism amongst Salsa Dancers* sees elements such as food, tourism, music, literature, clothes and dance in this light, as self-ascribing ways of creating and maintaining associations. He argues that

food, tourism, music, literature and clothes – to which I would add dancing, ... are the ways of styling the self, of how people 'transform themselves into singular beings, to make their lives into an oeuvre' (Nuttall 2004: 432). This lifestyle accessorisation, whether 'Afro-Chic' designer clothing worn in the townships of South Africa, holiday experiences 'souvenired', salsa groove record recordings taken in Cali (Waxer 2002), Columbia, or dance trends in Dublin and Belfast, are all self-ascribing ways of creating and maintaining associations, groupings and interrelations. Dancing salsa is also, so we shall see, a way of self-making and cosmopolitan creating as the body self. (Ibid., 12)

Skinner agrees with Calhoun that these activities remain the "easy faces of cosmopolitanism" (Calhoun 2002, 105 in Ibid., 12) and concedes that,

'Consumerist cosmopolitanism' does not equate to a tolerant cosmopolis. It is an 'easy' cosmopolitanism then, of items rather than identifications. (Ibid., 12)

Interestingly, Skinner also suggests that his interviewees may also pursue these cosmopolitan activities as forms of (temporary) escapism, as an answer to social alienation (Skinner 2010, 20).

In contrast, these activities can be theorised from a governmentality angle in quite different terms. This paper has argued that, behind a most benevolent facade, a call for cosmopolitanism can often enact hegemonic processes – Cheah eloquently demonstrated (1998; 2001, 2006) how this can take place at the macro level, through the creation of transnational institutions, NGOs and movements. At the individual level certain cosmopolitan pursuits can diffuse as mass cultural practices, and can also be theorised as technologies of freedom:

Rose (1992) argued that central to contemporary strategies for governing the soul was the creation of freedom. Subjects were obliged to be free and were required to conduct themselves responsibly, to account for their own lives and their vicissitudes in terms of their freedom. Freedom was not opposed to government. On the contrary, freedom, as choice, autonomy, self-responsibility, and the obligation to maximize one's life as a kind of enterprise, was one of the principal strategies of what Rose termed advanced liberal government ... the very ethic of freedom was itself part of a particular formula for governing free societies. (Rose, O'Malley, and Valverde 2006, 91).

This offers a different view of taste, self-styling and self-actualisation through certain (cosmopolitan or other) pursuits, although there are interesting overlaps with the theories of consumption and of taste that see life-style and leisure activities as self-defining and constitutive of identity and social differentiation. Everyday cosmopolitan practices (and tastes) are still seen as ways of self-realisation or self-styling, but again, rather than indicating a more progressive, humane and meaningful relationship with 'the other' and with 'diversity', they represent a way of navigating a more hybrid and hyper-mobile type of everyday life, and of aligning our 'self' with new trends that are culturally dominant or perceived as desirable (for instance the trend for ultra-mobility, or to become culturally 'omnivorous').<sup>24</sup>

If we combine these cultural and governmentality approaches with a view of the cosmopolitan through the lens of a changing conceptualisation of visibility and mobility

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24 From a governmentality angle culture is seen "as a set of technologies for governing habits, morals, and ethics – for governing subjects" (Rose, O'Malley, and Valverde 2006, 97).

– where mobility entails much more than physical mobility alone and is a much more diffuse experience, not confined to jet-setting elites – we may be able to ask interesting questions about the effects of cosmopolitanism.

In their 2006 paper entitled *Visuality, Mobility and the Cosmopolitan: Inhabiting the World from Afar*, Urry and Szerszynski define the cosmopolitan as someone possessing (all or a mix of) the following attributes – extensive mobility, capacity to consume, curiosity, willingness to take risks, ability to map one’s own society/culture and reflexivity, semiotic skills to interpret the images of others, openness to others and willingness/ability to appreciate certain elements of the language or culture of others (2006, 114–115).<sup>25</sup>

Because of their emphasis on the existence of multiple mobilities (physical, imaginative and virtual travel), their take on cosmopolitanism reflects the ways in which these multiple mobilities come to engender an awareness of the extraordinary, a blurring of the distinction between what is present and what is absent, and a sense of fluid interdependence. As a consequence, it may be hypothesised that

one of the more subtle but highly significant implications of the cosmopolitan condition is the way that growing numbers of humans might now be said to ‘inhabit’ their world at a distance. (Szerszynski and Urry 2006, 117)

Taking up Sach’s suggestion, they argue that a kind of alienation might result from some forms of cosmopolitanism, as people are increasingly accessing the world from afar:

perhaps the ‘cosmopolitan moment’ represents the completion of the process that started at the time of Wordsworth. Places have turned into a collection of abstract characteristics in a mobile world, ever easier to be visited, appreciated and compared, but not known from within. If our destiny is to become cosmopolitan, perhaps it is also to find pleasure in place only through an unrelenting visual economy of signs. (Szerszynski and Urry 2006, 127)

There are, therefore, productive convergences amongst these three interesting theoretical takes on cosmopolitanism – focusing on taste and consumption, on

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<sup>25</sup> The scholars are also adamant that (real) cosmopolitanisation may also entail unprogressive features, or exacerbate existing inequalities (Ibid., 115).

governmentality and technologies of the self, and on mobilities and visibilities respectively. These approaches see cosmopolitanism as a cultural phenomenon and diffuse the category of the cosmopolitan exponentially, but they also dismiss the most empathic and humanitarian agendas for cosmopolitanism.

As this section has argued, competing claims are still being made about who is and who is not seen as cosmopolitan. Some of the proponents of cosmopolitanism (for instance Nava 2002; Vieten 2012; Werbner 2008; Werbner 1999; Appiah 2006; Nava 2007) have recently tried to extend the category, in order to make it also more sensitive to gender, class and post-colonial sensibilities, to root it in personal experience, in emotions and even in the subconscious. However, none of these approaches has so far prevailed, and the deep emotional empathy and the commitment to social justice required by some of the new definitions of the cosmopolitan illustrate the difficulty in diffusing the concept widely. The only credible attempt at significantly diffusing the category is offered by those who theorise cosmopolitanism as a cultural phenomenon. This has important implications for the agendas pursued.

## Conclusions

This paper has presented an overview and critical appraisal of some of the key current debates accompanying the resurgence of cosmopolitanism. It demonstrated the heterogeneity of thought, criticism and controversy that characterise these debates. It has discussed possible drivers of the current 'cosmopolitan moment' and the different guises under which cosmopolitanism is theorised.

The agendas of some of the key proponents of cosmopolitanism today, particularly in the social sciences and sociology, while pervaded by enthusiasm and charged with a sense of purpose, emerge as fragmentary and contentious. Far from being a unified push held together across disciplines and with common intent, a variety of situated and divergent political projects lie behind the calls to embrace cosmopolitanism.

While appraising old and new critiques of cosmopolitanism and representations of the figure of the cosmopolitan, the paper suggested that the current interest in cosmopolitanism can be best interpreted in terms of theories of taste and class differentiation, of self-styling and life trajectories, of governmentality and of multiple mobilities.

The paper has also argued that an approach to cosmopolitanism based on governmentality and an understanding of cosmopolitanism as a cultural (and aesthetic)

phenomenon might be a more productive (although less benevolent) lens through which to conceptualise processes enacted at the macro-scale, and those experienced and enacted at the micro-scale of everyday practices, and geared towards making and sustaining identity. Such a lens would certainly temper the optimism that imbues many calls for cosmopolitanism by prompting some sobering reflections on its wide-ranging effects.

To see cosmopolitanism through such a lens reveals that, despite the benevolent rhetoric, hegemonic processes are taking place at the macro scale, and the embracing of a cosmopolitan identity and outlook at the micro-scale may in fact often represent an alignment with current dominant cultural trends and values, rather than the affirmation of a personal liberation from regressive constraints and a strong commitment to social justice globally.

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# Decolonizing Cosmopolitanism in Practice: From Universalizing Monologue to Intercultural Dialogue?

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*There has been a veritable upsurge in the debate on cosmopolitanism not merely as a philosophical ideal but also as a socially grounded concept denoting an individual or collective stance towards world openness. Postcolonial scholars, however, have criticized new cosmopolitanism's Eurocentric and universalizing stance. Pointing to the impossibility of global conviviality in a world in which non-Western epistemologies and cosmologies continue to be marginalized, they have challenged the exclusions and silences within the new cosmopolitan project. Decolonial scholars have also put forward cosmopolitanism as a decolonial political project challenging Western hegemony. These scholars have identified the World Social Forum as a privileged site for developing cosmopolitan projects. Overcoming the binary polarization between cosmopolitanism as imperial monologue or as privileged positionality of the subaltern, feminist scholar activists have developed knowledge-practices for dialogic encounters that offer a reading of cosmopolitanism as emancipatory self-transformation. This paper sketches the tensions and contradictions of the contemporary cosmopolitan debate in order to scrutinize the Inter-Movement Dialogues, a workshop methodology developed in the context of the World Social Forum process, as a way of grasping the contours but also ambiguities of embodied emancipatory cosmopolitanism.*

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Leena Kaunonen (ed.)

Cosmopolitanism and Transnationalism: Visions, Ethics, Practices

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Cosmopolitanism is rapidly becoming academia's favorite trope for characterizing the worldview deemed appropriate for today's globalized world (Delanty 2009, 3). Previously perceived as primarily a philosophical ideal characterizing the belief in the existence of a global community of humankind,<sup>2</sup> cosmopolitanism is increasingly used by social scientists as a socially grounded concept describing actual social practices or outlooks (Skrbis *et al.* 2007). This "actually existing" or "new" cosmopolitanism (Calhoun 2002; Fine 2003, 452) acknowledges that there is an interplay between the local and the global and locates cosmopolitan orientations not merely in a locally rooted appreciation of the global but rather in an active engagement with the cultural Other. The insertion of the Other into the cosmopolitan logic, bearing echoes of Kant's call for providing hospitality to a stranger (Cheah 2006, 488), transforms the abstract appreciation of the global into an affirmative stance towards intercultural communication. Being cosmopolitan, in this 'new' approach, inevitably entails being "open to otherness" (Kahn 2004, 6).<sup>3</sup>

The sociological debate on cosmopolitanism in particular follows this line of thought, framing cosmopolitanism not only as an appropriate outlook for acting and thinking in today's globalized world but also as an everyday strategy applied when encountering those who are different. This "willingness to engage with the Other" (Hannerz 1996, 103) is perceived as a core cosmopolitan skill, entailing the management of different systems of meaning and a constant state of readiness to enter, examine, and enact other cultures. But even Hannerz, who has put forward cosmopolitanism as a cultural skill, cautions that such cosmopolitanism displays a "narcissistic streak" as it grants "a sense of mastery" to those able to navigate between cultures, enabling them to feel that "a little more of the world is somehow under control" (Hannerz 1996, 103). This underlines that new cosmopolitanism is no innocent ideal but entwined in the power play of social relations. The cosmopolitan knack for intercultural communication might help undermine cultural (if not necessarily state) borders, leading to cultural hybridity.

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2 This broad definition is also reflected in the etymological meaning of cosmopolitanism, which connects *cosmos* (the world) to *polis* (community) (cf. Go 2013, 3). For Skrbis *et al.* (2004, 116), this general understanding depicts cosmopolitanism's predominant use in the literature as "a progressive humanistic ideal" broadly tied to ideas of world openness and global interconnections. Owing to its high level of abstraction, however, the concept of cosmopolitanism has been adapted to be of use for empirically examining human practices and outlooks.

3 In debates within new cosmopolitanism, 'Otherness' tends to be used synonymously for the figure of the stranger, constituted as being culturally different but yet approachable and, finally, intelligible. Postcolonial theory, on the other hand, generally understands the 'Other' as, by definition, not fully accessible, as the constitutive outside constructed by hegemonic discourses inevitably constituted by asymmetrical power relations. The repercussions of such an approach for evaluating the cosmopolitan desire to engage with the Other will be discussed in this paper.

However, it also ascribes social status in a globalizing world (Hage 1998 in Calcutt *et al.* 2009, 172). Managing cultural codes and being fluent in the practices and norms of various cultures might be accompanied by an increased striving for global justice, but just as well by the appropriation of other cultures as mere means of broadening one's skillset. Skrbis, Calcutt and Woodward (2009) consequently argue that one should take into account the implications of the wider social and political context for studies on cosmopolitan outlooks (see Lamont *et al.* 2002; Skrbis *et al.* 2007; Woodward *et al.* 2008). Postcolonial scholars broaden this perspective, underlining the fact that the context of social interaction worldwide is, inherently and inevitably, always shaped by colonial legacies. Framing cosmopolitanism as openness towards the Other, therefore, requires reflecting not only on the global dynamics that engender the encounters between culturally different peoples but also necessitates a critical reflection of the kind of openness that might enable an intercultural dialogue instead of a mono-directional inclusion of the Other into hegemonic designs.

This paper argues for the inclusion of postcolonial feminist insights in the new cosmopolitan debate and traces the argument for rethinking the political potential of cosmopolitanism as openness to the Other. It will illustrate the possibilities and limits of cosmopolitanism as an emancipatory consciousness by discussing the embodied practices of feminist activists observable in those global spaces where 'an-other' possible world is formed.

In the first section, I will sketch how cosmopolitanism has been debated in the social sciences, paying particular attention to the ways in which the cosmopolitan debate has been confronted with its global history by postcolonial scholars. I then link this debate to decolonial approaches to cosmopolitanism, which frame cosmopolitanism as a political project challenging the epistemic hegemony of Eurocentric universalism, striving for a world in which a multiplicity of belief-systems and ways of living fit. In the second section, I focus on the World Social Forum process, which has been perceived as cosmopolitanism in the making. I show how feminist commentators have contested easy notions of cosmopolitanism as the privilege of the subaltern by pointing out the many ways in which the Other is excluded and marginalized in the supposedly open space of the World Social Forum (hereafter WSF). Consequently, I propose to trace emerging cosmopolitan practices within the actual organizational practices of social movement actors addressing the exclusions and marginalizations within and between social movements. By aiming to politicize difference, social movement actors are invited to confront their internalized resistances to difference, thereby promoting the latter's self-transformation towards cosmopolitan openness. But taking Otherness as

subalternity seriously also means acknowledging the inability of the WSF – and of the practices developed within its spaces – to reach into subaltern space. Cosmopolitan self-transformation towards emancipatory futures necessarily reaches its limits when confronted with the deep structures of subalternity unalterable through pedagogic encounters with difference.

### **The universalizing monologue of contemporary cosmopolitanisms**

In recent decades, there has been such an explosion of academic writing on cosmopolitanism that some scholars already presume the existence of an academic field of cosmopolitan studies (cf. Inglis 2012). While the sheer number of publications on the topic certainly supports the suspicion that some form of collective debate is taking place, the plethora of different approaches, systematizations, contestations, and negations is not resulting in much clarity. Some scholars have tried to make sense of the debate, but even they have disagreed on how best to sum up the field: Vertovec and Cohen (2002), for example, identify six perspectives on cosmopolitanism in the social sciences, Delanty (2009) four and Rovisco and Nowicka (2011) three. A broad overview of the cosmopolitanisms debated in the social sciences that merges but does not strictly follow any of the approaches cited above includes the following four perspectives: First, there is cosmopolitanism as a philosophical worldview entailing certain normative assumptions regarding global justice and world citizenship (Vertovec *et al.* 2002, 10). The spectrum of approaches in this category ranges from Nussbaum, who has famously claimed that any moral commitment narrower than to humanity as a whole is a “morally questionable move of self-definition by a morally irrelevant characteristic” (Nussbaum 1996, 5), to Appiah’s concept of a localized “cosmopolitan patriotism” (Appiah 1996). Notwithstanding the differences in these philosophers’ views on the appropriate anchoring of cosmopolitanism, they concur that cosmopolitanism implies both the affirmation of moral obligations towards the Other as well as the pedagogic responsibility to learn from those who are different (Nussbaum 1996, 11; Appiah 2007, 31; Mendieta 2009, 250).

Second, cosmopolitanism can be approached as a global political project built on normative understandings of world citizenship, global democracy, and human rights (Delanty 2009, 4). Two forms of this political cosmopolitanism are observable (Vertovec *et al.* 2002, 12): One is cosmopolitanism from above, which is mainly concerned

with constructing the ideal institutional settings for furthering cosmopolitan global democracy (Archibugi *et al.* 1995; Archibugi *et al.* 1998; Held 2006; Archibugi 2008). The other is cosmopolitanism from below, which believes that transnational social movements, migrant communities, and travellers make up the core of a growing global community identifiable by their transnational experiences and their cosmopolitan outlooks (Hannerz 1996; Pieterse 2006).

Third, cosmopolitanism has taken shape as an analytical method in the social sciences responding to the challenge of how to examine and, ultimately, understand the transnationalization of social relations with scientific tools that are implicitly assuming the frame of the nation-state. Beck, in particular, has called for the overcoming of methodological nationalism and for a cosmopolitan social science (Beck 2002a; Beck *et al.* 2006). The anthropologist Hann, moreover, has argued for a redrafting of his discipline that is based on a “radical comparative cosmopolitanism” (Hann 2008, 80).

Fourth, cosmopolitanism has come to depict a “mode of engaging with the world” (Waldron 1992), a sense of belonging to a post-national community of humankind that expresses itself through the appreciation of global diversity and the celebration of difference (Stevenson 2002). In contrast to those putting forward a cosmopolitanism from below, the proponents of this way of perceiving cosmopolitanism prefer to examine specific social settings within or cross-cutting national borders and are not as much concerned with processes of community-building on the global level. Several studies have developed analytical methods to examine these outlooks empirically (Lamont *et al.* 2002; Phillips *et al.* 2008).

From this short overview of the very varied cosmopolitanisms being discussed in the social sciences it is clear that cosmopolitanism has the potential to express more than just the aesthetic stance of those familiar with frequent flyer lounges and high-end ethnic cuisine. Its capacity to grasp the imaginations of those living in today’s globalizing world and give a name to practices that respond to the increasing transnationalization of everyday life might partly explain why the term has become so popular. Its common core, describing a way of relating to the world positioned somewhere between locality and globality, particularity and universality (Mendieta 2009, 242) is furthermore abstract enough to be universally applicable as an explanatory frame for social outlooks and practices that seemingly stem from the contemporary processes of globalization.

Unfortunately, abstractions have the tendency to gloss over contradictions and exclusions. The German sociologist Beck, for example, has been at the forefront of developing a sociological cosmopolitanism seen as a universally valid ethical response to globalization. In today’s inevitably interdependent world, he argues that a global

community based upon shared risks already exists. In order to respond adequately to the global risks threatening human survival, a cosmopolitan perspective has to be developed, not least through transcending the nation-state-centric tools of academic analysis (Beck 2004; 2002b). He has been called out, however, for his Eurocentrism: In a recent contribution to the debate, Bhambra (2011) shows through a careful textual analysis how Beck reinforces a Eurocentric reading of history on the basis of which he attributes certain qualities to the West, implying that these attributes are lacking in the non-West (Bhambra 2011, 318–322). She also argues that, by characterizing the first modernity as the time of the nation-state and framing the challenge for the second modernity as the search for a post-national constellation, Beck does not consider the crucial role played by colonial empires in the development of current global relations. Beck's cosmopolitanism, when put to a postcolonial reading, is therefore "defined by the European experience. Its intellectual genealogy is seen to be European as is its political practice" (Bhambra 2011, 318).

But Beck is not the only scholar constructing cosmopolitanism's European genealogy: In many versions of cosmopolitanism, the global roots of cosmopolitan concerns are obscured, even though these concerns have been expressed in many cultures and are sustained by intercultural influences and ideas. From Vedic and Buddhist imaginations of the world as one family to the Japanese theorist Makiguchi, the idea of belonging to a global community of humankind is neither unique nor exclusive to European civilization (Giri 2006, 1279–1280; Hansen 2010, 153). But the general cosmopolitan lineage more often than not reads

Aristotle, Stoics, Renaissance humanism, Kant, Rawls, Habermas, Derrida. The main stations in this account are Greece, Renaissance, Enlightenment, the West, United States. (Pieterse 2006, 1251)

A similar process can be observed with regard to empirical studies on cosmopolitan outlooks: In cases where cosmopolitan attitudes are traced in the Global South (cf.

Werbner 2006; Notar 2008),<sup>4</sup> these studies are mainly ethnographic accounts of how certain groups or individuals express outlooks that value diversity and respect difference in interaction with other ethnic groups. Their observations seldom feed back into the general debate on cosmopolitanism conducted mainly in sociology and political science. These dynamics seem to mirror the disciplinary boundaries installed during colonialism when certain academic disciplines, such as anthropology, produced knowledge about the exotic Other, whilst others, such as sociology or what is today known as political science, produced universally valid knowledge on topics of general concern (Castro-Gomez 2005, 1–20; Restrepo 2007). Pointing out these continuities, critical scholars have commented on the many ways in which the debate on cosmopolitanism in the social sciences is still marked by Eurocentric parochialism (cf. Calhoun 2002; Hann 2008; Mendieta 2009; Bhabra 2011).

Without a doubt, nearly all new cosmopolitanisms are thoroughly anchored in Western (post-)modernity: Without the postmodern critique of the universal standpoint and the accompanying dissolution of stable and fixed identities, the new cosmopolitanism in its current shape would not have been possible, and without the uncertainties, hopes, and imaginations accompanying processes of globalization, it would not have become so popular (cf. Delanty 2006, 5).

Nonetheless, situating cosmopolitan approaches in global history, which reaches far beyond the European continent (cf. Sen 2002), is indispensable for a cosmopolitanism that strives for global conviviality and understanding. Provincializing cosmopolitanism (cf. Bhabra 2011, 314) would imply that the influences of trade, colonization, and conquest as well as of non-Western schools of thought would be recognized as crucial components of the conceptual development of cosmopolitanism (cf. Mignolo 2000b, 2010; Mendieta 2009, Grewal 2008). The global histories of colonialism, imperialism, and racism have not only shaped the conditions that have made current cosmopolitan projects possible, they also provide the epistemic basis for cosmopolitan debate. Decentering the dominant understanding of cosmopolitanism then also makes it possible to ask whether – by assuming that cosmopolitan outlooks are increasingly

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4 I use the term ‘Global South’ when referring to those societies that are geopolitically grouped on the periphery or semi-periphery of the modern world-system, to use Wallerstein’s terminology (cf. Wallerstein 1979). While the concept of ‘South’ has been used in international relations since the 1970s to denote the collectivity of ‘developing countries’ which, while being heterogeneous, were facing similar challenges and sharing similar vulnerabilities, the notion of ‘Global South’ points to the call for transnational solidarity between those countries detrimentally affected by the advent of neoliberalism. It is consequently a relational as well as a political concept (Cairo Carou *et al.* 2010, 43).

available for everyone, regardless of wealth, education, or nationality – cosmopolitan dispositions are too easily associated with progressiveness, casting all those who do not or cannot join the cosmopolitan ranks as parochial at best and fundamentalist at worst. The openness to the Other constitutive of cosmopolitanism seems to represent, in many versions, a “conspicuous openness to diversity” (Buchanan *et al.* 2002; Ollivier *et al.* 2002, 2; Yegenoglu 2005) that does not always reflect the many ways in which “the cosmopolitan appreciation of global diversity is based on privileges of wealth and perhaps especially citizenship in certain states” (Calhoun 2002, 108).

### **Subaltern knowledges from the edges: Cosmopolitanism as a political project of the oppressed**

Scholars taking the positionality of the Global South, and, in particular, of Latin America, have developed a form of cosmopolitanism reminiscent of cosmopolitanism from below, which they call “decolonial” or “subaltern” cosmopolitanism (Mendieta 2009; Mignolo 2010; Santos 2007; Go 2013).<sup>5</sup> Assuming a position at the ‘relative exteriority’ of European modernity,<sup>6</sup> they concur with mainstream approaches to new cosmopolitanism that states that modernity lies at the basis of cosmopolitanism. But modernity, according to them, is necessarily accompanied by its darker side, coloniality: Without the colonization and subjugation of the Americas and the social relations that were developed at that point in time, the modern world would not have taken its current shape. Modernity, therefore, cannot be disentangled from the “transhistoric expansion

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5 Mignolo, who in earlier writings used the adjective ‘critical’ to describe his approach to cosmopolitanism (2000b), currently prefers the term decolonial cosmopolitanism (Mignolo 2010). Santos, focusing on cosmopolitanism as a counter-movement to neocolonial and colonial oppression, uses the term ‘subaltern cosmopolitanism’ (Santos 2007, 13). Within the decolonial paradigm, the subaltern are understood as those whose epistemologies and world-views have been constituted as Other to Western modernity. Contrary to the usage of the term in postcolonial studies as those that are not recognized as political actors in their own right and who are cut off from all lines of social mobility (Venn 2006, 27; Krishnaswamy *et al.* 2008, 6), the authors formulating a subaltern or decolonial cosmopolitanism use the term to characterize those possessing an awareness of their subaltern position in the current geo-political distribution of epistemic power (Mignolo 2000b, 745). Postcolonial scholars, however, argue for a more complex understanding of the term and warn against the use of the term as an identity marker (Spivak 1988).

6 The notion of exteriority, for these scholars, should not be taken to mean that they assume that there is an ontological outside to Western modernity. On the contrary, they employ the concept to show how the ‘colonial difference’ has constituted an outside framed as the Other by the hegemonic discourse on modernity (Escobar 2004b): “Exteriority in other words, is the outside, invented in the process of building the inside” (Mignolo 2010, 122).

of colonial domination and the perpetuation of its effects in contemporary times” (Moraña *et al.* 2008, 2), which naturalizes difference as inferiority and stabilizes the epistemic privilege of Cartesian thought (Escobar 2004a; Quijano 2008).

As a counter-move to mainstream cosmopolitanism, these scholars consequently hold that the Other, who lives in the border-zones of colonial difference,<sup>7</sup> retains the possibility of thinking from a space of difference that negates the singularity of the epistemological perspectives affirmed in Eurocentrism and, therefore, is the privileged source of cosmopolitan orientations (Mignolo 2000b, 744–745; Escobar 2004b). Cosmopolitanism’s ‘openness to the Other’ is then reframed as the consciousness of those very Others who have been excluded and marginalized in the modern/colonial world and their desire to challenge this exclusion (Mignolo 2000b; Mignolo 2010). In Mignolo’s words, cosmopolitanism thus “demands yielding generously . . . toward diversity as a universal and cosmopolitan project in which everyone participates instead of ‘being participated’” (Mignolo 2000b, 744).

As the current system of global relations normalizes difference as inferiority, such a cosmopolitan project, they argue, would inevitably entail not only the transformation of economic and political power structures but also the overcoming of the hierarchical ordering of epistemologies and cosmologies installed by Western hegemonic rule (Castro-Gomez 2005). Cosmopolitan politics therefore entail the political move of building a contentious consciousness and a subaltern politics of emancipation as a “cultural and political form of counter-hegemonic globalization” (Santos 2007, 13–15; Mendieta 2009; Mignolo 2010).

The primary agents of such cosmopolitanism are seen as those movements from the Global South that aim to challenge and transform the global structures of domination from the bottom up. In particular the World Social Forum process<sup>8</sup> has been identified

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7 The concept of ‘colonial difference’ was originally formulated by Chatterjee (1993), who stresses that colonial domination posited an absolute difference between colonizer and colonized, based on the inferiority of the latter. The devaluation of practices and perspectives of political actors from the Global South, together with the co-optation of their knowledges, is in this interpretation a corollary of the colonial difference and the starting point from which cosmopolitanism has to be thought (Mignolo 2000a).

8 The World Social Forum is a worldwide process that gathers social movements, trade unions, NGOs, and other civil society actors that share an opposition to neoliberal globalization. Originally inaugurated in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2001 as a counter-event to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, it has triggered a wider process consisting of a plethora of meetings, networking efforts, and events on local, national, and transnational levels. The program of these gatherings is generally self-organized and is not geared towards producing joint declarations or statements. Rather, these forums aim at facilitating an unrestrained exchange of ideas in the spirit of pluralism and diversity.

as a privileged cosmopolitan space, mainly because of its emphasis on being an open space, its positionality in the global South, and its emphasis on the plurality of world-views that exist (Hardt *et al.* 2003, xvi; Santos 2006).

Already this very brief sketch of the decolonial approach to cosmopolitanism shows that these scholars tend to base their theorizing on a polarization between Western modernity – which for them is inherently colonial and therefore, in the last instance, unsalvageable – and the emancipatory knowledges emerging from the Global South, which in many cases draw on ancestral or indigenous epistemologies and cosmologies. They tend to reinforce the binary between the

liberal, modernist, universalist camp and, on the other hand, the camp of those who denounce racism, western hegemony, and emphasize plurality, multicentricism, and cultural relativism. (Chhachhi 2006, 1329)

The postcolonial feminist philosopher Spivak (1995, 115) explicitly warns against the move to construct subalternity as a marker of identity:

Subalternity is the name I borrow for the space out of any serious touch with the logic of capitalism or socialism. Please do not confuse it with unorganised labour, women as such, the proletarian, the colonized, . . . migrant labour, political refugees etc. Nothing useful comes out of this confusion.

The general tendency of the advocates of decolonial/subaltern cosmopolitanism, I would argue, to attribute cosmopolitan consciousness to people perceived as subaltern creates its own exclusions that, in the end, endanger their emancipatory project. By focusing on those groups that have been able to express political agency,<sup>9</sup> they do not take into account the subaltern – those who have internalized their condition of disenfranchisement as ‘normal’, and who, lacking the resources to form a political consciousness, do not participate in struggles for emancipation (cf. Dhawan 2013, 154). In the following, I will illustrate this claim by exploring how the WSF, whose participants are often divided not only by ideological or cultural, but also by epistemological and cosmological divides, deals with difference. I first address the critiques that have been raised against drawing an easy connection between the WSF process and the decolonial

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<sup>9</sup> Santos (2005, 24) holds that “[s]ubaltern cosmopolitanism manifests itself through the initiatives and movements that constitute the counter-hegemonic globalization”.

cosmopolitan project. Then, I will exemplify what feminist knowledge arising from activist circles can contribute to the cosmopolitan debate, focusing in particular on one of their approaches – the Inter-Movement Dialogues – that has been developed and adapted in the context of the World Social Forum process. This approach, based on a dialogical approach to alliance-building, is based on the belief that in order “to have a space to struggle for recognition, it is necessary to politicise difference” (Vargas 2004, 230).<sup>10</sup> I end with a discussion on the opportunities for, but also the limits to, portraying these embodied dialogic practices as cosmopolitanism in the making.

### **Inter-movement encounters in feminist world social forum spaces – politicizing difference, practicing dialogue**

Postcolonial feminists, in particular, have criticized approaches that depend on a unified collective subject, as the latter obscure the internal power relations within the presumed emancipatory agent, silencing those that are different within the movements themselves and pushing into the shadows those that lack the material, but also epistemic, social, and political resources necessary to participate in organizing social movements. They concur with decolonial approaches that emancipative politics have to be directed not only towards transforming economic and political power structures but also towards dissolving the hierarchical ordering of epistemologies and cosmologies in wider society. Nevertheless, they ascertain that this holds just as much for the dynamics within counter-hegemonic movements. Unjust and colonizing systems of rule are expressed in the “social patterns of representation, interpretation and communication” (Vargas 2003, 912), which are also perpetuated in supposedly open social movement spaces.

The debate on how to deal with difference has been constitutive of the feminist movement and theory: The internal debate on the role and place of heterogeneity in the women’s movement was initiated by colored women in the nineteenth century and taken up by Black and postcolonial feminists in the 1960s (Hill Collins 2000; Hernández Castillo 2008). Activist experiences during the transnational encounters of the UN

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<sup>10</sup> My analysis of the Inter-Movement Dialogues is based on secondary and primary materials, undergirded by fieldwork conducted at the WSF 2013 in Tunis as well as other spaces of the global justice movement. As no Inter-Movement Dialogues were organized in Tunis, I have no personal experience of how the Dialogues are carried out. The richness of material on the Dialogues available, both in the form of scholastic analyses as well as material produced by the organizers of the Dialogues, is sufficient for my research purposes. I am aware, however, of the limitations of my approach.

Decade for Women of 1975–1985 and the ensuing Beijing World Women’s Conference in 1995 further spurred on these debates. Whilst for the most part neither explicitly connecting to the cosmopolitan debate nor claiming the label ‘cosmopolitan’ for their undertakings, feminists have long since theorized and practised communication across difference under the banner of transversal politics and standpoint epistemology (cf. Hill Collins 2000; Yuval-Davis 1999; Lugones and Spelman 1983): While standpoint epistemology ascertains the partiality of all perspectives on the world and reclaims the necessity to situate one’s knowledge claims, transversality offers an approach to political dialogue based on standpoint epistemology implemented through the twin processes of ‘rooting’ and ‘shifting’:

The idea is that . . . each participant in a political dialogue . . . would bring with them the reflexive knowledge of their own positioning and identity. This is the ‘rooting’. At the same time, they should also try to ‘shift’ - to put themselves in the situation of those with whom they are in dialogue and who are different. (Yuval-Davis 1999)

Nonetheless, while feminist philosophers like Nussbaum or Benhabib have formulated some of the foundational texts in the philosophical debate on cosmopolitanism, the views of postcolonial feminists and feminist activists are not part of the new cosmopolitan debate (Chhachhi 2006, 1333). This paper does not intend to provide an explanation for this chasm, but puts forward the claim that, even though few postcolonial or Black feminists have claimed the cosmopolitan label for their discussions, important insights for the new cosmopolitan debate can be drawn from these debates, as they directly address some of the new cosmopolitan’s blind spots concerning the understanding of difference and the possibilities of cosmopolitan conviviality.

In the following, I show how feminist theorizing, arising from activist practices within emancipatory social movements, might provide a way of transcending Eurocentric thinking within the new cosmopolitan debate without producing insurmountable binarisms and polarizations. I focus on the World Social Forum process, as it has repeatedly been cited as one of the arenas where the emancipatory cosmopolitan project is taking shape. Moreover, it provides a vibrant environment in which new cultural politics are discussed and tried out. Feminists have also been able to assert their presence in the World Social Forum, shaping for example the politics of the Forum by steering the discourse of shared opposition towards the recognition of a multiplicity of oppressions, struggles, and political subjects (Conway 2011a, 50). Notwithstanding

the limitations of the WSF process, it provides one of the most innovative experiments in overcoming the universalizing monologue dominating contemporary social relations.

### **The world social forum: A cosmopolitan open space?**

One crucial characteristic of the World Social Forum process is the emphasis on fostering strategies of alliance-building that do not rest on shared identities or experiences in order to establish a “world in which many worlds fit”, to use the widely known Zapatista slogan (Walsh 2002; Waterman 2004, 24). This insistence on the politics of “open space” (Whitaker 2004) is reflected in its Charter of Principles, which states that the World Social Forum is

an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and interlinking for effective action, by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neoliberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism, and are committed to building a planetary society directed towards fruitful relationships among Mankind and between it and the Earth. (World Social Forum 2001)

The methodology of the World Social Forum might provide opportunities for communicative encounters across previously unbridged differences. But the overwhelming majority of commentators on the process have acknowledged that, due to the influence of the hierarchical ordering of knowledges and cosmologies prevalent in society at large, there still exist significant ongoing limitations and asymmetries in the relations between those sharing the space at World Social Forum encounters (Conway 2007; Alvarez 2009).

The Portuguese scholar Santos, who is one of the most prominent scholar activists of the World Social Forum proposing a subaltern cosmopolitanism, consequently argues for the need to establish cosmopolitan contact zones within every social movement that is part of the World Social Forum process in order to enable communication across the differences between movements (Santos 2005, 19–22). Anchoring this proposal in a wider argument regarding the work of translation, he recognizes the shortcomings of the World Social Forum process regarding the facilitation of non-exclusionary communication, but believes that the shared desire to challenge neoliberal globalization will make communication across difference possible (see Santos 2005).

Scholar activists involved in the World Social Forum process, many of whom identify themselves as feminists, question this hopeful reading, drawing attention to the fact that the Forum is far from being a cosmopolitan meeting place in which everyone can participate on equal terms (Conway 2011a, 34; Roskos *et al.* 2007; Conway 2013; Stephansen 2013). They discuss the numerous ways in which indigenous movements, dalits (the so-called ‘untouchables’ in the Indian caste system), slum dwellers, and women’s movements feel sidelined, silenced or excluded from the events of the WSF process. Starting from the insurmountable barriers to participation for many place-based activists – visa requirements and travel costs (Ylä-Anttila, 2005, 438; Doerr 2007) – to the formal exclusion of confessional groups, political parties, groups engaging in armed struggle, and those not opposing neoliberalism (cf. World Social Forum 2001) and ending with the actual dynamics during the WSF events that silence and marginalize those not accustomed to Western and male ways of speaking and debating in Left political circles (Ylä-Anttila 2005, 438; Conway 2013, 121–122), the ‘open space’ of the World Social Forum is closed for many activists and social movements. Indigenous people, furthermore, claim that the dominant intellectual discourses within the WSF do not mirror their outlooks and state that they hardly enter into communication with other participants (Conway 2011b, 222–227). Feminists have shown that, while feminist sensibilities and discourses have provided the conceptual core of the WSF process, women’s issues remain marginalized, especially when challenging the heteronormative or patriarchal practices of the WSF itself.<sup>11</sup>

Candido Grzybowski’s remark that “[t]here is a structural bias that obstructs the advancement of women’s issues [in the World Social Forum]” (Grzybowski 2001, cited in Vargas 2003, 914) therefore continues to be valid. The conclusion feminist scholars draw is that patterns of exclusion and marginalization, as well as patriarchal and colonizing systems of power and authority, have to be counteracted through tangible strategies, because otherwise, they will remain unchallenged even in supposedly progressive social movement spaces (Alvarez *et al.* 2004; Conway 2011b).

The experiences of the World Social Forum process, however, also show that transformative change can be achieved, and new actors and issues be introduced, but that such inclusions more often than not depend on direct challenges to the status quo:

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11 Feminist commentators have pointed, for example, to the invisibility of lesbians in the World Social Forum (Hawthorne 2007), to the silence surrounding cases of sexual harassment at WSF events (Koopman 2007), as well as to the prevailing marginalization of women and women’s issues in the lead-up to and during World Social Forum events like, for example, the WSF in 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya (Oloo 2006).

From the 2004 WSF in Mumbai, India, to the 2009 WSF in Belém, Brazil, to the 2011 WSF in Dakar, Senegal, and the 2013 WSF in Tunis, Tunisia, changes of place and space brought new actors and issues to the fore, transforming the political culture of the Forum to a certain extent each time.<sup>12</sup> Challenging and changing the practices of the WSF remains both a necessary as well as possible endeavour.

### **Tracing cosmopolitanism in the making in the feminist inter-movement dialogues**

One of the tangible strategies that feminist activists have devised to confront these dynamics is a framework to support communicative exchange between social movement actors divided by political and cultural differences. This framework has most prominently been implemented in the Inter-Movement Dialogues, workshops conducted during World Social Forum events that aim to make the multiple ways in which activism silences or dismisses certain points of view visible by focusing on the everyday practices of social movement activists. The framework for these workshops has been developed by a coalition of distinct feminist and women's movements from different regions of the globe.<sup>13</sup> Generally, the most known feminist initiative at the WSF, which most of the organizers of the Inter-Movement Dialogues have been co-sponsoring and which was an important precedent for the Inter-Movement Dialogues, is the Feminist Dialogues – feminist gatherings organized several days prior to the encounters of the World Social Forum. The Inter-Movement Dialogues, however, are particularly promising when aiming to examine how an embodied cosmopolitanism might take shape as their explicit aim is to make the radical difference of the Other tangible and real but not presuming a shared basis of identification, communicative

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12 The WSF in Mumbai 2004 was the first one to be held outside Brazil and witnessed a significant participation from poor peoples' movements, both dalit and indigenous, as well as from people with disabilities, sexual minorities, and sex workers (Stephansen 2011, 65). The WSF in 2009 in Belém was shaped by the critique of Amazonian and Andean indigenous peoples of modernist discourses of emancipation, while the WSF in 2011 in Dakar provided evidence of the salience of the struggles of African movements and at the most recent WSF at Tunis in 2013, activists of the Arab revolutions as well as of Occupy and the European anti-austerity movements participated in the WSF.

13 The organizers of the first Inter-Movement Dialogues were the National Network of Autonomous Women's Groups India (NNAWG), Development Alternatives for Women in a New Era (DAWN), Articulación Feminista Marcosur (AFM), and the Women's International Coalition for Economic Justice (WICEJ), each of which is a network of women's organizations that, in turn, comprises different local, national, and transnational organizations (Articulación Feminista Marcosur 2003).

intelligibility, or the instant recognition of these differences. The *Articulación Feminista Marcosur*, one of the organizers of the Inter-Movement Dialogues, even perceives the WSF process as a whole as a “space-dialogue” that might contribute to “shorten[ing] the distance that must be walked to further the dialogue between the diverse priorities that movements have” (Vargas 2004, 230). What is not presumed is that the distance between social movements will necessarily be bridged or even superseded.

Inter-Movement Dialogues were held at the World Social Forum in 2004 in Mumbai, at the Feminist Dialogues prior to the World Social Forum in 2005 in Porto Alegre, and at the World Social Forums in Nairobi in 2007 and in Belém in 2009 (Conway 2012, 385). The framework has also been implemented at various encounters in Latin America in particular (Wilson 2007, 15–19). They intend to support a praxis of inter-movement, inter-cultural, and inter-epistemological communication that is based on recognizing not only the specificities of the distinct struggles of those involved, but also the probable incommensurability of some of their normative orientations and goals. Yet, they aim at creating understanding and acceptance that may then provide a basis for collective action (cf. Antrobus 2004, 19). For the organizers of the Inter-Movement Dialogues, such understanding can best be reached by collective and individual transformation through changing both embodied practices and subjectivities. Gina Vargas, one of the key activists within the Inter-Movement Dialogues as both an organizer and panelist of the workshops, displays a similar orientation when summarizing her interventions in the World Social Forum as the striving for “the transformation of subjectivities, and . . . the recognition of the vital roles of diversity” (Vargas 2004, 230). As Gandhi and Shah (2006, 73–74), two of the organizers of the first Inter-Movement Dialogues, assert, “Walking the Talk” is the only way transformative change might occur:

In our experience, social movement activists who have to strike a balance between pragmatism, theorization and strategy agree to a rejection of sweeping categorizations but usually retain the concept of categories itself. However, most have not sufficiently come to grips with the politics of differences and the notion of conflicting identities. As movement activists, we need to not only accept difference, diversity and plurality but try to incorporate these ideas within our movements and strategies.

These workshops aim to reveal the often-unacknowledged differences between activists through pedagogic interventions in a workshop format. Their aim is to motivate the participating movement actors to confront their own contradictions and to recognize

properly what it means that there exist multiple ways of imagining, embodying, and striving for democracy, justice, and freedom.

In practice, the Inter-Movement Dialogues are convened as independent gatherings commonly scheduled to take several hours and attended by up to several hundred activists.<sup>14</sup> They are organized in a talk show-format, with several activists from different movements invited as representatives of their respective movements. During the inter-movement workshops of the World Social Forum in 2004, for example, representatives of the labor, the dalit, the indigenous and the feminist movement discussed their daily practices at work and how these relate to issues of race, gender, and class (cf. Gandhi *et al.* 2006). Once one representative finished speaking the other movement representatives were invited to comment, to which the second representative of the original movement was asked to respond. After these rounds of interaction between the speakers, the audience could comment. A member of the organizing committee acted as facilitator and structured the interactions during the proceedings (Vargas 2003, 914; Gandhi *et al.* 2006; Conway 2007, 56).

In these workshops, I argue, a potentially cosmopolitan consciousness is being developed through actual dialogical practices that do not presuppose a privileged subject position but invite the participants to reflect on their own practices and belief systems within a space that fosters political identities. This approach to facilitating dialogue across differences bears a striking resemblance to Delanty's (2009) 'critical cosmopolitanism' based on "processes of self-transformation arising out of the encounter with others in the context of global concerns" (Delanty *et al.* 2008, 324).

Nonetheless, the Inter-Movement Dialogues also illustrate the fundamental problems of cosmopolitan aspirations as well as the particular ambiguities of the discursive and empirical realization of a politics of recognition in a social field characterized not only by cultural or political but also by civilizational divides: The discourse of the Inter-Movement Dialogues, by perpetuating the dominant categorizations of intersectional politics, fails to open up the dialogue with the actual 'Other' in the context of the World Social Forum – those not present, those not easily fitting into the categorical schemes of counter-hegemonic politics, and those not wishing or not able to engage with other social movements on their own terms. In the call for the first Inter-Movement Dialogues, the topics to be broached in the Dialogues were predefined as concerning violence, work, religious fundamentalism, and access to power (Articulación Feminista Marcosur 2003).

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14 Gandhi and Shah maintain (2006, 73–74) that the first Inter-Movement Dialogues in Mumbai, India, were attended by 800 people, and the second in Belém, Brazil, saw the participation of 330 activists.

By presuming a particular frame of intersectionality, the Inter-Movement Dialogues have appealed mainly to those already familiar with the terminology of intersectionality and fluent in conversations based on academic argument. Conway, in this context, comments that “[i]t was striking how the same discourses of intersectionality, often carried by the same individuals, set the terms for the dialogue across movements” (Conway 2010, 162).

By foreclosing other possible topics as well as the possibility of an unstructured conversation, the content of the Dialogues was prefigured. By adhering to a talk show-format, keeping to a previously agreed-upon order of speeches, and by moderating the sessions according to the topics set by the organizers in advance, the terms of the conversation were fixed (Conway 2013, 134).

The Inter-Movement Dialogues were nonetheless successful in underlining the necessity of politicizing how the concern for bridging difference is translated into actual practice, complicating the celebration of counter-hegemonic alliance building prevalent in the WSF. Desai’s (2008, 52) evaluation of the Dialogues is a good indicator of the disappointment felt by many scholar activists committed to the aims of the WSF process when confronted with their actual achievements in furthering transversality:

[I]f this session was an indicator of coalition politics, it did not seem very promising. Solidarities with other movements have become the hegemonic movement strategy. But as the intermovement sessions at the forum in 2004 and 2005 showed, movements haven’t done the serious work: namely the work of rearticulating their visions to integrate other visions; reorganizing their movements to include others; and rethinking strategies to address issues of all inequalities, such as inequalities of class, race, gender, and sexuality, among others.

Reflecting on the failure of transversal politics and on the hard work necessary to transform the Self and collective practices, the difficulty of connecting to the Other present in the same space but still distant becomes the first pedagogical lesson of cosmopolitan encounters geared towards emancipation. The postcolonial feminist Lorde (1984, 113) issues a similar call:

I urge each one of us here to reach down into that deep place of knowledge inside herself and touch that terror and loathing of any difference that lives there. See whose face it wears.

Such an act of self-reflection is still concurrent with decolonial cosmopolitanism's conviction that the first step of decolonial cosmopolitanism is the recognition of how one's desires, expectations, and practices are intertwined with a system of social relations that is based on the inferiorization of other epistemologies, cosmologies, and practices. What the evaluation of the Inter-Movement Dialogues shows, however, is that the building of a counter-hegemonic movement is neither an automatic nor a logical consequence of such cosmopolitan self-transformation and that reaching towards the Other through endeavors overburdened by hopes and expectations must necessarily fail.

While some might find Spivak's assessment that the World Social Forum "is at best based on a hastily cobbled relationship between the intellectual and the subaltern in the broadest possible sense" (2009, 36) unnecessarily harsh, her analysis of the central crux of the pedagogic project of the WSF is poignant. The Other as subaltern – understood in the actual meaning of the term – remains untouched by the WSF process and if members of a marginalized group find their way to the Forum, the dynamics of its spaces often make it impossible for them to be heard (cf. Conway 2013, 154–157). Epistemological hierarchies also persist in open spaces, and while the Inter-Movement Dialogues provide a framework for acknowledging and challenging some of the inequalities within the open space of the WSF, they might provide but moments of cosmopolitan clarity. Those who perform the intellectual labor of comparing and abstracting their practices to make them intelligible for others are – for the most part – members of the world's middle class that are active in the name of the Other (cf. Waterman 2012). Cosmopolitan openness, even in its emancipatory or decolonial form, is achievable only for some parts of the globe, and while the WSF and practices like the Inter-Movement Dialogues can broaden the frame, they do not overcome its inherent limitations.

### **Conclusion: Practices of self-transformation and the necessary impossibility of cosmopolitanism openness**

The upsurge of debate on the nature and scope of cosmopolitanism is evidence that there is a desire to find new ways of global conviviality that somehow manage to include everyone on equal terms. Such a desire, laudable as it is, should nonetheless be paired with the recognition that former global projects have inevitably led to the exclusion and marginalization of large parts of the globe, which has had not only material and social but also epistemic consequences. The reproduction of class-apartheid in the global South testifies to the persistence of these consequences in contemporary times (Spivak 2004;

Dhawan 2013, 154). Including everyone and recognizing the Other, a core cosmopolitan concern, might thus be more challenging than just acknowledging their co-presence in a shared global community.

Seeing the development of a dialogue across cultural and civilizational worlds as a major challenge in today's world, Delanty and He (2008, 324) argue that cosmopolitan dialogue is distinct to intercultural dialogue as it involves the transformation of self-understanding and not merely the recognition of other perspectives. Decolonial and subaltern cosmopolitan approaches insist that such self-transformation has to depart from a political positioning that challenges the persisting coloniality of the world. Postcolonial feminists, in turn, hold that self-transformation must include the acknowledgement of one's dominating practices, as well as a strategy for creating non-dominating practices of collective contestation, to be truly emancipatory. The Inter-Movement Dialogues of the World Social Forum provide a continuously developing proposal of how cosmopolitan practices geared towards critical self-transformation might look like. They also show the pitfalls of endeavors based on an understanding of colonial difference as marginalization and not subalternity. To counteract exclusions, including new actors and facilitating dialogue between those already present, is a promising choice. To counteract subalternity, a more nuanced – and painfully slow – strategy of pedagogic intervention in the formation of subjectivities on both sides of the colonial difference is needed (see Spivak 2004). This includes the transformation of subjectivities towards cosmopolitan reflexivity and practice beyond the unilateral inclusion of the 'Other' into already fixed cosmopolitan projects. Critical projects such as the Inter-Movement Dialogues, focused on the practical and embodied aspects of cosmopolitan concerns, provide a way of politicizing difference and consequently de-essentializing alterity. They fail, however, to overcome the unilaterality of emancipatory projects in a world still characterized by colonial divides – even though they provide the space for recognizing this failure. The Other remains in the shadows (cf. Spivak 1988) – even after more than 10 years of striving for 'an-other' world.

Nonetheless, the acknowledgement of the distance yet to be travelled and of the painstaking process of self-transformation that is still unfinished is a more appropriate starting point for cosmopolitan openness than the self-assured certainty of openness of new cosmopolitanism already achieved. As Gandhi and Shah (2006, 75) testify, “[t]he crucial mind-shift from common hierarchies and concepts is painfully slow and gradual.” But even in such frameworks, cosmopolitan consciousness is the outcome of material and agential privilege.

To sum up, cosmopolitanism is neither a privilege of the transnational elite nor an already inherent characteristic of presumably subaltern movement actors. It is formed and filled with meaning through actual encounters with Otherness – as well as the acknowledgement of the limits of such encounters – resulting in a shifting of perspectives and a radical questioning of one’s openness to the Other. In order to further cosmopolitan aspirations of global conviviality, the impossibility of achieving cosmopolitan openness in a world in which the difference of the racially and gendered Other is still marked as inferiority has to be taken as the starting point for the emancipatory political struggle.

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# Fo Guang Shan Buddhism and Ethical Conversations across Borders: “Sowing Seeds of Affinity”<sup>1</sup>

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*On the basis of a study of an international Buddhist movement, this article defines “ethical conversations across borders” – acts of ethical deliberation, evaluation or argument that take place in cognisance of multiple ethical regimes – and proposes the conditions under which they can take place. Fo Guang Shan, described in the first part of the article, is a Buddhist movement that originated in Taiwan, but which now has branches around the world. It seeks to promote the cultivation of virtue among its members and among other people with which it has contact. The teachings of Master Hsing Yun, the movement’s founder, advocate two methods through which this project can be realised, “sowing seeds of affinity” and “convenience”. The second part of the article generalises observations made in relation to Fo Guang Shan and draws the conclusion that all “ethical conversations across borders” require two things, namely, the identification of similarities or “affinities”, and an account of difference that stipulates the units between which the conversation is to be carried on.*

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Cosmopolitanism and Transnationalism: Visions, Ethics, Practices

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## Introduction

### Ethics across borders

What does transnational or translocal ethics look like? Cosmopolitan open mindedness is all very well, but once the mind is open to other ways of life, what does it do with them? How does the open mind apprehend and value the values that are not its own? Can it do so only by the lights of a universal cosmopolitan ethic, or only in relation to its own 'local' values? Or does open mindedness mean not judging, not valuing values at all?

Open mindedness is, of course, only one way to pursue ethics in a context of global ethical diversity. What of the missionary, or the colonialist, or the human rights advocate – what of those convinced that they are right about some ethical questions and that others are wrong? Can such people reasonably believe that others will come to accept their priorities by force of argument? And if so, how is such an argument to be made persuasive?

Academic attempts to explain the diversity of moral thought and practice tend to gravitate towards one of two poles on a spectrum running from relativism to universalism. At one pole, differences in values are interpreted as the result of different processes of acculturation or socialization, evidence of incommensurable ways of understanding the world and human beings' place in it. On this view, encounters across ethical difference are bound to end in misunderstanding. At the other pole, apparent disagreements about values are taken to reflect the operation of a universal moral or economic rationality under different circumstances or on divergent economic and political interests. On this view, ethical discourse is so much empty rationalization intended to obscure the baser motives from self and other. In a global context, the implication of this view is that missionaries and campaigners only do what they do in order to justify the domination by their own societies of others, and, conversely, that the adoption of the values of powerful societies by members of less powerful societies is nothing more than mimicry in bad faith.

Both approaches have provided us with useful insights into human motivation and action, and, although their advocates sometimes suggest otherwise, we do not need to see them as mutually exclusive. Indeed a number of anthropologists have explored the ways in which the two can be combined by studying how individual interest can be – must be – expressed in forms that are constrained by the structure of cultural knowledge. However, there is an important dimension of ethical experience that occurs at the real

and imagined interface of ethical traditions that neither methodological relativism nor methodological universalism, nor a combination of the two can accommodate.

What is needed is a way of thinking about encounters with ethical difference in which the reaction is neither incomprehension, nor cynicism, but a genuine recognition of the ethical in the other. The need has made itself apparent to me during the course of my research on a contemporary Buddhist movement, Fo Guang Shan. My argument is that such encounters are characterised by what I call *ethical conversations across borders*. (As the term is rather unwieldy, I will simply use *Conversation* as a shorthand.)

### Fo Guang Shan

Fo Guang Shan is one of a number of Buddhist organizations that have emerged in Taiwan since the end of martial law in the 1980s. Originally founded in the 1950s and 1960s as a publishing business, and later a single temple, by its leader, Master Hsing Yun, Fo Guang Shan rapidly expanded in the 1990s and soon became a multi-million-member association with branches across the world. The movement is run by monastics, mainly female, but the key to its growth and influence are the lay members, who, as well as making regular cash donations and supporting specific fund-raising campaigns, also pledge their time as volunteers to help the organization run its administration, worship, education programmes and social work initiatives.

Fo Guang Shan is active in a wide range of areas. It runs a globally distributed daily newspaper, the *Merit Times*, a number of television channels, museums, libraries, orphanages and schools, three fully-accredited universities teaching a full range of secular subjects, and a travel agency. At the end of 2011, the organization opened what it claims is the largest Buddhist pilgrimage site in the world, the Buddha Memorial Centre, next to the original Fo Guang Shan temple in Kaohsiung.

Fo Guang Shan sees itself as a global organization, but also as the heir to a specifically Chinese tradition drawn from Buddhist and Confucian sources. It has a very clear account of the ways in which ethical values and practices from one culture can appeal to people of another, and of the limitations under which that process takes place. The aim of Fo Guang Shan is to “sow seeds of affinity” by exposing people to the best of Buddhist and Chinese culture, and to adapt Buddhist culture to make it “convenient”, so that people with different abilities, personal habits, cultural backgrounds and social conditions can find something that is easy for them to adopt and will help them to lead better lives. At

the same time, Fo Guang Shan teaches that its own ethical practices can be constantly improved and that lessons can and should be learned from other traditions.

This active, self-conscious effort to reflect on ethics, to influence others – others defined by variously constituted borders of difference – and to acquire ethical wisdom from them, in short to conduct an ethical conversation across borders, makes Fo Guang Shan a valuable case study for the development of a more general understanding of genuinely transnational ethics.

## Ethics

The term “ethics” has a wide variety of meanings in ordinary and technical usage, and for this reason it is necessary to say a little about what I mean when I use the term. First, to address the question of scope, for the purposes of this paper, when I use the term “ethics” I am using it in the broadest possible sense. That is to say, I am referring not only to that aspect of thought and action that has to do with rules, laws, duties and rights that we easily think of as ethical (and which some philosophers have distinguished from the “moral” in the light of arguments first advanced by Elizabeth Anscombe 1958), but also to questions of character, happiness and even aesthetics. Ethics as I use it here takes in anything that contributes to answering the Socratic question, “How should one live?” (Williams 1985, 1; Laidlaw 2002, 316), or any action taken or proposed because “it is presumed to be productive of some objective good” (Shweder 2012).

Second, in relation to the question of normativity, let me clarify that I am using “ethical” in a descriptive rather than a normative sense. Used descriptively, “ethical” means “to do with how we ought to live”. Used normatively, it means, “right”, or “good”.

Consider the ancient Spartan practice of exposing new-born infants to the elements in order that the weakest among them should perish. We may think this was unethical behaviour in the normative sense (we think it was wrong). But regardless of what we think of it, to the extent the Spartans adopted this practice as a means of achieving ends that they thought were good, we can agree that this was an ethical practice in the descriptive sense. To deny that it was ethical, in this specific, descriptive sense, would be to claim that it was done unthinkingly, unreflectively, without reference to a notion of the valuable or the good. Habitual or coerced action could be described as ‘unethical’ on those terms.

In what follows, then, when I describe particular Fo Guang Shan practices as ethical, that can be taken to mean that they are designed with the attainment of some good in mind.

In the first part of the article, I introduce the teachings of Fo Guang Shan leader, Master Hsing Yun, and explain some of the complexities that arise when putting these teachings into practice. In the second part of the paper, taking the Fo Guang Shan case as a starting point, I consider the question of *Conversations* from a formal or abstract point of view and draw some tentative general conclusions about the conditions under which it might be possible to speak ethically across borders. In a nutshell, my suggestion will be that any party to an ethical conversation across borders needs two things: (1) successful identification of one or more points of similarity, or *affinities*, as I call them, borrowing a term from Fo Guang Shan and (2) an *account of difference* that provides a conceptualisation of the borders across which the conversation is taking place, and of the relatively homogeneous units between which it is carried on.

## **Master Hsing Yun and Fo Guang Shan's ethical conversations**

### **Fo Guang Shan ethical teachings**

Although Fo Guang Shan is a relatively young religious movement, it has developed a distinctive body of teachings, mainly in the form of books, pamphlets, journals, speeches and videos by the founder and leader of the organization, Master Hsing Yun. These have been translated into many languages and disseminated among members and non-members through a variety of channels. Books are sold, but also often given away for free. Many of Hsing Yun's writings and speeches are available to download from the internet, and they form the basis of lectures and Dharma talks after services. There is a daily newspaper, DVDs and even television channels. There are short courses ending in examinations, but there is no attempt to enforce orthodoxy on the membership, and many members read widely about Buddhism and other spiritual traditions.

Hsing Yun sees Fo Guang Shan Buddhism as heir to Chinese Pure Land Buddhism (as well as to Chan Buddhism), but he adapts some of the central Pure Land teachings. On Master Hsing Yun's telling of it, the Pure Land tradition teaches that this world is impure, and full of suffering. Under these conditions, humans are distracted by suffering to such an extent that we have no real hope of learning from Buddhist teachings and reaching enlightenment through our own efforts. However, with the help of buddhas and bodhisattvas, humans can aspire to be reborn in one of a number of Pure Lands, where the Dharma is preached perpetually, and where, in the absence of pain and imperfection, everyone can reach enlightenment instantaneously.

Master Hsing Yun, in explicit contrast with traditional interpretations of Pure Land teaching, argues that the world of living human beings is not irredeemably impure, only relatively impure. In fact, medical and technological progress have reduced the suffering of many human beings. There have also been developments in moral wisdom such as the recognition of human equality (including equality of the sexes) and the increasing international acceptance of the principles of human rights. As a result, Hsing Yun teaches, our world is becoming a better approximation of a Pure Land. As the world has improved through human effort, so the opportunity and capacity of its inhabitants to cultivate wisdom and virtue has increased; wiser and more virtuous individuals will contribute to purer societies and a better world, leading to a virtuous cycle. In order to promote this cycle, Hsing Yun calls on Buddhists – and everyone else – to cultivate virtue in themselves and promote it in others. So although many of the premises of Hsing Yun’s “Humanistic Buddhism”,<sup>2</sup> as he calls it, are the same as those of traditional Pure Land teachings, the orientation towards the world we live in is quite different: it is broadly optimistic (though recent years have seen Hsing Yun and his monastics voice more concern over growing global problems, especially environmental ones) and activist, rather than pessimistic and quietist.

### **Universalism, relativism and pluralism**

Master Hsing Yun teaches that the principles of compassion and wisdom according to which the world is to be improved are not mysterious; the truths of Buddhism, such as impermanence, emptiness and the importance of compassion, are simple and transparent, accessible to everyone, and have probably been acknowledged in all traditions to some degree. What, for him, makes the Buddha and other sages great and worthy of devotion is not that they attained esoteric knowledge that eludes other beings, but rather that they achieved a practical mastery that enabled them fully to inhabit virtues that most people do know, but can implement only imperfectly.

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2 The idea of Humanistic Buddhism or Buddhism for the human world is found in slightly different forms among various contemporary Buddhist groups in Taiwan. The basic idea can be traced to Master Tai Xu, a modernist Buddhist in the early twentieth century who thought that a reformed Chinese Buddhism could play a role in returning the country to its former greatness, but that, in order for China to benefit from its heritage of Buddhist wisdom, the focus would need to be shifted away from death and the dead and towards life and living human beings (see Pittman 2001). Fo Guang Shan Humanistic Buddhism can also be seen as a form of ‘Engaged Buddhism’ (Queen and King 1996; Queen et al. 2003)

This optimism about the accessibility of fundamental moral truths means that Fo Guang Shan is confident in its ability to engage with and judge other traditions, regardless of cultural difference, by applying common human reason to universal truth. In this respect, Fo Guang Shan's ethics is universalist, and Hsing Yun frequently makes this claim explicitly. "Buddhism has always embodied universalism, the concept that geographic limitations do not exist," one of his essays explains, "Buddhism belongs to the world and to all people" (Hsing Yun 2010, 33). "Human reason itself," he writes in another, "is a reflection of deep reality. There is but one truth and it applies equally to all of us. No one can stand above this truth, and no one can escape the consequences of turning away from it" (Hsing Yun 2000).

One way in which he explains the universality of Buddhist truth is by drawing on the Chan Buddhist teaching of universal Buddha nature. So for instance, in his book, *The Buddha's Light Philosophy*, he writes,

After the Buddha attained enlightenment under the bodhi tree, he taught that all sentient beings possess Buddha nature, the potential to become a Buddha. . . . From this concept arises the idea that all sentient beings are equal, and all dharma realms are one. These insights are the foundation needed for human beings to reach eternal peace, and they provide guidance that can benefit the entire world. (Hsing Yun 2010, 4)

The existence of this truth, immanent in human reason, and realised in its perfection by Sakyamuni Buddha establishes the ethical commensurability of different times and places:

There is one truth for all of us, and this truth is the truth taught by Shakyamuni Buddha. The Dharma is true on every continent and in every realm of existence. (Hsing Yun 2000)

Thus Hsing Yun explicitly rejects cultural relativism, arguing that the Dharma,

applies to all because it is an objective truth that cannot be changed by our subjective interpretations of it. (2000)

The realisation of the goal of Humanistic Buddhism, the building of a Pure Land on earth, thus require the propagation of the truths of Buddhism around the world

so that the lay wing of the organization, the Buddha's Light International Association (BLIA) becomes,

a true international community, which transcends nationality, ethnicity, and tradition.  
(Hsing Yun 2010, 29)

When the Association was established, the objective of spreading Buddhism around the world was named by Hsing Yun as one of its missions, and he often reminds members of their obligation, saying for example:

BLIA members should stand locally and think globally. They should plant *bodhi* seeds on every continent, allowing the Dharma to be introduced worldwide. (Hsing Yun 2010, 33)

However, while Hsing Yun's ethics is strongly universalist, its universalism is complicated by the belief that the eternal values that Buddhism teaches never exist in the abstract. They must always be realised in some particular form, conditioned by specific contingencies of culture, history, and by technological and economic development. "Buddhism is of this world," says Hsing Yun, quoting a Chan sutra, "it cannot exist apart from this world." So the task Fo Guang Shan Buddhists set themselves is to find ever more specific ways of skilfully embodying the virtues that Buddhism teaches, with each way being particularly appropriate to a specific form of life, or attractive to a specific kind of person. Traditional Chinese culture succeeds in orchestrating frequent opportunities for people to cultivate virtue, but it provides only one way of doing that, appropriate for people who have grown into certain habits and who live in certain historical societies, with all of their contingent specificities.

In a speech addressed to BLIA members, Master Hsing Yun recalled a visit to an American university. His academic host, the Master reported, said to him,

You are welcome to propagate the Dharma in the USA. But it seems that you have repeatedly tried to impose your Chinese culture on the Americans; as if you are trying to subjugate the American culture. (Hsing Yun 2004)

Taken aback, the monk reflected. "It became apparent to me," he said,

that I have been insensitive to their local cultures. I was reminded that the purpose of my visit is to contribute and serve, just as Buddhist devotees make offerings of flowers to the

Bodhisattvas. Therefore we must respect the cultures of other countries and societies; and to accept the unique characteristics of these cultures. We learn from the sutras that the Eastern Pure land has its own characteristics which are different from the special features of the Western Pure land. Similarly, there are differences between practicing in secluded monasteries and practicing Humanistic Buddhism in society. (Hsing Yun 2004)

In general, Hsing Yun's position could be described as a variety of moral pluralism. He urges respect for cultural difference, but rejects outright relativism. He defends an objective view of morality, yet rejects the view that a concrete morality derived from one historical context could be universally valid (see Shweder 2012).

### **Sowing seeds of affinity and convenience**

One might wonder how the aims of spreading the Dharma and increasing virtue can be squared with the principle of respecting other cultures. There are two ways in which Master Hsing Yun speaks of doing both. The first is what he calls "sowing seeds of affinity": presenting audiences with a wealth of diverse manifestations of virtue, in the hope that some of them will appeal, drawing the target into a broader engagement in which both sides can learn about skilful living in the human world. Fo Guang Shan Buddhists call this strategy "sowing seeds of affinity".

The second way is what Hsing Yun calls "convenience". Buddhism needs to be adapted, or made "convenient", as Fo Guang Shan members say, so that it can be accepted by people for whom its traditions are alien. But the aim of convenience is not just to win people over to Buddhism. It is also to fashion Buddhist practices in a way that will not prove disruptive in the new setting. Because, according to Fo Guang Shan teachings, people's relationships with friends and family and with society at large are part of the conditions upon which their capacity for virtue depends, the aim must be to find a way of manifesting Buddhist truth that enhances rather than damages those relationships.

The flexibility of the principle of convenience might be mistaken for a form of encompassment, in which other traditions are approved in so far as they conform to the greater or higher truth of Fo Guang Shan Buddhism. This position is avoided because of an implicit distinction between Buddhism as Universal Truth, and Fo Guang Shan Chinese Buddhism as a historical tradition. Truth is unitary, but its manifestations are

numerous, and though Chinese tradition may have much to teach the world, it is not necessarily the most perfect in every respect, and where opportunities arise, it must be adapted to learn from other traditional or innovative ideas and practices. In fact, no tradition, including Fo Guang Shan's own, is thought to have a monopoly of virtue or wisdom, partly because, as societies interact, the conditions in which everyone has to act are changed, and opportunities and requirements for virtuous life change with them. Ethical diversity is only to be expected given the diversity of environmental, technological and social conditions to which virtue must respond.

Thus Fo Guang Shan as an organization aims to learn from other traditions in order to adapt to changing circumstances, just as it aims to promote Chinese Buddhism. Master Hsing Yun has gone to great lengths to incorporate into his teachings aspects of some quite disparate ethical traditions. One of the more surprising sources of ethical inspiration on which Hsing Yun has drawn is managerial capitalism; although the optimism that Fo Guang Shan exhibited in relation to capitalism in the 1980s and 1990s has dimmed somewhat, as concerns about consumerism and greed have entered into its vocabulary, Master Hsing Yun sees in the modern economy certain principles that are consonant with the fundamental truths of Buddhism.

For example, the opportunities it provides for advancement through hard work encourage the development of self-discipline and focus, by stimulating growth, it provides the wherewithal necessary to relieve suffering and cultivate wisdom, and most importantly, its emphasis on efficiency promotes the acquisition of "skilful means" by which one's goals can be achieved effectively. Identifying these virtues in contemporary business culture, Hsing Yun has sought to incorporate some of its practices into Fo Guang Shan organization. He has, for instance, encouraged the development of business enterprises under the auspices of BLIA in order to generate funds with which to fund Fo Guang Shan's activities. Management training culture has also been adopted by the movement; monastics are required to take regular refresher courses in management and leadership, and some of Fo Guang Shan's educational institutions teach accredited MBA courses.

In a similar way, international human rights discourse has been drawn on to modify, or at least to justify the modification of, traditional Chinese Buddhist practices. Human rights culture, Hsing Yun argues, is based on the principle of equality of all human beings, which is essential to the Chan Buddhist doctrine of Buddha-nature. However traditional Buddhism promoted a great deal of inequality, particularly between men and women; taking a lesson from other traditions, then, Fo Guang Shan Buddhism has encouraged women to become monastics and includes women among its leaders.

One of the biggest challenges to Buddhist traditions, according to Master Hsing Yun, is the emergence of modern technology, since many established Buddhist ways of doing things were the products of technological limitations that no longer apply. Thus, as the opportunities have arisen, Fo Guang Shan has embraced broadcast media and the internet as channels to communicate its message. The temples have been furnished with the latest mod-cons, including air conditioning in the meditation halls. Traditional limitations should not be idealised as a form of asceticism if they get in the way of achieving the goals of self cultivation, Hsing Yun writes,

With respect to modern technology and culture, all is subject to change and needs to be constantly upgraded. We should apply Buddhism in a modern way, by adapting to current changes and finding new solutions. This method allows Buddhism to remain the essence and knowledge to be used as a tool. (Hsing Yun 2010, 22)

The two principles of convenience, the adaptation of ethical models in order to make them suitable for an individual, community or culture, and sowing seeds of affinity, exhibiting virtue in order to elicit admiration and draw partners into an on-going dialogue, are frequently alluded to by Fo Guang Shan monastics and devotees. While leaders in the organisation see their role as adapting the tradition to the prevailing circumstances, they do not simply deliver the adaptations to their followers without comment; every localisation or reform is explained and commented on in an effort to remind devotees to learn to adapt virtuous practices to fit their own lives in whatever way they can.

### **Fo Guang Shan ethical conversations across borders in practice**

The aim of Fo Guang Shan is not necessarily to bring those who have not accepted Buddhism into the religion in the manner of a conversion. The goal is, first, to help people to live a good life and, second, to improve the state of the world. As I noted above, according to the Fo Guang Shan view of things, these two goals are mutually reinforcing and mutually limiting. Those who, for example, take up voluntary social service, are thought both to improve their own lives, and to contribute to making the world a better place, which will, in turn, help to provide the conditions that other people need to improve themselves.

There are many factors that can contribute to a good life. The activities that Fo Guang Shan undertakes are designed to address one or more of those factors, and the intention to do this is frequently explicitly discussed. Much of the activity is conceived as being educational, either directly, as is the case with lectures and publications, or indirectly, as in the case of exhibitions and concerts that are designed to develop in the audience an appreciation of beauty. Taken together, these educational activities are described as “life education”. One of the participants in the London study, a young professional, who volunteers and teaches regularly at the temple, explained why life education is necessary:

Buddhism teaches us about the happiness of life, which, in turn, helps us to deal with the difficulties and challenges in our daily life. Having a happy life is important for everyone. Unfortunately, the reality is the school does not teach us the ways to achieve true happiness.

The implementation of these ideas is complex. For a start, Fo Guang Shan *Conversations* take place over a wide variety of borders of ethical difference, some of which are related to national or cultural borders, some of which are not. The methods of sowing affinities and convenience might be used by a nun to understand the relation of Buddhist traditions to the different religious traditions of co-celebrants in an inter-faith service, such as the one the nuns, or “venerables” as devotees call them, based at the London temple take part in every year under the auspices of the Borough of Westminster. It equally provides a rationale for cooperation between different Buddhist traditions, such as the ecumenical Buddhist conferences that Fo Guang Shan organizes so energetically every year, or between Mandarin and Cantonese speakers within local Fo Guang Shan communities. And it can be applied by lay devotees to understand their cooperation with other members, or to guide their creative attempts to integrate Fo Guang Shan teachings and practices into their own lives.

A second source of complexity is that Fo Guang Shan teachings emphasise the importance of pursuing multiple channels of communication with various audiences in order to sow seeds of affinity that may take root in unexpected ways. Thus, Master Hsing Yun writes:

There are many ways that lead sentient beings to the path. People are not only guided by Dharma services, but may also be guided through literature, art, books, paintings, vegetarian food, or tea. All these can guide people to Buddhism. The BLIA has designed various activities to appeal to different people. Some examples are: Dharma discussion

groups, Dharma protectors' seminars, meditation classes, and Sunday classes for adults and children. . . . Providing a multitude of activities is akin to the methods used by Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, who manifests in a myriad of forms to teach the Dharma to each sentient being in the best way. . . . By using loving kindness and compassion as the foundation and skilful means as the method, we emulate the spirit of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva who manifests in different forms, travels to different lands, liberates sentient beings, and uses limitless loving kindness and compassion with boundless skilful means to teach the Dharma. (Hsing Yun 2010, 21f)

A good example of Fo Guang Shan's approach to *Conversations* is the annual International Youth Seminar on Life Education, held at the original Fo Guang Shan temple complex in southern Taiwan. This is just one of the more elaborate of a large number of similar events that Fo Guang Shan temples and branches of the BLIA organize around the world. I attended the International Youth Seminar in the summer of 2010, when around a thousand participants between the ages of 18 and 35 from some forty countries took part. The largest delegations were from Taiwan, mainland China, the US, Australia and the Philippines. Local temples around the world (or Fo Guang Shan libraries and galleries in the case of the Chinese mainland, where temples cannot be established except by organizations that accept the control of the State Administration of Religious Affairs) had advertised for participants and had chosen in most cases a mixture of devotees, often members of the Young Adult Division (YAD) of the BLIA, and sympathetic non-Buddhists. Some of the non-Buddhists I spoke to were considering adopting the religion, but many others were committed members of other traditions. For instance, the large Philippine contingent included an active YAD chapter, but also a devoutly Catholic university lecturer.

The seminar took place over ten days. Most of that time was spent at the Fo Guang Shan headquarters, the main temple, in Kaoshiung Province in the south of Taiwan. The programme was intensive. Days were spent in a mixture of lectures, discussion groups and practical activities. Towards the end of the seminar the participants, together with their monastic guides, were taken on the road for a two-day coach tour that took in Taiwan's natural beauty spots and a series of Fo Guang Shan temples, culminating in a closing ceremony in a large BLIA administration centre and temple complex in the north. As well as receiving certificates from Master Hsing Yun, participants were greeted by Ma Ying-Jeou, President of the Republic of China, a firm ally of Hsing Yun. Throughout the event, all costs regarding accommodation and food were borne by Fo Guang Shan, and there was even a cash grant towards the cost of travel.

The participants were divided into groups of about a dozen people, from a mixture of countries, and each of these groups was allocated one or two monastics as guides for the duration of the seminar. The venerable who led my group, like many of the others at Fo Guang Shan headquarters, held a higher degree and had had a very successful career before ‘leaving home’ to become a monastic. Every day began with early morning chanting and prostrations in one of the temples – this was optional, as my guide explained to me, because it is very difficult for young people to get up early in the morning. At eight o’clock each morning, the participants were gathered for a gentle, coordinated exercise routine, accompanied each day by a short talk on the importance of being aware of one’s body and exercising for health and energy. All food was vegetarian, and one meal a day was eaten with elaborate monastic etiquette, in which the participants were trained.

Lectures took place in a large auditorium. Several of these were given by Master Hsing Yun himself. These dealt with aspects of Buddhist theory, such as emptiness, with the meaning of Humanistic Buddhism, and with the importance of cultivation and life education itself. Most of the other lectures were given by Fo Guang Shan venerables and dealt with the Buddhist perspective on life and death (“death is the final examination, we must prepare”), ecology, art, and so on. There was a talk by the mountaineer Jiang Xiu Zhen, the first woman to climb the world’s seven highest peaks, who spoke about her career, and there were dramatic presentations and films, one of which presented the life of an ancient Chinese physician who had sacrificed his life for the sake of his students. Participants were also given practical activities, such as a meditation session and Chinese calligraphy, and tours of the temple complex, including the enormous Buddha Memorial Centre, which was then under construction.

At least twice a day, the monastic guides would assemble their small groups of participants to ask them to reflect on and discuss the lectures and other activities they had experienced. In those discussions, as in every other activity, the theme of life education was reiterated. Although it was clear that we were being introduced to what our hosts saw as the best of Fo Guang Shan Buddhist teachings, the emphasis was on learning about how to live well, not on accepting Buddhism as a package. In fact, when a number of participants, including many of the mainland Chinese participants, asked to take refuge in the Buddha during the camp (effectively to accept conversion to Buddhism in a formal ceremony), in the presence of Master Hsing Yun, the monastics whom they approached were at first discouraging and finally gently refused, arguing that it was more important that they should pay attention to the different lessons they were learning, reflect on them when they returned home and put them into practice as best they could.

A similar multi-channelled approach is adopted by the three nuns who lead the London Fo Guang Shan temple. A service of worship is held at the temple every week on Sunday afternoon, incorporating chanting and prostrations, followed by a short talk by the abbess. Other religious services are held for specific festivals, such as Chinese New Year, or the Buddha's Birthday. Like most Fo Guang Shan institutions, the London temple offers a number of courses, including meditation, introduction to Buddhism (students study the writings of Master Hsing Yun), Chinese dancing, and Mandarin Chinese, and there is a "Bodhi Garden" (something like a Christian Sunday School) for small children. There are occasional lectures by visiting Buddhist leaders. There are cultural events, such as tea ceremonies and art exhibitions. There are many opportunities for volunteering, either helping in the temple itself by cooking, cleaning or manning the small shop and reception, or by visiting old age homes and prisons. The venerables also make frequent trips to local schools and participate in inter-faith services.

The nuns recognize that certain aspects of the Buddhist and Chinese culture that Fo Guang Shan offers will appeal to particular sections of the population they serve. Some embrace the devotional aspects, for example, but balk at the courses in Buddhist theory and history, others prefer the reading and study and rarely attend the services of worship. Many of the people who are drawn to the temple by the meditation classes are rather surprised to learn that worship plays such an important role in the life of some Buddhists. "The nuns here are excellent meditation teachers," a meditator in his thirties told me, "but the thing is, they have taken Buddhism and they have turned it into a religion." The nuns I have spoken to who serve communities outside of Taiwan are acutely aware of cultural differences between different groups of temple users, for instance, between earlier generations of Hakka- or Cantonese-speaking migrants, and more recently arrived Mandarin speakers, or between the Chinese community and other ethnic groups. Rather than attempting to persuade their followers to embrace all of these activities, the venerables and lay teachers focus on providing them with practices that do appeal while taking every opportunity to prompt reflection on the opportunities to apply the lessons of Buddhism to cultivate happiness and virtue in whatever other ways might be appropriate to their own lives.

## Issues arising in Conversations

### Standards and affinities

Contemplating the many forms that Buddhism has taken in its spread across Asia, and the prospect of further adaptation as it spreads to other parts of the globe, the founder and leader of Fo Guang Shan, Master Hsing Yun writes,

So long as the principles of the Dharma are not altered, we should emphasize and promote the retention of the local cultures and needs. (Hsing Yun 2004)

This statement is easy to understand, but it is clear that to put it into practice would require an elaboration of the distinction between indispensable moral content and merely contingent cultural convention. That is to say, one would need to consider specific Buddhist practices, and to extract from them the principles that justify them, disentangling those principles from arbitrary custom that might be abandoned altogether and from pragmatic arrangements that are designed to achieve goals that might be achieved in some other, equally or more effective way. The same process would be necessary for any enterprise that sought to apply the principles of some local set of practices more widely. It may be no easy matter, for although psychologists have long held that the distinction between moral rule and social convention is innate and universal, knowing that there is a difference is not the same as knowing where the line can be drawn that divides the two.

The problem is easier where the rule is one that we are aware of, that is manifested in legislation, say, or is self-consciously celebrated as a local custom. However, many of those objectified rules depend on categories of thought or social arrangements or habits that are usually taken for granted and are rarely reflected upon. To a significant extent, our moral lives are not based on abstract principles, but on what philosopher J. E. Tiles, in his book on cross-cultural ethics, developing a concept with its roots in the thought of Hegel, calls “concrete moralities” (2000, 27). Concrete moralities are something like what anthropologists call ‘total institutions’ in which a whole way of life, incorporating custom, social arrangements and even environmental conditions is implicated in moral thought and practice. The problem posed for *Conversations* by these concrete moralities is that they naturalise the categories on which ethical deliberation depends. “Most of the time,” Tiles writes,

people live within their concrete moralities as comfortably (or otherwise) as they live in their houses or tents, and they do not feel called upon to justify their practices and attitudes or to examine what if any basis these might have. (Tiles 2000, 74)

Especially when we are in familiar settings — in our own tents, so to speak — the differences between tradition, habit and pragmatic efficiency on the one hand, and ethical considerations about value and duty on the other are frequently omitted from consideration: there are a limited number of given, concrete ways of living life, and most of our choices will be made from among them. Even innovations justified on moral grounds will silently incorporate much that is conventional. But when people speak ethically across borders, they must face the problem of finding ways to render the ethics of different regions commensurate. They must decide on a place to draw the line that divides a universal or shared essence from contingent cultural convention, to decide whether it is the form of the specific practices that are valued, or the principle that underlies them, or the goal to which they contribute.

Tiles suggests that a common approach to the resolution of this kind of conflict of concrete moralities is to seek a common standard of measurement that can be applied to competing ethical considerations. I want to suggest that ethical conversations across borders are always based on finding this kind of common standard, or point of communication, which I will call, after the fashion of Fo Guang Shan Buddhists, affinities. Tiles discusses three possible methods for arriving at a common standard when facing disagreement. They are:

(1) *Using reason to move from particular cases to universal abstract principles.* Tiles takes the Socratic dialectician as the pattern for this approach. As a contemporary example we might take movements such as Karen Armstrong's Charter for Compassion, which aims to unite disparate religious traditions around the Golden Rule, which supporters claim is universal ("The principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves").

(2) *Identifying shared exemplary models, against which different ethical considerations are to be measured.* Tiles identifies this approach with Confucius.

(3) *Using an empirical approach to determine functions or ends and judging competing ethical considerations according to their contribution to achieving those ends.* Tiles

associates this approach with Aristotelian virtue ethics: the thing is to understand the nature of man, and whether particular practices contribute to the perfection of that nature or prevent it. More recent examples would include twentieth-century state socialisms that, starting from a theory about the nature of economic relations and the ethically positive trend of world history, judged policies according to whether they advanced or retarded the liberation of the Proletariat.

To Tiles' three kinds of standard, I suggest we add several more – though this is unlikely to exhaust the possibilities:

(4) *Agreeing on a common meta-ethics*. For example, Eugenio Menegon, a scholar of the Jesuit's missions to China, has argued that the Jesuits and the Confucian literati with whom they interacted in China were able to admire in each other an organic approach to knowledge, in which the aspiration of scholarship was to reveal the connection between physical and metaphysical orders of knowledge, including moral knowledge (Menegon n.d.; see also Mungello 2009,137 f).

(5) *Agreeing on a common enemy*. This approach, like agreeing on shared exemplars, allows ethical conversations to be carried on in the absence of agreement on or even any specification of underlying principles. Mungello gives an example of this in the Jesuit case: both Jesuits and Confucian literati reviled Buddhist monks, each side for its own reasons (2009, 14). For a contemporary example, consider the agreement that can be reached between otherwise ethically divergent states through the condemnation of terrorism and terrorists.

(6) *Agreeing on the importance of practices*. We can agree on the value of maintaining certain embedded practices, such as forms of etiquette, or rituals, even if we have interpretations of them that are quite contradictory.

### Accounts of difference

In order to engage in a *Conversation* one needs to have in mind two or more ethical units. Neither the units, nor the differences or borders that separate and define them, are givens. The borders need not be territorial at all, still less national or regional geopolitical ones. Border thinking is not limited to thought about nation states: other ways of imagining difference such as galactic polities, historical periods, world religions (Masuzawa 2005, Cook et al. 2009), literary civilizations (Pollock 1998), ethnicities, clans and castes all produce interfaces across which differences can be observed. Borders can be complicated and the units they separate may not be divided by the same kinds of difference.

For an empire that sees itself as universal, like the historical Chinese empire, the key border may be between those inside the empire, and those outside it (traditional Chinese thought made room for a third category between Chinese subjects and ‘raw’ barbarians, the ‘cooked’ barbarians, who were on their way to becoming Chinese; see Fiskesjö 1999). For the European jurists who developed international law in the nineteenth century, one set of borders divided ‘civilized nations’ from each other, another divided those countries from ‘barbarous’ and ‘semi-barbarous’ states; legal arguments were a proper way to settle disputes between the powerful European and Anglophone states, but force, not persuasion, was appropriate in dealing with the less developed countries (Orakhelashvili 2006).

For the border to be meaningful, it will need to separate units of relative internal homogeneity, but it is not important whether the border or the homogeneity on either side of it is real. The point is that when people engage in ethical deliberation in the form of a *Conversation*, the form their deliberation takes is dependent on their accounts of difference.

In the case of Fo Guang Shan *Conversations*, it is clear that no one set of borders takes priority. Fo Guang Shan addresses a number of different groups of outsiders across borders it conceives: non-Buddhists in Taiwan, mainlanders across the Strait, westerners in general across the border of East/West cultural difference, followers of other forms of Buddhism, and of other, non-Buddhist religious traditions. Particularly important is the border between traditional Chinese and modern culture, as understood by Master Hsing Yun, because it is the *Conversation* carried out across that divide that explains and justifies most of the innovations that distinguish Fo Guang Shan practice from its Chinese Buddhist antecedents.

However, though the borders involved in Fo Guang Shan *Conversations* are diverse, they are united by a common and specific account of difference: the view that ethical differences are due to differences in culture, and that cultures are in part the result of more or less successful attempts to adapt virtue to prevailing circumstances.

### ***Conversation partners***

*Conversations*, as I have described them, make possible at least two distinct roles for interlocutors. The first is the role of interlocutor as a bearer of values. The second role is the role of interlocutor as an addressee. In the first sense, when Master Hsing Yun speaks to his followers of capitalism and management culture as being a source of moral values with which Buddhist values can be compared, both units are serving as bearers of values – Buddhist values and business values are being simultaneously distinguished and juxtaposed in Master Hsing Yun’s ethical reasoning. However, the lessons that Hsing Yun draws from the *Conversation* are intended for Fo Guang Shan; Fo Guang Shan members, as Buddhists, rather than as business people, are the addressees of the deliberation.

One can think of many *Conversations* that take this form: deliberations carried on by parties who, though they may disagree with one another, see themselves as being on the same side of a border, separated by ethical difference from a party who is not present. This is the case in cultural renaissances, in which thinkers attempt to draw moral lessons for their contemporaries from ancient authors who lie beyond the border of temporal disjunction (Goody 2009). The widely read anthropologist Margaret Mead famously drew ethical lessons from the Samoan islanders whom she had studied. In so far as her reasoning depended on the acknowledgement of ethical difference between Samoans and Americans, her work constitutes a *Conversation* in my sense, even though her intended audience, her compatriots, were situated on the same side of the border defined by that difference (Mead 1928).

In the case of Fo Guang Shan, the purpose of the conversation is partly to draw people together: not all *Conversations* will have such an amicable goal. The aim of a *Conversation* may be to reach an amicable understanding as a basis for cooperation, or to find things to admire in an unfamiliar way of life, but it may also be to persuade, to condemn or to shame. In order to disagree effectively with an enemy, it may be necessary to find a shared value about which to wrangle.

There are well attested examples of this in the history of Christian missionary activity: in many cases the subjects of the missionaries' attentions accepted prescriptions about what a proper religion would look like but turned the values they learnt against Christianity and claimed that their own traditions were superior religions, *on Christian terms*; they were, as Ludek Broz puts it, in the context of an article about religion in the Altai Republic, converted to religion – as a moral category – but not to Christianity (2009; see Masuzawa 2005 for an argument that similar processes were at work in the emergence of the category of 'world religion' in the nineteenth century). Perhaps the most well known case of this kind is the refiguring of Sri Lankan Buddhism as a form of rationalist philosophy described by Gombrich and Obeyesekere in *Buddhism Transformed* (1988). They relate the way in which reformers such as Anagarika Dharmapala (1864–1933), having been trained in English missionary schools to look down on Buddhism as an idolatrous and therefore superstitious faith, rejected many of the traditions of Buddhism as perversions of the Buddha's teachings on just those grounds, but reasserted an atheistic and philosophical core that they claimed was more rational and modern than the Christianity of the colonizers.

## Conclusions

The aim of this article has been to explore a particular kind of ethical deliberation, which I have called *ethical conversations across borders*, or simply *Conversations*. I have argued that *Conversations* succeed in overcoming the conflict between universalism and relativism by elaborating *accounts of difference* that distinguish two or more ethical units, while simultaneously identifying one or more similarities or *affinities* between the parties.

I introduced Fo Guang Shan, an organization that places a particularly heavy emphasis on the importance of *Conversations*, and explained how it mobilizes concepts of affinity and difference in its teachings and in its practice. Fo Guang Shan *Conversations* are based on an account of difference that sees the human world divided into cultures at various scales, from the global, through the national, to the local or even the individual. Each culture is seen as a more or less successful attempt to adapt culture to local conditions.

The affinities deployed in Fo Guang Shan *Conversations* in order to bridge the border of cultural difference vary depending on context. In teachings about the importance of engaging with ethical difference, Master Hsing Yun stresses affinities at a high level of

abstraction: values such as equality, freedom from suffering and wisdom. Fo Guang Shan monastics and lay devotees tend to put the mission of speaking ethically across borders into practice by relying on more concrete goods such as musical and artistic skill, taste and comfort. Fo Guang Shan *Conversations* are sometimes aimed at adapting practices from one ethical culture for use in another, on the principle of “convenience”. Sometimes the objective is to “sow seeds of affinity” by exhibiting a concrete manifestation of universal values in order to draw others into a long-term dialogue in which mutual learning and adaptation can take place.

The phenomena that I discuss in this article in relation to a specific religious movement must be ubiquitous, among other religious groups, but also in many other non-religious contexts. Existing social scientific models of transcultural ethics attempt to understand the nature of cultures, or of the universal characteristics of ethical thought that transcend cultural difference. What the Fo Guang Shan case shows is that the actors’ own models of difference and similarity define the shape that ethical conversations across borders will take. Understanding this is more important than ever at a time when, in Europe at least, well established paradigms for understanding the interaction and coexistence of cultures have been thrown into question.

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# Growing up Cosmopolitan? Children of Western Lifestyle Migrants in Goa, India<sup>1</sup>

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*An increasing number of Western families lead a lifestyle whereby they spend half of the year in Goa, India, and the rest in the parents' countries of origin. Such people can be defined as lifestyle migrants. In this article, I discuss the phenomenon in terms of cosmopolitanism. I ask whether lifestyle migrant children in Goa (3 to 12-year-olds) are growing up in a cosmopolitan way. I show that the parents say that for their children their lifestyle is a great advantage: their transnationally mobile life makes the children sociable and cosmopolitan. The views and practices of children and young adults who have grown up in Goa, however, show that although they appear cosmopolitan in some respects, in other respects they do not, and deeming them cosmopolitan depends on how we define the term. The lifestyle migrant children and young people do not necessarily reach out across cultural differences but their horizons are not narrowly national either. I argue that lifestyle migrant children in Goa are multilingual, sociable and flexible in adapting to life in different places but that their engagement with the Indian other is limited. Therefore, they are cosmopolitan, but it is cosmopolitanism on limited, Western terms.*

The state of Goa on the western coast of India is a popular travel destination. Hippies arrived there in the late sixties, and ever since Westerners<sup>2</sup> in search of an alternative

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2 Westerners in Goa come from a number of European countries, and from Israel, Russia, North America and Australia, but in the Goan context the West seems to become one, and national differences between the various Western nationalities often appear rather insignificant. The terms “West” and “Westerners” are also emic terms, that is, the lifestyle migrants, and local Indians, commonly use them. Crucially, a “Westerner” is a non-Indian – a citizen of an affluent industrialised country.

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lifestyle have been gathering on its beaches every winter. Many of them are not just visiting tourists, but spend several months there every year. For them, living in Goa is a lifestyle, not merely a temporary break from everyday routines in their countries of origin. They can be conceptualised as lifestyle migrants. Lifestyle migration refers to the phenomenon whereby citizens of affluent Western nations move abroad in order to find a more meaningful and relaxed life, usually in places with lower living costs and sunny climates (see e.g. Benson and O'Reilly 2009a, b). However, although lifestyle migrants go in search of a relaxed life, many of them need to work to support their lifestyle, and many Westerners make their living in Goa: some are fashion designers, while others run restaurants or guesthouses, sell jewellery or work as yoga teachers, massage therapists or spiritual healers, etc.

Goa attracts Westerners because of its beaches, but also because of the trance music scene. There is a rapidly increasing number of Western families with children, and like most other Westerners there, they tend to lead a lifestyle whereby they live half of the year in Goa and the other half in their countries of origin. The lifestyle migrants do not live in Goa permanently, for various reasons. Firstly, they need to leave India regularly to renew their visas, secondly, many of them want to escape the heavy monsoon rains, and, thirdly, those who are dependent on tourists for their income do not have customers in Goa during the monsoon months.

Lifestyle migration to Goa has a long history. Goa was a Portuguese colony for 450 years, until 1961, and the presence of Westerners has its roots in this colonial past (see Korpela 2010). The phenomenon also has its roots in the hippie movement, which in turn grew out of earlier countercultural movements. As early as the 17th century, there were alternative communities in the countryside in the USA (Zablocki 1980, 3) and Western bohemians moved abroad in the 19th century. In the 1960s and 1970s, hundreds of hippies travelled to India (see e.g., Alderson 1971; Wiles 1972; Odzer 1995; Tomory 1996), with Goa being one of the most popular destinations. Some of these early hippies had children, but the number of Western children in Goa has multiplied in recent years.

Among lifestyle migrant families in Goa, the parents are very often of different national origins, and consequently their children spend time in three countries every year, sometimes visiting other countries as well. The children have been leading this lifestyle from a very early age. In this article, I discuss the phenomenon in terms of cosmopolitanism. I start with a short overview of how scholars have defined cosmopolitanism. I then present the parents' views of the advantages for their children of growing up in Goa and leading a lifestyle whereby they move between two or three

countries every year, and after that I discuss the views of the children themselves. I also elaborate on the significance of local cultures in these lifestyle migrants' lives in Goa. Finally, I discuss the views of young Western adults who have grown up in Goa and argue that they indeed appear to hold a cosmopolitan discourse. It seems to be cosmopolitanism on rather limited terms, but cosmopolitanism nonetheless.

### **Cosmopolitanism: an ideal or an everyday practice?**

Cosmopolitanism is a fashionable word today: it frequently appears in everyday conversation as well as in research literature. Researchers have been discussing the term for a long time, and in recent years the debate has gained new momentum. The work of the anthropologist Ulf Hannerz has been highly influential in these discussions. Hannerz defines cosmopolitanism as “an orientation, a willingness to engage with the other”. It is an “intellectual and aesthetic openness toward divergent cultural experiences”. A cosmopolitan person appreciates cultural diversity and searches for contrast rather than uniformity. (Hannerz 1996, 103)

Hannerz's definition of cosmopolitanism is, however, insufficient: it is rather vague and diffuse to define cosmopolitanism as an attitude of “openness” towards other cultures (Skrbis et al. in Jansen 2009, 75). In order to avoid such vagueness, the sociologists Magdalena Nowicka and Maria Rovisco have distinguished two analytical levels of cosmopolitanism. Firstly, cosmopolitanism can be understood as a moral ideal, as a question of tolerance towards difference and eventually as a belief in the possibility of a more just world order. Secondly, cosmopolitanism can be understood as a practice, as a question of what people do and say. (Nowicka et al. 2009, 2) The same distinction has been made by others: for example, Pnina Werbner and Chris Hann distinguish between cosmopolitan consciousness or conviction and cosmopolitan practice (Werbner 2008, 5; Hann 2008, 60). Defining cosmopolitanism as consciousness or conviction comes close to Hannerz's definition in that it is a rather abstract understanding of cosmopolitanism. Understanding cosmopolitanism as a practice, however, refers to existing empirical realities.

Pnina Werbner has been a key scholar in recent anthropological discussions on cosmopolitanism, and I find her definition of the term useful. According to Werbner, cosmopolitanism means “empathy, toleration and respect for other cultures and values”. It is about “reaching out across cultural differences through dialogue, aesthetic

enjoyment and respect; of living together with difference". Cosmopolitanism is "an ethical horizon, an aspirational outlook and mode of practice". (Werbner 2008, 2)

Cosmopolitanism is often understood as an identity that is fundamentally different from that of "locals" or "nationals" (Nowicka and Rovisco 2009, 1). In similar terms, Jonathan Parry writes that cosmopolitanism means a "freedom from local or national prejudices; an openness to, and tolerance of, other ways of life" (Parry 2008, 327), and Calhoun defines cosmopolitanism to mean belonging to all parts of the world and not being restricted to any one country or its inhabitants (Calhoun 2002, 102). In short, the cosmopolitan approach means a perspective that is wider than that which is tied to a specific locality or nation. It also means an ability to adapt to different cultural environments.

Cosmopolitanism has often been understood as being available only to an elite who have the resources to travel and encounter other cultures and languages (Vertovec and Cohen 2002, 5; Calhoun 2002, 106), but although this may have been true historically, many scholars have pointed out that it is no longer the case. Cosmopolitanism is no longer class specific (Hann 2008, 61) and there is now more than one way to be cosmopolitan (Sichone 2008, 320). Scholars have come up with terms such as "working-class cosmopolitanism" (Werbner 2008, 16; Sichone 2008, 310; Nowicka and Rovisco 2009, 4), "non-elite or non-western cosmopolitanism" (Nowicka and Ramin 2009, 52), "bottom-up cosmopolitans" (Hannerz 2004), "cosmopolitanism from below" (see Hall 2008), and "everyday" or "ordinary" cosmopolitanism (Vertovec et al. 2002, 5). Ulrich Beck has pointed out that cosmopolitanism is not necessarily always voluntary: he has used terms such as forced, banal or passive when analysing involuntary cosmopolitanisms (Beck 2006 10, 19). Nowicka and Ramin accurately point out that the relevant question is not really "whether certain groups are cosmopolitan or not but which kind of cosmopolitanism characterises" them (Nowicka and Ramin 2009, 52). When analysing cosmopolitanism, it is important not to ignore structural and material conditions, and Nina Glick Schiller (2009; 2010) and Aihwa Ong (1999) have both emphasised the political and economic conditions within which particular cosmopolitanisms are possible.

Transnational mobility is often understood as a necessary prerequisite for individuals to develop cosmopolitan attitudes, but several scholars have remarked that locals can also be cosmopolitan, and cosmopolitanism does not necessarily require someone to reside, or move permanently, beyond their nation or culture (Werbner 2008, 17). Moreover, transnational movement across national borders does not necessarily lead to cosmopolitanism (Nowicka and Rovisco 2009, 8; Nowicka and Ramin 2009, 53; Falzon 2008, 38; Vertovec et al. 2002, 20). Someone may be exposed to other cultures but still

be unwilling to interact with them. In other words, being aware of other cultures does not necessarily mean that you are open to a dialogue (Nowicka and Rovisco 2009, 8).

This short overview shows that cosmopolitanism can be defined in different ways. Instead of elaborating on an ideal, I now want to look at an empirical case: lifestyle migrant children in Goa. At this point, I define cosmopolitanism as an open-minded attitude towards other cultures, as an interest in engaging with other cultures and as an ability to adapt to life in different cultural environments.

## **How was the research conducted?**

This article is based on my anthropological research on lifestyle migrant children in Goa. I carried out ten months of ethnographic fieldwork divided into three parts, namely, during the winters of 2011, 2012 and 2013. When in Goa, I participated intensively in the lives of Western families with children (aged 3–12 years). I spent time with them on the beach, at swimming pools and in restaurants. I visited their homes, attended numerous children's birthday parties and observed various hobby groups. I also spent time in schools and nurseries.

My research material consists of detailed field diaries of my participant observation and of interviews with children, parents, and people who worked with the children, as well as young adults who grew up in Goa. In addition, I conducted a small survey in an expatriate school and organised drawing projects with children (see e.g. Thomas et al. 1998, 342; Coates 2002). In groups of between two and five, the children drew pictures for me on a variety of themes (home, family, India, Goa and the other places where they spent time, etc.). While the children were drawing, I chatted with them and recorded the discussions. They also invented stories about children arriving in Goa and drew pictures to go with the stories. The children seemed to enjoy the drawing projects very much, and they provided me with first-hand access to children's discourses (for more details on my methodology, see the appendix).

## **The great cosmopolitan childhood in Goa: parents' views**

The lifestyle migrant families are in Goa because the parents have chosen to live there. Most of them led this kind of lifestyle before their children were born, so their original reasons for being in Goa had nothing to do with their children. However, the parents I met often emphasised that living there was of benefit to their children, with many of

them seeming to explain their lifestyle by claiming that it was better for their children. Many of them mentioned how Goa offers children freedom in a beautiful natural setting. In addition, almost every parent I spoke to emphasised that living between Goa and some other country(ies) made their children flexible, sociable and easy-going: they easily adapted to new environments.

They all [people in my native country] tell me “he is going to have problems merging and getting adapted”. But funnily enough, if you take a child who is seven years old and has spent all his life [...] in the same place. If you [move] him, he is going to fall to pieces. But for my children, it is a fact of life, it doesn’t matter where you put them, it’s ok. [...] [They adapt] very easily. To another climate, to another language, to another way of people, the way they look, which is very important! (Ines, 2 children)<sup>3</sup>

*Wherever my daughter is, immediately she is making friends and hanging out with them... We go to America and she’s immediately joining in there and sleeping over and making friends and hanging out. Wherever she goes, she’s quite comfortable. (Susie, 2 children)*

I am amazed with how my kids have grown here, I go back to Germany and my nieces and nephews are shy and barely make any eye contact, they don’t speak and my kids are blaahblaah... they’ll be friendly. [...] I find them [Goa kids] a lot more chatty, you can actually go to strangers and they are not just hiding behind your legs, like kids would do in Europe and they are not encouraged to speak to anybody else they don’t know because it’s dangerous. (Marta, 3 children)

All these mothers present a clear contrast between children in the West and their own children: they claim that living in Goa and leading transnationally mobile lives has made their children particularly adaptable and sociable, qualities that will also be useful when they grow up. During my fieldwork I was indeed often struck by the social openness of lifestyle migrant children in Goa: they willingly chatted with me or other adults, whereas children in my country of origin, Finland, are more reluctant to chat with adults they do not know well.

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3 All the names used in this article are pseudonyms. The parents’ number of children and the children’s ages are correctly marked after each interview quotation. English is not the mother tongue of most of the interviewees but the grammar of the quotations has not been corrected but left as they spoke.

If we define cosmopolitanism as an ability to adapt anywhere in the world, these parents seem to think that their mobile lifestyle makes their children cosmopolitan – a quality the parents value highly. In addition, many of the parents considered that life in Goa provided their children with a unique international environment, which they would lack if they lived in their parents' countries of origin.

It's an amazing opportunity [...] They know many different nationalities that they meet and they are hearing all the different languages and they are in such an amazing place learning first hand some things instead of only reading about them in a book. (Marta, 3 children)

Marta, above, describes Goa as a place where there are people of many different nationalities speaking a variety of languages. This is a reference solely to the expatriate community of Goa, because lifestyle migrant families seldom socialise with local Indian families and the children attend different schools and hobby groups from those of Indian children. Marta does refer to the local environment when she mentions children learning at first hand things that children in the West would read about only in books, but, in practice, such learning experiences often seem to involve India as a sort of fun, sightseeing place: you can ride an elephant, monkeys come to play on your roof and cows wander along the roads. Having such experiences is fun and interesting but it does not really mean that you are “engaged with the other”. In fact, Indian people are seldom part of these “amazing experiences” about which the parents speak so highly.

The Western parents nevertheless often seem to define Goa – or, more precisely, the community of lifestyle migrants there – as multinational and thus cosmopolitan. Indicative for them is the community's multilingualism. Hearing and speaking various languages is part of everyday life, and the parents often spoke highly of the situation. They emphasised that their children get used to hearing a variety of languages and pick up a range of phrases. The parents also shared the view that exposure to several languages as a child improves language learning abilities later on. In other words, the parents seem to believe that their children are being prepared to adapt to life in different countries not only in terms of their social openness and flexibility but also in terms of their ability to learn languages. Therefore, according to the parents, life in Goa prepares children for a cosmopolitan adulthood.

Below, a mother explains why she prefers Goa and does not want to live in her country of origin.

It is terrible [in my native country]. Narrow-minded, primitive, stupid. No, I don't want my children to grow up like this. I like it here [in Goa]! Cosmopolitan, open-minded.  
(Ines, 2 children)

The open-minded and cosmopolitan environment that Ines, and many others, talk about refers to the community of lifestyle migrants in Goa. In fact, lifestyle migrant families in Goa can be understood as trying to live outside local cultures or at least to be choosing for themselves what suits them and when. The families do not tend to participate in local Goan festivals: if they do, it is on a very ad hoc basis. They also do not socialise with local Indians. At the same time, the parents often want to distance themselves from the cultures of their native countries, which they define as narrow-minded and repressive, as Ines's comment above illustrates. In fact, Ines explicitly states that she and her spouse want to be detached from local cultures and customs everywhere, especially from the cultures in which they themselves grew up.

M: Are you teaching your children about the Israeli, English or Indian culture? Do you celebrate some holidays or...?

I: We are bad. We are bad because we choose it. We are global players, we don't want any identification of religion, nothing. We don't want any traditional mark. What the children will pick up from the environment, we are not gonna give to them. If they see it in the environment and if they like it, ok, what can I do, you know? But I won't give them a path, no way. This is 100% their own choice. We don't celebrate any holiday. (Ines, 2 children)

Ines' comment is rather extreme and many other parents in Goa are not so determined to avoid traditions or cultural celebrations. However, they are not particularly keen on following them either. Usually, the parents have a very practical approach: they celebrate whichever festival is fun and suitable in terms of timing and practical arrangements but they do not put much effort into trying to teach their "native cultures" to their children. Ines's comment reveals a very individualistic approach: she seems to think that people – including her children – can choose which traditions they want to follow and celebrate. Such a discourse of extreme individualism and such a strong ethos of freedom are common among lifestyle migrants in Goa (Korpela 2014). This is obviously a very privileged position, embedded in particular political and economic circumstances in the current global order.

A central theme in research on children is the process of socialisation, almost to the extent that sometimes the only purpose of childhood seems to be preparing for

adulthood (Jenks 2005, 34; Olwig et al. 2003, 2). In every culture, adults want children to learn the necessary skills to survive and succeed, and it is considered important that children are taught cultural values, norms and practices. Lifestyle migrant parents in Goa seem disinclined to socialise their children, at least not strictly, in the cultures from which they themselves originate, but they consider it important for them to learn to be flexible and to be able to navigate in a variety of environments, which can be interpreted as a strategy of making the children cosmopolitan. This, the parents believe, will make their children successful in today's globalising world. Preparing children to be global subjects is by no means restricted to lifestyle migrants in Goa – parents in other places adopt a variety of strategies to achieve the same goal (see e.g., Woronov 2007; Anagnost 2008) – but Goan lifestyle migrant parents' denial of their own cultural roots is rather unique.

Nina Glick Schiller, Tsypylma Darieva and Sandra Gruner-Domic (2011) argue that cosmopolitan attitudes on the one hand and deeply rooted views on the other can co-exist rather than having to exclude one other. Among lifestyle migrant families in Goa, however, rootedness is a tricky issue. The parents seem to hold a discourse of raising themselves above cultural roots, when they distance themselves from their native cultures: belonging to the countercultural community of lifestyle migrants in Goa is more important for them. At the same time, however, the parents define the lifestyle migrant community as multilingual and multinational, which indicates that roots and background matter after all.

Nevertheless, when the parents talk about their children's lives in Goa, they describe rather gloriously the great childhood that their children have the privilege of experiencing. According to them, living in Goa provides children with cosmopolitan attitudes and characteristics – flexibility, social openness and awareness of a variety of languages and nationalities – that will be useful to them in the future. It is, however, not enough to listen to the discourse of the parents. In the following section, I focus on the views of the children themselves.

## **The everyday cosmopolitanism of lifestyle migrant children in Goa**

M: What is your favourite food?

E: In India?

M: Somewhere!

E: Em...I don't know. [...] Like my dad made up some nice sauce for the chicken you grill. And then we sometimes have that. And we do schnitzel and food from all over the world.

(Ella, 8)

Ella above is confused by my question. Because she has experience of food in various places, she is not sure which country I am asking about. Mobility is the norm for lifestyle migrant children in Goa. Most of them have never lived in a single location for a whole year but are used to spending time in different places. The children with whom I spoke in Goa seemed to enjoy this mobile lifestyle.

M: Is it nice to move, not to stay in one place?

L: Yeah. Otherwise you would get too bored, living in the same place, same town, same school. (Lilie, 9)

The children's frequent transnational mobility is reflected, in various ways, in what they say, as can be seen in the comments above. Being exposed to a variety of locations does not, however, necessarily lead to cosmopolitan attitudes and practices.

While the parents praised the language skills of their children and the fact that they adapt easily to different places, some of the children were less positive. They brought up some difficulties, although none of them considered these to be serious. Many children were confronted with the issue of language skills.

M: When you are in Spain do you feel different from the other children there? Do they live a different life?

L: Yeah, they live a different life there because I don't know this lower [slang] Spanish cause I don't, it's not really the language that I speak so much. I normally speak Spanish all the time and when I come from Goa to Spain, it's very hard. And I'm different from them... because I come from a different country and I speak a different language. (Lilie, 9)

Nine-year-old Lillie above expresses a rather reflective view when she analyses why she feels different from other children in her mother's country of origin, where she spends several months each year. Although she speaks Spanish fluently, she prefers English (her father's mother tongue) and is uncomfortable with the slang used by her peers in Spain. Therefore, although the lifestyle migrant children speak several languages, their skills are not necessarily at the same level in all those languages and their multilingualism should not be idealised.

Some 9 to 12-year-olds also mentioned that they felt different from their peers in their parents' native countries because they did not know about local sports teams or TV shows. They all said they liked to spend time in those countries, but they did not appear as easy-going as their parents claimed.

Everyone plays football [in Italy] and everybody has their own team that they like. I don't know [the teams] and then they come and ask me which one I like in football and I am like "I don't like any football team" and they are like "What? What's wrong with you?" "I don't have my own team because of travelling" and they say, "Travelling? So that explains it." (Bruno, 11)

Although Bruno, above, describes a situation in which he feels different from his peers in his mother's native country because he does not live there permanently, he is able to circumvent the situation by adopting the identity of a traveller.

The younger children, however, did not express such problems: their lifeworlds were filled with fun and play wherever they were.

M: What do you like to do in England?

R: I like to play in the snow in England...and the bouncy castle. (Ruth, 4)

If we take flexibility as a quality of cosmopolitanism, we can define lifestyle migrant children in Goa as cosmopolitan. The younger children seemed to adapt easily wherever the family went. Some older ones mentioned problems but nevertheless adapted, while others said they felt at ease in all the countries they spent a lot of time in. All the children with whom I spoke said that they liked to spend time in different countries. It is, however, important to note that this is what they say: I did not meet or observe them outside Goa. They may have spoken differently had I interviewed them elsewhere. Moreover, they do not seem to have experience in adapting to new and different environments because they keep moving between places that are familiar to them.

One aspect of cosmopolitanism is personal knowledge of cultural differences. Many lifestyle migrant children in Goa complained that people in the West do not know about India and ask them stupid questions about it.

Sometimes people ask questions like “Do you live in a forest?” or “Do people have computers?”... and “Do snakes come to your house?” And like “Are there cannibals in India?” and like, “Is your family cannibals?” and everything, and I’m like “Seriously?” (Jonathan, 10)

Such comments demonstrate the children’s frustrations with other people’s ignorance. Jonathan has been to many different countries and is able to reflect on the simplistic and prejudiced views that some people have of those places, especially of India. Similar to many parents’ comments, he expresses a clear difference between the non-cosmopolitan people he encounters in the West and those who have lived in Goa and thus have a wider perspective. Yet, the India that the children talked about referred above all to the natural world and to the life of the community of lifestyle migrants in Goa. When I asked children to draw me pictures of Goa or India, they drew swimming pools, beaches, sunsets, coconut trees, banyan trees, dogs, cats and cows, but never an Indian person. None of them even talked much about the local population, and if they did it was often in negative terms. For example, an 8-year-old complained about the drunk Indian men who disturb her on the beach. The fact that the children hardly mentioned Indian people to me indicates that they seldom have encounters with them. Interestingly, many of the young children told me they do not have any Indian friends but that they would like to. They said that it was difficult – even impossible – on a practical level, because they attended different schools, kindergartens, hobby groups and leisure activities.<sup>4</sup>

Many children constructed a boundary between themselves and Indians, and claimed not to like many “Indian” things.

A: I am from India.

B: And why don’t you eat with your fingers?

M: Fingers?

B: Because the Indians, they eat like this.

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4 The Western families spend a lot of time on the beach and at swimming pools. Local Indian families do not spend time in these places.

M: They eat with their fingers... You like to eat with your fingers? Rice and dal you eat with your fingers, do you like that?

B: Disgusting. (Amir and Bobby, 4)

R: I got a hundred Barbie dolls.

M: A hundred Barbie dolls?

L: Me too.

M: And you have the Indian Barbie dolls, with the sari and...?

L: I had an Indian Barbie, I had it for my birthday but my sister didn't have any Barbie. Then I gave her one, the sari one.

M: Oh, that's nice.

R: I don't like the sari Barbie...I just like Barbie dolls that have dresses and... I don't like sari Barbie. (Rose and Lisa, 4)

In the above discussions, the children are aware of the Indian other – the custom of eating with one's fingers and wearing saris – but they view such things negatively. They express an awareness of the other but no willingness to appreciate it or to engage with it. In fact, the children's knowledge of Indian cultures and practices is rather limited. For example, once when a musician entered a school attended by lifestyle migrants with a *sitar*, none of the children recognised the instrument despite its centrality in Indian music.

The Western parents in Goa often speak highly of the fact that their children grow up multilingual and thus cosmopolitan. This multilingualism, however, refers solely to the native languages of the lifestyle migrants: none of the children knew Konkani (the spoken language of Goa) or other Indian languages. This is a clear sign of their lack of engagement with the Indian other, a lack of a cosmopolitan mode of practice towards Indians. Karen O'Reilly has studied lifestyle migrant children and teenagers in an international school in Spain. She claims that the international school is "an institution established to preserve the continuity of the Western lifestyle": the aim is to keep the children "uncontaminated by local cultures" (O'Reilly 2012, 121). In other words, children are not socialised into the local surrounding cultures but into "a Western lifestyle". Since most lifestyle migrant children in Goa attend expatriate schools that follow British or European curriculums, the situation there is very similar to that described by O'Reilly. Local people and cultures are "out there", possibly observed from a distance, but they are not part of the lifestyle migrant children's everyday experience. The India they

experience usually involves nature – beautiful beaches, exciting jungle, exotic plants and animals – and not people or cultures.

## **The world is open; how open are the individuals?**

M: What are the advantages of your lifestyle for your children?

A: The spectrum of what the children see and what they experience is so much bigger than what you see and experience when you stay only in one place.

[..]

The advantage of living in two countries is that you get to see two different cultures, your mind doesn't get stuck in only one way of doing things [...] So it's kind of like an alternative LSD you could say. It's like you get another perspective. (Andre, 2 children)

The lifestyle migrant parents in Goa often emphasised that their lifestyle exposes their children to a wider range of experiences than living in one place would. Yet, during the interview that I quote from above, Andre did not talk much about India but about the alternative life and values that his children are exposed to within the lifestyle migrant community in Goa. The children attended a home schooling project in Goa that emphasised spiritual values and arts, whereas in Europe they attended a regular school. In Goa, they also got the chance to observe, and even participate in, various New Age ceremonies. All in all, “the other perspective” that the father mentioned did not include much Indian culture. This particular family did in fact socialise with some Indians and the children thus knew some Indian adults, but many other Western children in Goa had no such contact at all.

In spite of the fact that they live in Goa, India is little present in these lifestyle migrants' everyday lives. Their contact with the local population is usually instrumental: they know shopkeepers, cleaning ladies, motorbike mechanics, restaurant owners, taxi drivers, etc. Some parents mentioned that they had some Indian friends but that they were “modern” and “westernised”. In other words, the parents seem to think that in order for friendships to be formed between Indians and Westerners, Indians need to understand Westerners but not vice versa. If cosmopolitanism is defined as a willingness to engage with the other, this attitude does not seem cosmopolitan. In fact, it requires Indians to be cosmopolitan, as the Westerners are unwilling to engage with “the other” unless “the other” is open to their views and ways. Pnina Werbner writes that cosmopolitans are able to imagine the world from “an other's” perspective and are able

to envision the possibility of a borderless world of cultural plurality (Werbner 2008, 2). Among lifestyle migrants in Goa, however, there is not much interest in understanding “the other’s” perspective: the boundary between Indians and Westerners persists and if parents are unwilling to cross it, their young children cannot socialise with local people either because they cannot usually decide for themselves where and with whom they spend their time.

Being able to keep your distance from local cultures and populations indicates a privileged position. Lifestyle migration to Goa happens within particular material and economic circumstances: their relative economic wealth allows lifestyle migrants in Goa to keep their distance from local populations. It may, of course, be that local people would not be interested in socialising with foreigners – I did not study that aspect – but it is nevertheless rather remarkable that many lifestyle migrants seem to view Indian people as servants or employees and not as their social equals.

When Western adults and children in Goa talk about their transnationally mobile lives, the world often appears to be an open arena of fun and leisure. The world is like a supermarket from which they can choose pleasing things. It is not so much a question of immersing oneself in a range of local cultures and social environments but of consuming a variety of places for one’s own pleasure. For example, one family gave me lengthy descriptions of snorkelling opportunities in various locations around the world. Their interest in visiting those places was snorkelling, not the local cultures or people. Tourists are often said to seek sun, sea and sand – that is, aspects of nature (Hannerz 1992, 248). Tourism, however, is a matter of a short-term visit after which people return to their settled everyday life at home. For the lifestyle migrants in Goa sojourns in different places are not temporary breaks from their everyday routines but are part of their lifestyle, yet they still view the world very similarly to tourists. Interestingly, the parents’ native countries sometimes become defined in similar terms.

M: Do your children like to go to France?

S: They love it. We love the journey, we love the airplane, we love to go. They love the airplane, the airport, enjoying yourself a little bit, running around. Flying, going on trains and metros and the whole thing. And France they love to go to the supermarket and they are just like “Ahhhh, what do we want?” You know like all the yogurt section and all the salami and the cheese and all, they love it. [...] Flea markets we go, we look for clothes and shoes and books and toys and we buy little things, it’s nice. We go to nice cafes and... (Stella, 2 children)

In Stella's comment, France is defined in terms of consumerism. The comment reveals, again, a privileged position: Stella, and her children, have the means to "consume France". Consuming and material aspects often appear in what the children say as well.

F: We are soon leaving Goa.

M: Do you want to go or would you like to stay?

F: I would like to stay because I want to go again to the water park.

Y: But in Israel, there is a huge park too.

F: I know... actually I think it is even better in Germany.

M: Germany, you also go there?

F: Yeah because there are so much legos... I had one airplane but it broke, an electric airplane, there is also one airplane made from paper that is hard. The airplane flies and has a big propeller, like this big... (Fred, 6)

When the lifestyle migrants and their children describe their stays in various places – in India or elsewhere – engagements with local people are seldom mentioned. Lifestyle migration to Goa is strongly embedded in today's global political and economic circumstances. It is a privileged lifestyle that is available to some people, and it results in a particular kind of cosmopolitanism.

### **Cosmopolitans after all: reflections of young Western adults in Goa**

M: If you compare the West, either England or Greece, to Goa, what is better and what is worse?

A: To?

M: Here or there.

A: Well, each country has their own things that are good. So I can't really say this country has this or this country has that, because over there I enjoy what they have there and over here I enjoy what they have here, so I can't really say anything other than that. (Anton, 17)

During my fieldwork, I interviewed a few young Western adults (17 to 23-year-olds) who had spent most of their childhood in Goa. I wanted to find out what they thought about their childhood and youth in Goa and about their transnationally mobile lifestyle. The interview extract above indicates that my young interviewees were sometimes more

cosmopolitan than I realised; the interviewee above seems to be confused, even irritated, by my question, thus questioning my comparative approach to viewing the world.

Although with regard to some issues, the young adults I interviewed found the comparative approach pointless, they also gave lengthy reflections on differences between Goa and the other countries (usually their parents' countries of origin) where they had spent a lot of time. Above all, the young adults I interviewed often expressed that they felt more open and more sociable than their peers in the West, thus sharing the discourse with some of the lifestyle migrant parents of the young children.

M: Do you feel different from the other people who are of your age in Europe?

S: Yeah. They are a bit more closed. The mentality is quite... they are a bit more frozen. In some other aspect, I think even a bit stupid. But that's maybe from the way I see it. Maybe from the way they see it, they think I'm the strange one, coming from here. But it doesn't seem... sometimes even they say it. When we go into new places, maybe you meet people that you don't know a lot. I'm more talkative, more friendly. They are more closed. And sometimes they say "You are more open, you are more friendly. We wouldn't be able to integrate like you in a group, coming in a group of 30 people where nobody knows you."

(Stefan, 23)

Stefan, above, defines himself as an open and sociable person who can easily make friends in new situations, and he believes that such characteristics are typical of Westerners who have grown up in Goa. The ability to adapt to different social situations in different places is an attribute that can be understood as cosmopolitan. Here, however, it is good to keep in mind that this is the way my interviewees talk; I did not see how they act when they are away from Goa. Nevertheless, the young adults seem to share with their parents the discourse about their lifestyle making them flexible and social. One young interviewee, however, told me how she found it difficult to socialise with people when she spent a few months in a European country that she had not visited before. This may, in fact, indicate that the flexibility that some young adults described to me applies only to countries they are familiar with and not necessarily to new places, which raises the question of which kind of cosmopolitanism it is. The interviewee who had had trouble in the new destination blamed the local people for being unfriendly and closed, which can, again, be interpreted as a request for "the other" to be open and tolerant, that is, cosmopolitan.

Another characteristic that all my young adult interviewees mentioned when comparing themselves to their peers in the West was that living in Goa had made them open-minded.

S: Having had the opportunity to live here, I think we got a bit more open mentality and we saw more things.

B: And because of living in India you have to deal with so many funny things every day... Things that you don't see in Europe, like cows on the road and people, the locals, they are a bit crazy sometimes. The people in Europe who would come to Goa and see the things for the first time, they wouldn't know what to do...

S: They would be a bit like shocked...

B: ...but we've seen it since we were small, we are a bit more open to everything, you know? But some Europeans have a very closed mentality. (Stefan, 23 and Beatrice, 21)

In the above dialogue, Stefan and Beatrice are actually reflecting on “the wider spectrum” that a father mentioned in an earlier interview extract. Interestingly, Stefan and Beatrice are talking about *seeing* many funny things – a spectacle – not about getting involved with the other. Seeing all those things for several years does make them a part of your everyday reality and thus likely affects your views and attitudes but it is not necessarily a mode of practice or an engagement with the Indian other.

M: Do you have local friends, Indian friends?

S: Not in the group [where we usually hang out] but yeah. You could call them friends. Not close friends but... It's a bit hard being... really close with a local.

M: Why?

S: Cause... maybe I'm mistaken but they have a bit different mentality. First of all, also the young ones, I have a girlfriend and they are like, “Oh you have a girlfriend?” Very shy and timid. And some other ways...

B: It depends, there are so many places in Goa...

S: Yeah, that depends...

B: Like I have a lot of Indian friends but... from my [boarding] school.

S: But your Indian friends, it's a school that already, to enter it there, they are a bit, not posh people but... they have a different way of thinking.

B: Yeah, but they are still locals, they are still Indian.

[...]

S: They have money to go to the school, money makes them a bit, maybe they travel a bit more, they open a bit more to think. I'm talking about the locals that stay in the villages. They are more closed.

B: Yeah.

S: Of course, we cannot talk about Ajey.

B: Yeah.

S: He drives a BMW, he goes to England... he's like us. Just dark skin. [...] We are talking about Goans here. [...] In some ways you feel that you can't relate with them a lot, like you could with others. (Stefan, 23 and Beatrice, 21)

Stefan and Beatrice, above, are, in fact, talking about a class difference. When they define upper-class Indians as those who are able to understand Westerners, and thus able to form friendships with them, they align themselves with the upper class, the elite. Lifestyle migrants in Goa are an interesting case in terms of their class status. In their native countries, they are not an elite but are middle class or even working class in terms of their income and professions, and many lifestyle migrant adults in Goa have little formal education beyond secondary school. In Goa, however, they are doing quite well financially and can afford a lifestyle they could not have in their native countries: they frequently eat in restaurants, they have domestic servants and they live in spacious villas. In other words, although outsiders in relation to the local social system, they have enough money to live like an elite in Goa. Karen O'Reilly argues that in the case of British lifestyle migrant children in an international school in Spain, it is not merely the Western lifestyle that is being preserved, but a class-based one: the children are educated to become the future global elite (O'Reilly 2009, 113). Lifestyle migrant children and young adults in Goa seem to adopt a racially biased class-based identity as well: they are an elite based on their non-Indianness. While Stefan and Beatrice express a willingness to engage with the other who is "like us", they appear unwilling to reach out over cultural differences and they expect "the other" to reach out to them.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, although Stefan's and Beatrice's cosmopolitanism is somewhat questionable with regards to their limited engagement with the other, in other respects they do appear cosmopolitan in what they say. The following dialogue from their

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5 Some young adults who had lived in Goa permanently claimed to have many local Indian friends. The situation in Goa now, however, is very different from how it was when the young adults were children. At that time, there were no lifestyle migrant schools or kindergartens and few Western children, whereas now there are several such schools and hundreds of Western children.

interview is a good example of how at least some young adults who have grown up in Goa are able to take a reflective view of cultural tolerance.

S: One thing that is not nice in Europe is that there are many people who are racist. When I see that, I hate it. I just take... I [would like to] take each one of them when they are a bit racist and with a snap of my finger. One thrown here in Goa, one in Africa, China... Then I want to make them deal with people being racist against them. I hate...

B: But it's true also the Indians can be racist.

S: Indians are very [racist], Goans [are very racist].

B: Everyone's racist.

S: Everyone is. The thing that could help you against this racism is living a bit around the world.

[..]

B: There're annoying people in every country. (Stefan, 23, and Beatrice, 21)

Criticising racism can be understood to mean respect and tolerance for cultural difference – qualities that can be understood as cosmopolitan. In the above extract, a distinction between the non-racist cosmopolitan self and the racist national or local other is constructed. In other words, Stefan and Beatrice say that leading transnationally mobile lives has made them non-racist and cosmopolitan whereas those who lead non-mobile lives lack these qualities. This section has thus shown that the young adults share the parents' discourse about their lifestyle making them cosmopolitan. The distance from local Indian people is, however, rather remarkable and leads us to consider what kind of a cosmopolitan empirical reality it actually is.

## **Cosmopolitanism on limited terms**

Vered Amit argues that becoming cosmopolitan is a very slow process. Acquiring new ethical horizons, and engaging with and appreciating a wider range of cultural and social possibilities, requires the formation of prosaic routines and relationships, which takes time. She emphasises the importance of mundane, everyday efforts when developing cosmopolitan aspirations. (Amit 2012, 65–66) In the case of the lifestyle migrants in Goa, such mundane relationships and situations are largely missing. They are not exposed to Indian people and cultural practices in their everyday lives. Consequently,

although they are aware of “the other”, they are not engaged with it. Nevertheless, their horizons are clearly not mono-cultural or narrowly national either.

This empirical case leads us to consider whether cosmopolitanism means openness to any culture or only to specific ones, and to what extent everyday interactions with “the other” are needed. The bottom line seems to be whether cosmopolitanism is defined as an identity and an approach or whether the everyday engagement – a mode of practice – with the other is emphasised.

Nowicka and Ramin define cosmopolitanism as the project of an individual. Cosmopolitanism helps you to appreciate the experience of difference and to overcome the difficulties and stress of resettlement (Nowicka and Ramin 2009, 68). Also Anthony D’Andrea argues that cosmopolitanism is not an altruistic gesture: it is ultimately more about the self than about the other (D’Andrea 2007, 15). Such an approach emphasises the flexibility of the self. The lifestyle migrant children and young adults described in this article seem to have qualities of flexibility that enable them to adapt to a variety of environments. They share a cosmopolitan identity and approach, but in their discourse the emphasis is clearly on the self and not “the other”, as they lack everyday engagement with “the other”.

Cosmopolitanism by definition implies that the world is divided into cultures, and that some individuals – the cosmopolitans – are able to navigate between the various cultures whereas most people – the nationals – are tied to cultures that are attached to their immediate localities. The case of lifestyle migrants in Goa is interesting in these terms because their cosmopolitanism seems to take place to a large extent within circles where everyone is transnationally mobile and somewhat detached from their national cultures.

In this article, I have shown that lifestyle migrant children in Goa are flexible and adaptable but that, in practice, their cosmopolitanism is a very Western project. This is a very similar situation to that described by Anne-Meike Fechter regarding expatriates in Indonesia. She describes the expatriates’ identities as cosmopolitan but prefers terms such as internationally-oriented or Western international (Fechter 2008, 105, 165), because cosmopolitanism demands so much and these terms describe the empirical reality better. Such definitions seem suitable for lifestyle migrants in Goa too. I would also add the term “cosmopolitanism on Western terms” because it is very much defined by the Westerners, not by “the other”, and because their multilingualism and social openness tends to include several Western languages and nationalities but to a large extent excludes the rest. The cosmopolitanism of lifestyle migrants in Goa also appears to be about consuming various places by choice, that is, lifestyle migrants taking from

each place what pleases them (e.g. snorkelling opportunities) but not engaging with “the other” in other ways. Local people may not, of course, be interested in engaging with foreigners, but lifestyle migrants nevertheless seem to hold a particular discourse of superiority towards them.

## **Conclusion**

Cosmopolitanism can be defined either as an aspiration or in terms of real-life practices. This article has presented certain limitations to real-life cosmopolitanism among lifestyle migrant children in Goa. The parents speak highly of how their children grow up to be cosmopolitan and what they say seems to reflect a particular and ideal version of cosmopolitanism: they describe a happy lifestyle that produces flexible and open-minded global subjects. This cosmopolitanism also includes a discourse of cultural detachment. The children confirm some of the parents’ views, although they do not necessarily appear to be as flexible as the parents like to claim, and some of the children’s comments actually hint at cracks in their cosmopolitan practice. Adding the views of young Western adults who have grown up in Goa to this equation leads me to argue that lifestyle migrants in Goa have cosmopolitan views and characteristics, but it is cosmopolitanism on limited terms: in particular, it is cosmopolitanism on Western terms and within the (multilingual and multinational) lifestyle migrant community. Moreover, instead of engaging with “the other”, the lifestyle migrants seem to move between locations with which they are already familiar. Yet, although their cosmopolitanism may be limited, it is cosmopolitanism nonetheless. A significant characteristic of this cosmopolitanism is that of consuming a variety of places according to one’s needs and pleasures, which in turn indicates a very privileged position, with particular structural, political and economic circumstances allowing particular individuals (and their children) to view the world as an open arena within which they can choose their destinations and their degree of engagement with “the other”.

## Appendix: Details about methodology

During my fieldwork in Goa, I knew about 150 lifestyle migrants and socialised more closely with about 20 families. People who participated in my research represented various nationalities, for example British, Irish, French, Italian, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, German, Swiss, Austrian, Italian, Polish, Russian, Dutch, Israeli, American, Canadian, Australian, Japanese etc. It is difficult to give complete statistics because many of my research subjects, especially most of the children, held two nationalities. The parents were in their late 30s or in their 40s, some were in their 50s. Their youngest children were new-born, the oldest were teenagers; but the majority of the lifestyle migrant children in Goa are between 2 and 13 years old. Most families that I knew had 1-2 children, a few had 3 children. I conducted 25 formal interviews (13 adults, 8 children and 5 young adults). I conducted, however, many more interviews during my participant observation, that is, they were not pre-scheduled or recorded but I took detailed notes. In addition, I conducted 34 drawing sessions with groups of 2-5 children. Each group consisted of children of the same age, the youngest being 4-year-olds and the oldest being 12-year-olds. During the drawing sessions, I carried out informal group interviews as well as informal individual interviews with the children. In addition, my research material consists of hundreds of pages of detailed field diaries and hundreds of photographs and drawings that the children made.

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# Self-translating: Linking Languages, Literary Traditions and Cultural Spheres

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*Self-translation, which is when an author translates his or her own texts and the outcome is two (or more) distinct works speaking to two (or more) different audiences, provides a useful insight into transnationalism and border-crossings, which are phenomena that operate outside the national, monolingual paradigm. Self-translation is regarded as a kind of border-zone activity that reorganises the relationships between languages and literary traditions, challenging the monolingual assumptions of the literary institution and literary history writing, which have been important in the construction of the modern nation-state. This is also the case in Finland where the literary institution and traditions have been defined by language despite the fact that Finland has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish.*

*By looking more closely at the self-translations of two Finnish authors, Kersti Bergroth (1886–1975) and Henrik Tikkanen (1924–1984), and the strategies that are used in their texts in order to engage simultaneously in two languages, cultural spheres, and literary traditions, I discuss self-translation as an interpretive task that attempts to negotiate complex cultural equations that are subject to the changing fortunes of time and place. The analysis focuses on texts by Bergroth and Tikkanen that depict war, on their intersections and overlaps, showing that self-translations link Finnish and Swedish-speaking language groups and literary traditions.*

The following reflections and thoughts by Henrik Tikkanen (1924–1984), a prolific Finnish author and illustrator, who wrote and published both in Swedish and Finnish, provide valuable information about the individual motifs, choices, and practices of linguistic border crossings from the author's point of view.

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Cosmopolitanism and Transnationalism: Visions, Ethics, Practices

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Helsinki: Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies. 116–137.

. . . tekstin sävy on ruotsiksi erilainen kuin suomeksi. Se ei johdu yksinomaan teknisistä seikoista vaan siitä, että kirjoittaessani suomeksi kirjoitan suomalaisille ja kirjoittaessani ruotsiksi kirjoitan ruotsinkielisille. . . Sillä samat asiat on sanottava eri tavalla suomenkielisille ja ruotsinkielisille, jotta sanoma olisi sama, toisin sanoen jotta sanoilla olisi sama vaikutus molempiin ryhmiin. Kirjoittaessani esimerkiksi Helsinki-kirjaani tuli suomenkielisestä laitoksesta nelisenkymmentä sivua laajempi kuin ruotsinkielisestä. (Tikkanen 1978, 76.)

. . . the tone of the text is different in Swedish than in Finnish. This does not only stem from technicalities, but also from the fact that when I write in Finnish, I write for Finnish-speaking people and when I write in Swedish I write for Swedish-speaking people . . . as the same things must be expressed differently to Finnish-speaking people, compared to Swedish-speaking people in order for the message to be the same; in other words, in order for the words to have the same effect on both groups. For example, when I wrote my Helsinki book, the Finnish version became 40 pages longer than the Swedish one.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of the quotation, Tikkanen refers to his work *Mitt Helsingfors/Minun Helsingini* (1972), in which he, in a combination of drawings and texts, captures views of a past, and partly already lost, Helsinki in his original style. He offers his Swedish- and Finnish-language audiences different texts on the same topic. This kind of information, which reveals personal views of writing, translation and, in particular, self-translation, is interesting: how do author-translators, who often live and work in two (or more) languages and cultures, or who do not necessarily sharply distinguish between the languages and cultures, or give priority to one over the other, cope with writing in their different languages? However, instead of only emphasising the creative role of the author, it is also important to pay attention to the collective aspects of the phenomenon, not least to its effects for the conceptualisation of literature, literary history and nationality.

Self-translation has been addressed to some extent in research dealing with migrant and diasporic writing (e.g. Seyhan 2001) as well as minority studies (e.g. Hirvonen 2011), although, in general, the subject has received far more attention within translation

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1 Unless otherwise indicated, the translations are my own.

studies than literary studies.<sup>2</sup> In the following, my aim is to bring the discussion about self-translation more closely into the field of literary studies. The focus here is on the cultural and historical perspectives of the phenomenon in Finnish literature and especially on the strategies that are used in the “twin-texts” of self-translators in order to engage simultaneously in two languages, cultural spheres, literatures and literary traditions. Self-translation is regarded as a kind of border-zone activity that reorganises relationships between languages and literary traditions and challenges monolingual assumptions of the literary institution and literary history writing.<sup>3</sup>

### **Self-translation: Amidst overlaps and intersections**

In recent years, ideas of fixed entities such as nation-states as well as homogeneous national histories and national cultures have been widely challenged in various disciplines across the humanities and social sciences. Instead of viewing nations as territorially or ethnically bounded, scholars have focused on different kinds of cross-border relations between nations, their histories, languages and traditions (see e.g. Amelina *et al.* 2012, 2–19). “Transnational studies” or “cross-border studies” are terms that have been widely used to deal with the interwoven relationships between nations and cultures. Yet, the focus on transnational dimensions should not lead to a disregard of the internal and local hierarchies of power. On the contrary, one of the methodological challenges of transnational and cross-border studies is to seek to explore the relationship between global and local cultural dynamics (see Amelina *et al.* 2012, 6). Self-translation, in which an author translates his or her own texts and the outcome is two (or more) distinct versions with overlapping content, speaking to two (or more) different audiences (e.g. Kellman 2000, 32–33; Hokenson & Munson 2007, 12–14; Zanotti 2011, 84), provides a useful insight into these phenomena, which operate outside traditional modes of conceptualisation of nations, literature and national literary canons. It is an activity that draws attention to cross-language constellations that take place within national borders

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2 Translation studies have examined, for example, the connections between language, translation and authorship (Fitch 1988; Boyden 2013; Buffagni *et al.* 2011), as well as the history of self-translation (Hokenson & Munson 2007).

3 Terms such as ‘contact-zone’ or ‘border-zone’ were developed and applied within post-colonial studies, border studies, and studies making use of the term transnationalism (see e.g. Simon 1998; Seyhan 2001; Jay 2010) have often been applied in discussions of spaces where languages and cultural categories overlap and intertwine with each other.

at the same time as it encompasses aspects of transcending the limits of nation-centred thinking. It can be seen as an effort to overcome the idea of linguistic purity, which has been and still is important – if not fundamental – to modern nation-states, cultures, disciplines, institutions and individuals, albeit that not all nation-states possess only a single language.

As language has been such an important element of nation-building, self-translation – or other phenomena of multilingualism that challenge the idea of linguistic purity – has not been in favour or given priority within national history and its monolingual framework (also Hokenson & Munson 2007, 8). The assumption of an individual possessing one language, a “mother tongue”, through which he or she is organically linked to a particular ethnicity, culture and nation, has been and still is deeply rooted in the idea of the modern nation. As the word “mother” in “mother tongue” has strong associations with a maternal origin, an affective and corporeal intimacy, and natural kinship, the whole constellation of a “mother language” is highly emotionally charged (Yildiz 2012, 10–14). Yet, as Yasemin Yildiz (Ibid.) expresses it, monolingualism is not only a quantitative term designating the presence of just one language: it constitutes an important structuring principle, a monolingual paradigm, which organises individuals and social life. This is also the case in Finland, where, in spite of the fact that Finland is a bilingual country with Finnish and Swedish as the official languages, the division of the literary and cultural field into separate literary institutions and traditions defined by language has been taking place since the end of the 19th century, when Finnish also became a language of administration and education along with Swedish.<sup>4</sup>

Even today, when looking at Finnish literary histories, it is difficult to find even brief references to self-translation or other phenomena related to multilingualism. In the case of Henrik Tikkanen, it is not easy to decide which of his novels, children’s books or travel books were rewritten or translated into another language by Tikkanen himself. He wrote and published most of his works in Swedish. For example, the Swedish-language literary history *Finlands svenska litteraturhistoria* (2000), in which Tikkanen’s authorship is thoroughly discussed, highlights this very aspect of his career, whereas his moves between the Finnish and Swedish language literary fields do not get any attention at all. In the most recent Finnish language literary history *Suomen kirjallisuushistoria* (1999), he is introduced in two contexts: in war literature and confessional literature. In contrast to Swedish-language literary history, the language question is dealt with at length, as it is mentioned that due to his provocative style and public TV debates in the 1970s, he also became known among the Finnish-speaking population. Thus, he

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4 For a brief overview of Finland’s past and present linguistic situation, see Salo (2012, 26–28).

cannot be regarded only as a part of Finland-Swedish literature. What is not mentioned, however, is that Tikkanen wrote his best-known war novel *Unohdettu sotilas* (1974) not only in Finnish but also, later on, in Swedish.<sup>5</sup>

Although Finnish literary histories seem to experience difficulties in dealing with phenomena in which languages and cultural categories intertwine with and overlap each other, there are a few scholars who have considered Tikkanen's bilingualism and works in the Finnish language to be important (Schoolfield 1987; Alhoniemi 1987 and 1995). George C. Schoolfield (1987, 136) even positions Tikkanen's drawings in the context of language issues, when he writes, appositely, that they "cut straight across language boundaries."<sup>6</sup> In the most recent work on Henrik Tikkanen's authorship, the biography or essayistic biography *Tikkanens blick* (2012; Tikkanen's gaze) by Johan Wrede, one important thread running through the whole work is Tikkanen's bilingualism and his ability to reach a broad audience outside the Finland-Swedish literary sphere, where he has usually been placed. His works found a wide readership not only in Finland, but also in Sweden. By calling attention to Henrik Tikkanen's self-translations and the phenomenon of self-translating, the linguistic and cultural diversity of Finland can be grasped in even greater detail.

In this article, I will deal with two Finnish writers: the above-mentioned Henrik Tikkanen, as well as Kersti Bergroth (1886–1975), who was, like Tikkanen, enormously productive as a writer. She published, among other things, more than 70 volumes of novels, poems, plays, memoirs and essays in Swedish, Finnish and German. In contrast to Tikkanen, for whom switching between Finnish and Swedish or working with them in parallel was already characteristic at an early stage of his career, Bergroth began her career as a Swedish-language author in the early 20th century. At the beginning of the 1920s, however, she changed the language of her writing to Finnish. Nevertheless, her

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5 Another illustrative example is Hella Wuolijoki (1884–1954), a well-known and respected playwright who is best-known for her Niskavuori plays, which she began to write in the 1930s in Finnish. Although it is widely known that Wuolijoki was Estonian-born, *Suomen kirjallisuushistoria* (1999) does not say a word about the works she wrote in Estonian or in both Estonian and Finnish, as if these were insignificant to her authorship and would reduce her importance as a Finnish writer.

6 Tikkanen's witty aphorisms, published in both Swedish- and Finnish-language newspapers, in which he combined a simplified drawing with a short text, were especially popular among Finns, regardless of their native language. Pirkko Alhoniemi (1987, 37–49; 1995, 94–120), who in her analyses of *Unohdettu sotilas* also mentions its Swedish-language version, *30-åriga kriget*, discusses these two novels and their follow-ups, not as two different versions of the same text, but as a sequel. She calls them a long-lasting "Käppärä process" referring to the protagonist Vihtori/Viktor Käppärä, who binds together the works *Unohdettu sotilas* (1974), *30-åriga kriget* (1977), *Efter hjälte döden* (1979) and *Viimeinen sankari* (1979).

language shift was not absolute, as she wrote and published children's literature both in Swedish and Finnish, translating the texts herself.<sup>7</sup>

Kersti Bergroth and Henrik Tikkanen belong to different generations, and they wrote in different genres, but in spite of this there is a common denominator in their self-translations: they both wrote about war. Kersti Bergroth's *Nuoren lotan päiväkirja/ En ung lottas dagbok* (1940; 'The Diary of a Young Lotta'<sup>8</sup>) is a war-novel about the Finnish Winter War (1939–40). It appeared both in Finland and Sweden first in Finnish and then in Swedish only a couple of months after the war had ended. Henrik Tikkanen, for his part, takes issue with the Continuation War (1941–44). In contrast to Bergroth's book, however, his Finnish language novel *Unohdettu sotilas* ('*The Forgotten Soldier*') was written and published in 1974; that is, long after the war had finished. The Swedish version, *30-åriga kriget* (*The 30 Years' War*), was published three years later, in 1977, both in Finland and Sweden.

The fact that both Bergroth and Tikkanen found it important to address both Finnish- and Swedish-speaking readers with their depictions of war serves as an important starting point for my analysis. War seems to be a theme that needs to be discussed in contexts where language borders and strict cultural categories are crossed. Bergroth and Tikkanen are not the only self-translators who have dealt with this theme. For example, Elmer Diktonius, an early modernist, wrote about the Finnish civil war first in Swedish (*Janne Kubik* 1932) and then some time later in Finnish (*Janne Kuutio* 1948).<sup>9</sup> Therefore, in twin-texts, the attention shifts not only to spaces where languages and cultural categories overlap and intertwine with each other, but also to the complex cultural equations and questions of national belonging (also Seyhan 2001, 9–10).

An awareness of the specific cultural and linguistic differences and similarities is, of course, required of all translators. The choices the translator makes have an effect on the

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7 According to Bergroth, she wrote her children's books, the "Mary Marck books", in Swedish and then translated them into Finnish, with one exception. She was not at all satisfied with the language of the Finnish versions, however, as, in her opinion, the idioms were not as "soulful" and "incisive" as their counterparts in the Swedish texts (see Grönstrand 2011a and b). Stylistically, these books bear a great resemblance with, for example, the Katy books by Susan Coolidge. Before publishing her first children's books, Kersti Bergroth translated Coolidge's novel *What Katy Did at School* (1873) from English into Finnish.

8 The term "lotta" in the title refers to Lotta Svärd, the name of the voluntary paramilitary organisation for women, whose members were called "lottas". They worked in different tasks both at the front and at home during the Winter War and the Continuation War.

9 Unlike Diktonius, Bergroth and Tikkanen do not, for example, mix different languages within a single text. Diktonius however uses not only Finnish and Swedish, but also English and Russian in his novels. Julia Tidigs (2008, 685–692) analyses, in detail, the multilingualism of Janne Kubik, but a thorough research where both versions are discussed is still missing.

text and its readers, and there are various translation strategies. Instead of corresponding perfectly with the “original” text, translation establishes a new inscription and, with it, the possibility of a new interpretation (e.g. Bermann 2005, 6). On the one hand, translations bridge languages, cultures and nations, but, on the other hand, they also point to the disparities among states, nations and local traditions, revealing disunity and dissension in the shadow of apparent unity, as Sandra Bermann (2005, 2) puts it. In her reflections on translation, Bermann (2005, 6–7) particularly emphasises the ethical aspects of the task of the translator which involves, among other things, the ability to take into account the context of each language, its intertexts and intrinsic alterity. These kinds of perspectives also open up interesting opportunities for the works by the author-translators, who are responsible for texts which do not necessarily follow the traditional division into an “original” or “source” text, and a “target text” or translation.

The idea of a static “original text” and its translation, which indicates a dichotomy, and often also a hierarchy, between the two texts and between the author/translator, as well, has been criticised for some time within translation studies. The critics emphasise, for example, that the two texts produced possess equal artistic value, and that translation should be understood as a creative rather than a re-creative activity (see e.g. Buffagni 2011, 17; Zanotti 2011, 79). The relationship between the two poles is further complicated when the translator and author are one and the same person (also Zanotti 2011, 84). For example Jan Walsh Hokenson and Marcella Munson (2007, 9) state that the terms ‘equality’, ‘commensurability’ and ‘equivalence’, which are often used in measuring the quality of a translation, are nowhere as problematic as in this kind of case. Sometimes the deviations between the two texts are so great, for instance, that they raise the question of whether the two versions should be considered as totally different works. Yet the similarities might be so prominent that neither can be called autonomous creations. When analysing self-translations, there is a risk that the result is a description of the differences between the two versions. However, instead of looking at the “gaps” between texts, languages and cultures, it is more important to focus on the common core of the two versions of the same text, the intersections and overlaps between them, and how they are engaged in several cultures simultaneously (Ibid. 2007, 4–12).

## Focus on the cornerstone of common Finnish culture

The two versions of Kersti Bergroth's *Nuoren lotan päiväkirja / Ung lottas dagbok* were offered to young Finnish- and Swedish-speaking readers almost simultaneously, during the second half 1940. The Finnish version came out first, but this cannot by any means be regarded as clear evidence that it had been written before the Swedish language text. Similarly to her previous parallel texts, the stories take place in a milieu that is represented in a surprisingly monolingual fashion. The character and place names are Finnish in the Finnish-language version and Swedish in the Swedish-language version. The characters in *Nuoren lotan päiväkirja* have Finnish language names such as Orvokki, Misse Ahola, Eira, Siiri, Reijonen and Hannes Aramo, while in *Ung lottas dagbok* there is a greater variation. Judging by their names, the characters seem to be either Finnish or Swedish speakers. The reader comes across characters with names like Viola, Misse Ahola, Eira, Siri, Reijonen and Hans Arming, names that reflect everyday life at the war hospital where the events are taking place. The wounded soldiers and evacuees from the front, who are being taken care of by the nurses, all come from different parts of Finland. However, despite these kinds of adaptations, similarities between the texts predominate as if there was no need to make a difference between the language groups. The two texts are easily comparable, beginning with the title which is identical.

The protagonist and narrator in *Nuoren lotan päiväkirja* and *Ung lottas dagbok* is Telma, a name that can be understood as either Finnish or Swedish, and thus needs no adaptation in order to function in both Finnish- and Swedish-language contexts. Moreover, in both versions, the central figures of mid-19th century Finnish culture and literature – Lönnrot, Topelius and Runeberg – are of importance, as they serve as markers of the kind of Finnish culture that is regarded as common to everyone regardless of language and class: it is evident that Lönnrot, Runeberg and Snellman are called upon in order to emphasise the unity of the Finns and to evoke feelings of patriotism.

In spite of the patriotism that runs through the whole story, however, there is also room for hesitation towards the classic texts and their ability to speak to Telma, who keeps a diary where she records her thoughts, feelings and reflections during the war. In the beginning of the novel, on 5 February 1940, which is the day when the national poet of Finland, J. L. Runeberg, is celebrated, she writes:

Mutta en voi ymmärtää mitään, kun luen Runebergiä. Kaikki ne rakkaat runot näyttävät vaan paperilta. Olenko minä tosiaankin pieni ihminen, kun en voi unohtaa itseäni ja

omaa kohtaloani, niinkuin Vänrikki Stoolin sankarit osasivat ja niinkuin pilven veikon morsian<sup>10</sup> ja torpan tyttö osasivat? Enkö minä ole Lotta Svärd, joka kestää ja kantaa? (Bergroth 1940a, 35.)

Men jag förstår ingenting av Runeberg när jag läser. Alla de kära dikterna ser ut som bara papper. Är jag faktiskt en liten människa då jag inte kan glömma mig själv och mitt eget öde, liksom hjältarna i Fänrik Stål glömde sitt och liksom torpflickan glömde sitt? Är jag inte Lotta Svärd, som kan bära och fördra? (Bergroth 1940b, 43.)

But I do not understand anything when I read Runeberg. All the beloved poems look like paper. Am I really a small-minded human being as I am not able to forget myself and my own destiny as did the heroes of Ensign Stål and the bride of the Cloud's brother and the girl of the cottage? Am I not Lotta Svärd, who endures and bears her cross?

There is no doubt about the fact that Telma is familiar with Runeberg and his works. She makes precise references to particular poems in *Fänriks Ståls sägner* (1848; *The Tales of Ensign Stål*) and the well-known female figures portrayed in them. She brings out her love for them, and she is also well aware that these poems, which deal with the Russian-Swedish War (1808–09), are supposed to function as important role models in times of war. In the 1940s, Runeberg was still very influential both within the Finnish and Swedish cultural circles of Finland. For example, the entire Lotta Svärd organisation, as a voluntary organisation for those women who wanted to work in different tasks at the front and at home during the war, was named after one character of one of Runeberg's poem. But as the poems suddenly seem to have lost their effect, the contradiction between Telma's inner, private feelings and her sense of collective duty is represented in a somewhat dramatic way. However, this kind of self-scrutiny can also be regarded as an integral part of the genre's conventions as *Nuoren lotan päiväkirja/En ung lottas dagbok* is a diary novel. The diary form gives a strong impression of authenticity and immediacy; the entries follow upon each other, frequently documenting not only the intense course of the war's events and the feelings on the home front, but also reflections on the diary keeper's own personality and her personal relationships. Moreover, with its young and colourful narrator-protagonist, *Nuoren lotan päiväkirja/En ung lottas*

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<sup>10</sup> The reference to the poem "Pilven veikon morsian"/"Molnets broder" is missing from the Swedish version.

dagbok may also be regarded as a book for young readers, being specifically addressed to girls.

Kersti Bergroth's earlier twin-texts, which were popular, warm-hearted school stories for girls, became acknowledged for their patriotic spirit, amongst other things, and for being models of an exemplary way of life (Grönstrand 2011a, 86). The same kind of atmosphere can also be found in *Nuoren lotan päiväkirja /En ung lottas dagbok*. Collective experiences gain in importance especially when it becomes obvious that Finland will lose important battles. In her entry of 5 March 1940, Telma writes about the loss of Vyborg, which was the second biggest city of Finland and situated near the Russian (Soviet) border, in the following way:

Viipurista taistellaan. Annetaanko se? . . . Me istuimme kaikki aivan hiljaa radion ympärillä. Me tiesimme, että koko Suomi istui sillä tavalla, tuntien yhteisen suruun ja yhteisen, yhä korkeammalle nousevan rakkauden. (Bergroth 1940a, 107; emphasis HG.)

Nu pågår kampen om Viborg. Måste vi uppge det? . . . Vi satt alla alldeles tysta omkring radion. Vi visste att hela Finland satt på det sättet, att hela Finland kände den gemensamma sorgen och den gemensamma allt större kärleken. (Bergroth 1940b, 125; emphasis HG.)

The battle of Vyborg is being fought. Will we lose it? . . . We were all sitting completely silent at the radio. We knew that all of Finland was sitting like we were, that all of Finland felt the shared sorrow and the shared, ever increasing love. (emphasis HG.)

Instead of reflecting on her own private self, Telma emphasises the people at the hospital that form the entity of the collective “we”. This “we”, in turn, is presented as part of a much larger group, that of “all Finns”, who all identify themselves as one. The references to the canonical texts have the same kind of function: to stress the collectivity and unity of the nation. One night when the nurses and patients gather together to discuss the true meaning of the idea of Finnishness, they characterise it by making references to a song by Topelius, “Kesäpäivä kangasalla”/ “En sommardag i Kangasala” (‘A summer’s day in Kangasala’), a section from the *Kalevala*, and to Runeberg’s most famous epic poem, *Fänriks Ståls sägner* (*The Tales of Ensign Stål*). The fact that the national epic *Kalevala*, compiled by Lönnrot, is based on Finnish-language folklore, whereas *Fänriks Stål’s sägner* and Topelius’s texts were originally written in Swedish, does not disturb their reflections on people, nation and nationhood. The texts that are referred to are

the same both in the Finnish and Swedish versions, in the original language and the translation, suggesting that there is no need to distinguish between the two language groups.

The importance of the canonised 19th-century texts is further reinforced at the end of the novel. It offers a quotation from Topelius's poem "Morgonsång" ("Aamulaulu"/ 'Morning song'), which is the opening poem of one of his most influential works, *Boken om vårt land* (1875; 'A Book about our country'). *Boken om vårt land* was a textbook for schoolchildren which contained illustrated stories of Finland's history and geography as well as stories of the people and their languages, thus highlighting Topelius's central idea of national unity. Topelius found that despite differences with regard to language, geography and culture, there was a fundamental unity among the Finnish people. If clear evidence of the significance of *Boken om vårt land* is required, one only has to look at its popularity: it was translated into Finnish only a year after it had been published, and, in addition, for decades it frequently appeared in new editions. Until the 1950s, it was an essential part of the school curriculum.<sup>11</sup>

Interestingly, the poem quoted at the end of the novel is the same in both versions, yet the stanzas are different. Whereas the Finnish language quotation "Kuin kukkaranta aamusella/Heräjä uuteen aikaan"<sup>12</sup> is taken from the second stanza, the Swedish language quotation "Vak upp kring hundramila stränder/mitt sköna land, mitt fosterland"<sup>13</sup> comprises the first two verses straight from the beginning of "Morgonsång". It is, of course, impossible to know why or how Kersti Bergroth arrived at this particular solution. Did she not remember how Topelius's "Morgonsång" began in Finnish or was she not satisfied with the Finnish translation of those particular lines? There is not even a way of finding out which one of the two versions, the Finnish- or Swedish-language one, Kersti Bergroth had in mind in the first place. However, when taking into account the patriotic theme of the novel and the context in which it had been published, it is obvious that the reference to a well-known patriotic text brimming with optimism and hope is more important than any exact equivalence between the two texts. However, this kind of difference also signals that although the author-translator knows the two languages and cultures well, they do not necessarily overlap each other entirely.

Sometimes the subtexts have different connotations in Finnish and Swedish, which means that they cannot be used in the same way. For example, when the nurses gather

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11 See, for example, Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland (The Society of Swedish Literature in Finland): <<http://www.topelius.fi/index.php?docid=28>> (visited 4 August 2013).

12 "Like a shore in blossom at dawn / Wake up to a new time".

13 "Wake up on the shores of thousands of lakes / my beautiful country, my motherland".

together for the first time to get to know each other, they address the questions of patriotism in singing. Although the sing-along song they choose is the same in both versions, “Suomen salossa”/“I Finlands skog” (‘In the backwoods of Finland’),<sup>14</sup> only *Nuoren lotan päiväkirja* provides an explicit quotation from the song’s text while there is only an implicit reference to it in *En ung lottas dagbok*:

Tuntui hyvältä saada laulaa taas kerran näin lottien kesken.

”Omanpa henkeni kieltä ne puhuu

Honkain humina ja luonto muu...”

Sitä se juuri on. Minä en olisi osannut sanoa sitä, mutta niin se on. (Bergroth 1940a, 27.)

Det gjorde gott att sjunga så här lottor emellan en gång igen.

När vi sjöng om att furornas sus talar ”vår andes språk” så tänkte jag: ja, så är det. (Bergroth 1940b, 33.)

It felt good to have an opportunity to sing once again among nurses. “They speak the language of my heart / Whisper of the pine trees and the rest of nature. . . .” That is just how it is. I would not have known how to say it, but that is how it is. / It felt good to sing like this among the nurses once again. As we sang that whisper of the pine trees speaks “the language of our heart”, I thought: yes, that is just how it is.

Originally “Suomen salossa” is a Finnish folk song to which Yrjö Sakari Yrjö-Koskinen, a central character in the Finnish language nationalist movement, wrote a text in 1856. Although a Swedish version of this song already existed at the end of the 19th century, it is possible that Bergroth herself did not know the song in Swedish or did not rely on her readers knowing it. Perhaps she found it overly “Finnish” to be entirely credible in a Swedish context. The reference in the Swedish language text points more towards the Finnish version than to the Swedish translation of the song in which there is not, for example, an expression such as “furornas sus talar ‘vår andes språk’” (“whisper of the pine trees speaks ‘the language of our heart’”).

A closer look at *Nuoren lotan päiväkirja/En ung lottas dagbok* discloses that nationhood and patriotism cannot, after all, be discussed exactly in the same terms. In addition to the example above, there are other examples too. When one of the nurses

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14 Also known as “Honkain keskellä/ Dold mellan furorna”.

reflects on her patriotism, the Finnish and Swedish language versions differ slightly from each other:

Lönnrotin aika, ja Runebergin ja Snellmanin – se on minusta tavallaan oikein oikea Suomi. . . . Siinä on kaikki koottuna – historia ja runous ja rakkaus tähän kansaan. (Bergroth 1940a, 74.)

Lönnrots tid, och Runebergs och Snellmans – det tycker jag på ett vis är det riktiga Finland. . . . Där har vi allt liksom förenat – historien och det poetiska och kärleken till det här landet. (Bergroth 1940b, 85.)

The period of Lönnrot, and Runeberg and Snellman – that is in my view somehow the real Finland. . . . Everything is combined – the history, poetry, and love for these people/ this nation.

Although the first sentence is the same, there is an interesting difference at the end of the quotation. In the Finnish version, the nurse explains that the period of Lönnrot, Runeberg and Snellman echoes love for the Finnish people ('kansa'), whereas the Swedish version emphasises the love for the nation or the country ('landet') instead of the people ('folk'). This preference for nation/country acknowledges that the idea of "one people, one nation" that had already been around for decades by the 1940s – not least as an issue in a large number of language conflicts in which the power relations of languages and language groups were contested – was not an undisputed one. From the point of view of the Swedish-speaking language group, which possessed a strong minority identity based on language, it does not question the idea of one nation, but implies a critical attitude towards an idea of a nation consisting of only "one people". The language conflicts between the Finnish and Swedish language groups were not, in the first place, issues of ethnicity, but rather posed ideological and philosophical questions as to what language policy would best serve Finland as a nation (see e.g. Salo 2012, 27–28). Yet, among both language groups there were strong tendencies to strengthen their status and unity. The most radical Finnish language nationalists in the 1920s and 1930s, for example, stated that the development of the whole nation was being threatened by bilingualism (see e.g. Grönstrand 2009, 24).

At the same time, even though Kersti Bergroth's twin-texts show that in times of crisis there is a literary tradition that the Finnish- and Swedish-speaking language groups have in common and which is worth turning to, this tradition cannot be applied

straightforwardly. There is accuracy with regard to the implicit or explicit culturally specific meanings of known songs and single concept. The practices of adaptation are needed every now and then in order to produce culturally convincing texts with the right connotations. On the one hand, the differences are relatively few, encompassing adjustments in character and place, names and references to a few texts that might work in a similar way both in Finnish and Swedish. On the other hand, the differences reveal a discerning eye for questions of language policies and minority/majority positions.

### **Different texts – same tradition**

While Kersti Bergroth provides texts for her Finnish- and Swedish-speaking readers that can be placed, if necessary, on a continuum of “originals” and translations, Henrik Tikkanen’s strategy is totally different. Tikkanen wrote and published his novels *Unohdettu sotilas/30-åriga kriget* long after the war had finished, namely, in the 1970s, which was a period known for its radicalism, revolt against authorities and institutions, and preference for highly personal accounts and confessions in literature. In his twin-texts, Tikkanen follows the tradition of the novel in which the critical attitude towards the Continuation War and war heroism had been established through a scarce style of expression, comical events, ironic attitude and absurd – even grotesque – details (Alhoniemi 1987; Riikonen 2012, 464–466). Tikkanen is considered to have been a satirist (Ibid.), and he has also been given the honour of being the first author of a postmodern Finnish war novel, a genre characterised by a fragmentary structure and a highly controversial view of heroism (Niemi 1999, 121). An important part of his unique style is playing with well-known depictions of the war; not only with those found in J. L. Runeberg’s *Fänriks Ståls sägner* but also with those in Väinö Linnas’s Finnish-language novel *Tuntematon sotilas* (1954; *The Unknown Soldier*), a novel which radically changed the tradition of depicting war events and soon became a classic. As a consequence of its realist style, *Tuntematon sotilas* does not provide a heroic view of the war’s events, which was the case in J. L. Runeberg’s epic poem. This poem, in its turn, is again one of the prominent subtexts of *Tuntematon sotilas*.

In contrast to Kersti Bergroth’s *Nuoren lotan päiväkirja/En ung lottas dagbok* in which the collective “we” is at the centre, the focus in Tikkanen’s *Unohdettu sotilas/30-åriga kriget* is on the individual. The experiences of the lonely soldier Käppärä, whose war lasts for 30 years as he is left alone at the front during the Continuation War, and who stays at his post in obedience to the order that he has been given, are at the

heart of the story. However, whereas dialogue dominates the narrative in the Finnish-language version, it has almost disappeared in the Swedish one. Instead there is an omniscient narrator telling Käppärä's story. Interestingly, the explicit subtexts in use are also different in the two versions. Whereas Linna's *Tuntematon sotilas* is an important subtext in the Finnish-language version, Runeberg's *Fänriks Ståls sägner* is dealt with in the Swedish-language version. However, in practice, the division is not that categorical. The protagonist Käppärä, for example, whose first name Vihtori/Viktor means victory, is depicted in both versions as a modern Sven Dufva. In Runeberg's portrayal of Sven Dufva he was a dutiful soldier who died at his post (see Niemi 1988, 171). Moreover, in spite of the differences regarding the use of subtexts, the effect is the same: both *Unohdettu sotilas* and *30-åriga kriget* make parody of the nationalist discourse in which war heroism is admired.

In *Unohdettu sotilas*, a close connection with Väinö Linnas's *Tuntematon sotilas* is already established in the title. The title is almost the same, as the meanings of the words "unohdettu sotilas" ("forgotten soldier") and "tuntematon sotilas" ("unknown soldier") are close to each other. This kind of allusion is missing from *30-åriga kriget*, in which the title points to a factual historical event, the Thirty Years' War that took place in Europe between 1618 and 1648, and of course to Käppärä's own long war in Karelia. Another strong marker of the relationship between Tikkanen's and Linna's texts is the language of the soldiers, the use of dialect or several Finnish dialects, which was unique in Linnas's work and an important part of his character description, and which Tikkanen follows. At the beginning of the novel, the protagonist, soldier Vihtori Käppärä, and staff sergeant Hurmalainen are talking to each other at their post in the Karelian woods in the following way:

"Ei hyö täst tuu läpi", sanoi ylikersantti.

"Ei tule, herra ylikersantti.

"Eikä mistään", sanoi ylikersantti.

"Eivätkä mistään, niin", sanoi Vihtori.

"Ratekiaa tää vaa, sanoi Hurmalainen. "Vetäyvytää jos hyö tulee peräs, ja taas vetäyvytää ja hyö tulee taas peräs. Ja eivät huomaakaa ja niin myö ollaaki Suomes ja tääl mejän kans ei oo leikkimist. Tääl Suomen leijona purroo ja raapii. Vanja kuoloo ja katuu lähteneesä mejän perrää...

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“Mitäs lähtivät väärälle asialle, sanoi Vihtori vähän innostuen. ”En mä pahalla, mutta ku lähtivät väärälle asialle niin saavat syyttää itseään jos me tapetaan heijät. (Tikkanen 1974, 6.)

”They won’t come through here, said staff sergeant.

“No they won’t, Sir.”

“And not anywhere”, said staff sergeant.”

“Yeah, right. And not anywhere,” said Vihtori.

“This is just a strategy, said Hurmalainen. “We’ll retreat if they follow us, and then we’ll retreat again if they follow us. And they won’t realise until we’re in Finland and here you can’t play tricks with us. Here the lion of Finland bites and scratches. Ruski dies and regrets that he started to follow us...

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“Why did they run a false errand?”, said Vihtori a bit enthusiastically. “No offence meant, but as they run false errands they can blame themselves if we kill them.”

This dialogue between Käppärä and Hurmalainen is highly colloquial. While Käppärä speaks in a form of slang typically found amongst people from the cities of Southern Finland, Hurmalainen speaks in a particular dialect. Moreover, as Hurmalainen’s dialect is from the South-Eastern part of Finland, he reminds the reader of the best-known character of *Tuntematon sotilas*, Antero Rokka, who was from the Karelian Isthmus (also Niemi 1988, 171).

While dialect is essential to the narrative in *Unohdettu sotilas*, it has almost disappeared in the Swedish version. According to Johan Wrede (2012, 125–127), Tikkanen was not able to catch the nuances of the soldiers’ speech convincingly enough, as he himself had experienced the Continuation War in a Finnish-language unit and, thus, did not know how the soldiers spoke in Finland-Swedish detachments. This explanation draws on questions of biography and realism, pointing to the idea that literature reflects the human language facility and its use. These are by all means important dimensions of multilingualism in literature (also Laakso 2011, 33–34) and self-translation. However, the decision to abandon the use of dialect may also be dealt with by taking into consideration the previous tradition of Finnish war literature and the models of depiction it offered. A new leaf was turned when Linna’s *Tuntematon sotilas* appeared. As the language of the soldiers was considered to be not only original and creative, but also an elementary part of the aesthetics, the effect would not have been the same if Tikkanen had tried to use the Finland-Swedish dialects with their totally different

connotations – compared to the Finnish ones – in his Swedish-language version. For example, the South-Eastern dialect that the famous character of Rokka speaks, has strong connotations of Karelia and also to humour, and these dimensions cannot be easily caught in any Swedish dialect.<sup>15</sup> When Tikkanen in his Swedish-language version puts aside the dialect as well as the dialogue, the connection to Linna's classical war text, as well as an influential model of Finnish language war depiction, also changes, although it does not disappear altogether. Like Bergroth, Tikkanen also seems to be well-aware that not even the best-known texts, which were familiar to both the Finnish- and the Swedish-speaking populations, may be applied in the same way. However, in contrast to Bergroth, Tikkanen has a larger repertoire of means for doing this, which is something that gives rise to innovative forms of expression.

As mentioned earlier, an important subtext in Linna's *Tuntematon sotilas* is Runeberg's *Fänriks Ståls sägner*, and this also applies to Tikkanen's *30-åriga kriget*. In Linna's text, the references are varied: the soldiers quote Runeberg, often inappropriately; the role models Runeberg's epic poem first offers to the soldiers turn out to be fallacious in Linna's work, etc. (e.g. Nummi 1993, 100–120). In Tikkanen's novel, the narrator refers to Runeberg, sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly. In the following extract from the beginning of the story, Runeberg and the heroism of his influential epic *Fänriks Ståls sägner* is called into question in different ways:

I det krig Runeberg skildrade bjöds de ryska officerarna på bal efter det de intagit en stad. Kulnev brukade dricka champagne ur damers skor. Men det var innan krigen politiserats, det var under krigens l'art pour l'artperiod. Det var krig med nästan bara trevliga sidor, det allra trevligaste var när en ung hjälte fick en kula genom bröstet och blev blek och dog. Det var inte bara trevligt, det var vackert.

När kriget sedan politiserades, fick en mening, som man påstod, var det slut på det roliga, allt förvandlades till en tung plikt, att döda och dödas. Men äran kvarstod från tider som flytt och hindrade soldaterna från att själva fly. (Tikkanen 1977, 6–8.)

In the war that Runeberg described, Russian officers were invited to balls after they'd taken a town; Kulnev would drink champagne from ladies' slippers. But this was before war became politicized; it was during its l'art pour l'art period. War was almost nothing but attractive sides to it, the most attractive one being when a young hero took a bullet

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15 In the Swedish translation of *Tuntematon sotilas*, the dialect that is used (östnyländska) is spoken in a relatively small area in Southern Finland.

in his chest, grew pale, and died: that wasn't just attractive; it was beautiful! Later, when war became politicized, acquiring, so to speak, a purpose, all the fun went out of it. It became a tedious duty – kill and be killed – except for the sense of honor which lingered on from bygone days, and which kept soldiers from taking to their heels (1987, 4; Trans. G. Blecher and L. Thygesen Blecher. *The Thirty Years' War*).

In the beginning of the quote, Tikkanen is referring directly to Runeberg's poem "Kulneff", the character of which is a Russian field commander. The expression "a young hero took a bullet in his chest, and died", in turn, calls up Runeberg's widely known poem "Soldatgossen" ("The Soldier boy"), in which the death of a young boy at the front for the sake of "honour, country, and king" is described in positive terms; as something worthy of admiration. This short excerpt illustrates Tikkanen's economic and laconic style, which creates the parodic tone through which he is able to grasp a number of widely known features of Runeberg's classical text and use them to criticise excessive patriotism and heroism. He makes use of a well-known subtext, as he did in the case of the Finnish-language novel *Unohdettu sotilas*, and thus follows the tradition that Väinö Linna initiated through his *Tuntematon sotilas*.

To be accurate, *Tuntematon sotilas* is not entirely absent from *30-åriga kriget*, either. Linna's novel is being referred to, for example, when the narrator explains that the letters Kämpärä is writing to his mother during his stay in the wilderness reveal that he is tired and, many times, willing to leave his post:

Sådana reflexioner återkommer ofta i breven och psykiatern betecknade dem som helt normala och betingade av sysslolösheten som betraktas som soldatens kanske farligaste fiende. Desto hedersammare var segern över defaitismen, Kämpärä hölls trots sina tvivel kvar på sin post. (Här hänvisade biograferna till Väinö Linnas hjälteepos *Okänd soldat* där det klart framgår att ett betecknande drag för den finska ödemarkssoldaten är hans knorrande, som dock inte har nån negativ verkan på hans stridsinsats, snarare tvärtom. (Tikkanen 1977, 46–47.)

Such thoughts recur often in the letters. The psychiatrists considered them perfectly normal; they were the result of idleness, perhaps the soldier's greatest enemy, and they made Viktor's decision to stay at his post doubly admirable. (In this regard the biographers cite Väinö Linna's heroic epic, *The Unknown Soldier*, in which it's evident that the Finnish fighting man's affinity for complaining has no negative influence on his performance in

battle; quite the contrary.) (1987, 36–37; Trans. G. Blecher and L. Thygesen Blecher. The Thirty Years' War.)

Here the ordinariness and humanity of Linna's soldiers, their habit of complaining, is once again referred to and shown as a positive feature. Although the voice of the narrator is highly ironical, it shows that *Tuntematon sotilas* radically changed the way of looking at the heroism of war, and that Tikkanen's *30-åriga kriget* is part of the same tradition. All in all, even though the subtexts used in Tikkanen's two novels are different, the effect is the same. The rich tradition of war depictions and especially the classical texts give him plenty of material to work with, and he can thus provide his Finnish- and Swedish-speaking readers works in which the cultural and literary connotations are – given their enthusiastic reception – convincing, interesting and inspiring. *Unohdettu sotilas* was a breakthrough for Tikkanen, marking him out as a Finnish-language author. The work became a success in Finnish, but later on also in Swedish (Wrede 2012, 126–136).

### **Self-translation as a border-zone activity**

In their twin texts, both Bergroth and Tikkanen show that the borders and barriers between the Finnish- and Swedish-language groups, cultural spheres and literary institutions are not as sharp as they are often presented in Finland. Instead there are texts and traditions that are common to both language groups that can be used when there is a need to reach out to a larger audience. As war seems to be a topic that has given reason for broadening the amount of potential readers and for discussing it as widely as possible, self-translation can be regarded as an important strategy for dealing with culturally traumatic experiences which are not only personal but also deeply collective.

The analysis of Bergroth's and Tikkanen's texts has shown that self-translation links the Finnish- and Swedish-speaking language groups and literary traditions. By crossing the monolingual paradigm(s), so essential to the modern nation-state, self-translation turns out to be an activity that cuts straight to the core of nationhood, showing that it is possible to engage in two languages, cultures and literary traditions at the same time. By marking how the categories of language, culture and literature – which are so important for modern nation- states, whether they are monolingual or bilingual – overlap each other, and by pointing towards spaces common to both cultures, self-translations disclose the mechanisms of monolingual practices and provide new interpretations of questions about national belonging. There are aspects of incorporation and inclusion,

efforts to discuss important, even traumatic, collective conflicts and crises that cross linguistic and cultural borders and categories by turning to texts that convey the same kinds of connotations and meanings in both language groups.

However, despite the similarities, the two cultural spheres never overlap each other completely, and different kinds of strategies are needed to deal with this. While Kersti Bergroth uses relatively conventional modes of adaptation, such as changing the characters' names and rather discreet revision of subtexts and single words and expressions, Tikkanen constructs both of his texts differently. His decision to construct the stories by changing subtexts and narrative gives rise to two works that are anything but symmetrical and identical, and the strategies in use are close to improvisation. Many researchers dealing with border-cultures and border-zones emphasize and regard such improvisation as important in re-organising and inventing new kinds of subjectivities and cultures (see e.g. Jay 2010, 76–79). As a border-zone activity, self-translation moves the attention not only to the overlaps of languages, literatures and cultures, but also to the fact that cross-cultural activity involves asymmetrical and arbitrary forms of experiences, expression and practices, thus paving the way for reformulations of literary history and theory, which do not stem from monolingual assumptions about literature and culture.

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# Translocal Religious Identification in Christian Metal Music Videos and Discussions on *YouTube*

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*This chapter shows that, although the geographical roots of Christian metal (CM) bands do play a role, not least for the audiences, the crossing of national borders in online settings is equally important both to the audience and to the bands themselves. A detailed look into the discourse and interaction around Finnish CM music on YouTube.com is the basis for considering social media sites, such as YouTube, as providing a space for translocal negotiation of and identification on the basis of religiosity, music, language and place.*

## Introduction

While established geographical roots often play an important role in making singers and bands authentic, today's subcultures utilise the World Wide Web to transcend the boundaries of place (e.g. Barker and Taylor 2007; Connell and Gibson 2003; Peterson and Bennett 2004). In the context of religious music subcultures, it is not only music that the artists wish to spread but also certain beliefs and values. Drawing on recent work on language, multisemioticity and globalization (e.g. Blommaert 2010; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006; Leppänen et al. 2013, 2014) and on religion and popular culture (e.g. Jousmäki 2013; Moberg 2009; Partridge 2010), this chapter explores transnationalism in relation to how Christian metal (CM) music adherents interact with each other on the social media site *YouTube.com* on issues related to music, place and religiosity. This chapter proposes a bottom-up understanding of religiosity more specifically as *religious*

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*identification*, processed and indexed through discursive and multisemiotic means (cf. Leppänen et al. 2013, 2014), most notably text and visuality. Through analyzing such practices, this chapter contributes to a deeper understanding of the nature of online interaction and grassroots-level religious identification as *translocal*.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, I briefly discuss the history of CM music, and religion in Finland, and consider the two together from 1990s onwards. Next, I review the literature on Finnish CM music especially on online contexts and propose the term *translocal* to be used in the context of CM music. After that, I introduce the notion of religious identification and show how it will be applied in the analytical part that follows. Following a three-part analysis of song lyrics, a video and comments, I conclude by considering the broader implications of the results obtained thus far.

## Background

Built around a combined interest in Christian beliefs and metal music, CM music was born in the US in the 1980s. Such a combination proved, and still is, problematic for many: while CM music distanced itself from anti-Christian metal music, it was regarded as inauthentic by secular metal music adherents. Nor were Christian believers enthusiastic about their young people playing such rebellious music (Luhr 2005, 106–121; Moberg 2009, 225–229). Thirty years later, in Finland, CM music is still a border (sub)culture (cf. Grönstrand in this volume), which transcends not only the national but also the traditional cultural borders of Christianity and of metal music culture: it does not comply with forms of practising Christian religion that favour modesty, silence and subtlety – the characteristics of religious practice that appeal to many Finns (Ketola et al. 2011), nor does it accept the rejection of Christian beliefs and values conveyed in secular metal music culture, in black and anti-Christian metal music in particular (Bossius 2003, 77–78; Jousmäki forthcoming; Partridge 2010, 498–499).

As Vertovec (2009, 145) notes, religion is inherently transnational in nature, and things are no different when it comes to CM music. Like various other religions, as well as popular cultural influences, CM music found its way to Finland in the 1990s – or, rather, was appropriated by young local Christians who were willing to take up the idea of merging the so-called ‘good news’ of their faith with what they considered to be good music (Moberg 2009; Nikula 2012). However, the Finnish social and religious context within which Christian metal music began to settle differed somewhat from the original

evangelical context of the subculture (Jousmäki 2013, 274). Even today, the Christian metal music phenomenon in Finland is not the same as it was in California in the 1980s: there are differences between the national, societal and religious backgrounds of today's bands around the world and influences. For example, while US-based Christian metal bands are often nurtured in the Evangelical Christian sphere of influence (Moberg 2009, 173), in the predominantly Lutheran Finland, Christian metal music is also employed in a distinctive Metal Mass (Jousmäki 2013, 273–274; Moberg 2009, 196). While the Evangelical Lutheran Church has a long tradition as Finns' default religious orientation, the Church today is losing members, especially among young adults (Niemelä 2007). At the same time, young people are searching for new forms of spiritual and religious expression—such as Christian metal music (see Moberg 2009). Likewise, evangelical, charismatic and experiential movements are gaining popularity (Kääriäinen et al. 2009, 110, 117; 2005, 69–71). Moberg (2009, 179) also points out that although most Finnish Christian metalheads are Lutheran, 'the lines between denominational affiliations become fluid in this context' as people may participate more or less actively in activities across institutional religious borders.

## Translocality

Since the 1990s, various Finnish metal bands, such as *HIM*, *Nightwish* and *Stratovarius*, to name a few, have been acknowledged internationally to the extent that metal music has been closely connected with the very notion of 'Finnishness' (Lukkarinen 2010). In this spirit, various Finnish CM bands have also become popular outside Finland, while the Finnish fan base also connects with and admires CM bands from other countries. Rather than calling this transnational, in this chapter I prefer the term *translocal*. It has previously been applied to the study of other music scenes (e.g. Peterson and Bennett 2004) and activity cultures (Leppänen et al. 2009; Peuronen 2011.) In the context of CM music, translocality is an apt term because Christian metal is, not only, a border (sub) cultural movement between Christianity and metal music on the one hand and between various different institutions and traditions *within* Christianity on the other; but also, despite being geographically and religiously and culturally dispersed across specific locales, is rather effortlessly conjured up with the help of today's virtual communication technologies (Block 2004; Jousmäki forthcoming).

Previously, Moberg (2009, 191–194) has pointed to the important role the Internet has had for the development of what he calls a transnational Christian metal music community:

The Internet has played an important role in the formation of what can be viewed as a transnational Christian metal discursive community with a set of common ideals and goals as it also offers a range of opportunities for communication and interaction among its members. However, in doing so it has not only affected the nature of Christian metal discourse by making it more fixed and concentrated but, arguably, also entailed the formation of certain requirements on participation, such as the acquisition and understanding of a specific use of language (*cf.* Moberg 2008, 97). (Moberg 2009, 192.)

Moberg posits that the Internet allows Christian metal enthusiasts to interact with each other, and that, in doing so, they engage in the discursive work of constructing not only the subculture (or scene, as he calls it) but also its language norms. (A similar tendency of peers regulating and monitoring each others' language use is also found in online discussions around other interests; Leppänen et al. (2013) discuss fan fiction and football as examples.) However, the literature on CM still lacks a description of that type of communication and interaction. While Moberg's analysis answers questions like how 'core members' of the scene, such as the administrators of central CM websites, define the basic functions and meanings of CM and how those outside the scene view it, as a largely macro-level approach it does not go into detail about the discourse practices of more or less sporadic social media users engaging with CM. This type of information is important, however, because it provides us with an understanding of the constant, contemporary making of CM translocally, especially from the perspective of the online audience, the members of which can seldom be anticipated in terms of, for example, nationality, age, sex, worldview or socio-economic status. Consequently, this chapter seeks to describe on a micro-level the on-going identification processes involved in the discursive and multisemiotic interaction of people affiliated with CM, Finnish CM in particular, around the world.

## Religious identification

In addition to discussing CM as translocal, another central undertaking of this chapter is the application of the concept of religious identification which points, firstly, to the fluidity of 'identity', that is, to the on-going discursive construction of identities in multisemiotic online spaces such as *YouTube.com* (henceforth *YouTube*). As Leppänen et al. (2013, 2014) and Brubaker and Cooper (2000, 14–21) argue, 'identification', as a term, steps away from what has become known as the more fixed concept of 'identity' and places more emphasis on the active process-type construal of it. According to them, identification entails affinity, alignment, emotional attachment as well as ideological notions of togetherness, which, in online environments, are put forth and indexed through using different multisemiotic resources, such as texts, sounds, pictures and moving images.

Secondly, as regards *religious* identification in particular, it refers to those a(spe)cts of identification that relate to and evoke certain discourses, systems of belief and religiosities. In the context of CM, it is important to highlight the fact that more is at stake than in the more traditional forms of Christianity or 'religion'. Typically for (late) modern religiosity more generally, it can mean the incorporation of popular culture, consumerism, health and well being, and so on, into the realm of religion (see e.g. Ahlbäck 2012; Vincett & Woodhead 2010). But again, while CM centrally manifests itself through and with the help of popular cultural forms of expression, according to Moberg (2009, 172, 205–207) it builds strongly on the basic premises of Protestant Christianity. In the following, I explain my approach to study how this 'building' takes place in practice – that is, how religious identification is achieved – in CM videos and discussions on *YouTube*.

## Aim, data and method

To explore translocal religiosity and practices of religious identification on *YouTube*, I will look at different linguistic, discursive and textual-visual resources used in one specific *YouTube* video and in the discussions taking place around this and other similar videos. The central questions in the analysis become what the socio-cultural and religious meanings conveyed in and through these multisemiotic choices are and how these provide the discussants with points of translocal religious identification. This analytic approach combines sociolinguistics, multimodal discourse analysis and online ethnography (Blommaert 2010; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006; Kytölä and

Androutsopoulos 2012; Leppänen et al. 2013, 2014; Leppänen et al. 2009), which enables a close reading of the multisemiotic features of user-generated videos whilst also situating the findings in socio-cultural and religious contexts. As a theoretically loaded tool of inquiry, it proposes a bottom-up approach to the construction of situated religious identification. The approach is not that of semiotic theory in a strict sense but draws on some aspects of it and incorporates them into a discourse-analytic framework, in the vein of sociolinguistics of globalization (Blommaert 2010), where discourse is by default taken as multisemiotic, that is, not merely text or talk but also visuality, orality and embodiment – in this chapter, mostly text and visuals.

While various social media sites are blooming today, this chapter focuses on only one example of such a site. Overall, *YouTube* videos on CM music make a good case for studying contemporary ways of participating in the production and consumption of socio-cultural reality and of interacting with others. As one of the most popular forms of social media, *YouTube* works not only as a site for distributing and circulating popular cultural products licensed by large record and film companies, for instance, but also as a platform for the general public to create anew, reinterpret and challenge commercial, ideological and political creations, and to connect, if only temporarily, with other like-minded people (Burgess and Greene 2009, Leppänen and Häkkinen 2012; Leppänen et al. 2013, 2014; Meikle 2002). As regards CM in particular, the creation of online videos makes it possible for the users to participate in a marginal musical-religious subculture independent of their geographical location, to find others with similar interests and to experience groupness and belonging.

As to the specific band around which the videos under scrutiny are made, *HB*, it provides a particularly apt example for the study of questions of music, place and identification because the band combines aspects of both ‘fluidity’ and ‘fixity’ (cf. Connell and Gibson 2003, 9–11). On the one hand, *HB* represents itself as a pronouncedly Finnish CM band as indexed by their use of Finnish and by the long-term use of blue and white colours (that is, the colours of the national flag of Finland) in the central photograph on their official website,<sup>1</sup> thus strengthening the disputable idea of an inherent tie between Finland and metal music (cf. *ibid.*, 1–15) – and Christianity. The claim that there is a natural connection between any of these three is debated in the comments section of some other CM videos (see Jousmäki forthcoming). On the other hand, their more recent practice of releasing albums in English and touring in Turkey and Central Europe,

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1 <[www.hbmusic.net](http://www.hbmusic.net)> Web addresses accurate as of 30 January, 2013.

together with an upsurge in their presence in various forms of social media (*MySpace*, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *YouTube*),<sup>2</sup> gives the band a more fluid profile.

The video analyzed in this chapter is built around the song *Lovesong* performed by *HB* and uploaded onto *YouTube* by a Brazilian user *sonatamano*.<sup>3</sup> At a later point in the analysis, other data are also incorporated to widen the perspective. These include comments around three other videos on *HB*: *Ambition* by the Costa Rican *Henry Fernández*,<sup>4</sup> *Jeremia* 'Jeremiah' by the Brazilian *Aline Sartori*,<sup>5</sup> and *Jesus on Herra* (*Live at Turkuhalli*) 'Jesus is the Lord (Live at Turku Hall)' by the Brazilian *Jessica Kon*.<sup>6</sup> While *YouTube* features numerous *HB*-centred videos, the majority of which are uploaded by users of Finnish or Latin origin, these four are representative of the wider genre in terms of both visuality and textuality as well as of the thematic nature of the comment threads.

### ***HB as a translocal Christian metal group***

The analysis begins with a close reading of a *YouTube* video *HB – The love Song – Legendado*,<sup>4</sup> uploaded by user *sonatamano* in late 2008. *HB* first published the song on their first English-language album *Frozen Inside* in 2008. The album is an English version of their second Finnish album, *Enne* 'omen' (2006), where *Lovesong* was known as *Jesus on Herra* 'Jesus is the Lord'. Before analysing the video and the comments it has received in more detail, a more in-depth discussion of the song itself is in place to gain a better understanding of what translocal religious identification means in this case. In the following, I will first compare the Finnish lyrics with the English ones as provided by the band on their website. Although lyrics are often best analyzed in the context of music and performance (cf. Frith 1996, 158–182) – and I do make some observations about sound – in the context of CM, the analysis of lyrics as individual artefacts is also justified because it is exactly the lyrics that make the difference between Christian and secular metal music (e.g. Jousmäki 2011, 2013). Towards the end of the discussion, I

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2 <[www.myspace.com/hbmetal](http://www.myspace.com/hbmetal)>; <[www.facebook.com/pages/HB-official-/149236541794296](https://www.facebook.com/pages/HB-official-/149236541794296)>; <[www.twitter.com/hbmetal](https://www.twitter.com/hbmetal)>; <[www.youtube.com/user/HBvideochannel](https://www.youtube.com/user/HBvideochannel)>

3 <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqYJymmGHug>>

4 <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=xN4bjOmSaKU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xN4bjOmSaKU)>

5 <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pa9O8xysbg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pa9O8xysbg)>

6 <[www.youtube.com/watch?v=582P412fP2o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=582P412fP2o)>

look at the differences between the versions from the perspective of translocality and religious identification.

Despite the different meanings conveyed in *HB*'s song title in Finnish and in English, the lyrics resemble each other to the extent that *Lovesong* is easily taken as a translation of *Jeesus on Herra* 'Jesus is the Lord'. However, there is more to it. To start with, while the Finnish lyrics contain three verses only, the English lyrics expand up to five verses (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** The lyrics of *Jeesus on Herra* 'Jesus is the Lord' (left; translated into English by H.J) and *Lovesong* (right). Published on the band's homepage <[www.hbmusic.net/index.php?page=310](http://www.hbmusic.net/index.php?page=310)>; <[www.hbmusic.net/index.php?page=410](http://www.hbmusic.net/index.php?page=410)>.

Vain sinua Herrani, vain Sinua Herrani, vain Sinua rakastan, Herrani	For you alone my Father For you alone have my love, oh Father.
Vallan saat, nyt tunnustan, että Jeesus on Herra. Hän on!	You are love, from you comes all Even death could not hold you. (You live!) Now I know, I so love you
Hei! Miksi en tee niin kuin Sä tahdot, jos Sua rakastan niin paljon? Hei! Miksi en mee niin kuin sä tahdot, jos Sua ylistän ja palvon?	Jesus you are my Saviour. You reign! There's no one else like you God x 4 There's no one else who can compare with you.
('It is only You, my Lord, only You, my Lord, only You, my Lord, that I love	Hey, I want to be more like you Father, You are everything to me.
I give you all the power, I now confess that Jesus is the Lord. He is!	Still the good I should do I do not do Weren't you everything to me?
Hey! If I love you this much, why am I not doing things Your way? Hey! If I praise and adore You, why am I not going Your way?')	I know faith comes from you That's why I need you, so please fill me with you power I don't wanna lose your loving presence, Disobeying your Holy Spirit.
HB: <i>Jeesus on Herra</i> , <i>Enne</i> (2006)	HB: <i>Lovesong</i> , <i>Frozen Inside</i> (2008)

The overall tone in the two versions could be characterized as worshipful in both cases, as the author expresses his/her gratitude and adoration towards the Lord – for example, in *I so love you/ Jesus you are my Saviour* (in the English *Lovesong*, 2nd verse) and by repeating simple phrases several times in a row at the beginning of the song (cf. McGann 2002). As can be seen both in the final verse of the Finnish *Jeesus on Herra* and in the fourth verse of *Lovesong*, the author also becomes aware of the dilemma of “not doing the good s/he should” in the vein of Paul the Apostle as expressed in Romans 7:19 (NRSV 1989; for uses of the Bible in CM discourse, see Jousmäki 2012). The English version does not stop here, however, but continues to develop on the theme in another ‘final’ verse in which the author expresses powerlessness and remorse as well as dependence on God to provide His *loving presence* and *Holy Spirit*. Time wise, the different versions are of equal length, however (over six minutes), because the Finnish version is sung through twice. The text version of the lyrics in both languages lack the final phrase *Hän on ‘He is’*, which is audible when listening to the song and watching the video. In terms of genre, the song can be classified as symphonic metal because of its distinct guitar riffs and solos as well as the female lead singer’s clean vocals. Owing to these characteristics, many discussants on *YouTube* frequently compare the band with *Nightwish*, also fronted by a female vocalist; simultaneously, many also criticize calling bands such as *HB* ‘proper metal’.

We thus begin to see that the length of the lyrics is not the only difference between the two versions of the song, as the wording also differs, and this has important consequences for the translocal religious identification conveyed through the song. In English, the song is verbally and theologically more versatile than in Finnish, which may be due to time having passed since the publication of the original version in Finnish and to the band’s wish to work on the song again. From the perspective of translocality and religious identification, the English version is especially interesting as it introduces and makes use of words and expressions typical to Evangelical and Charismatic Christianity and to the praiseful and worshipful music produced within such movements. This of course also reveals itself in the Finnish version but the remodification of the lyrics in the English version intensifies it with the introduction of new material in the final verse: *I know faith comes from you/ That’s why I need you, so please fill me with your power/ I don’t wanna lose your loving presence/ Disobeying your Holy Spirit*. These lines emphasize the central role of the Holy Spirit, which is typical of (Neo-) Charismatic Christian movements, as is the talk about becoming ‘filled’ with the ‘presence’ and ‘power’ of God (Woodhead 2010, 227–229). Thus, the switch into English also enables *HB* to draw on Anglo-American Christian discourse whereby these lyrics become an

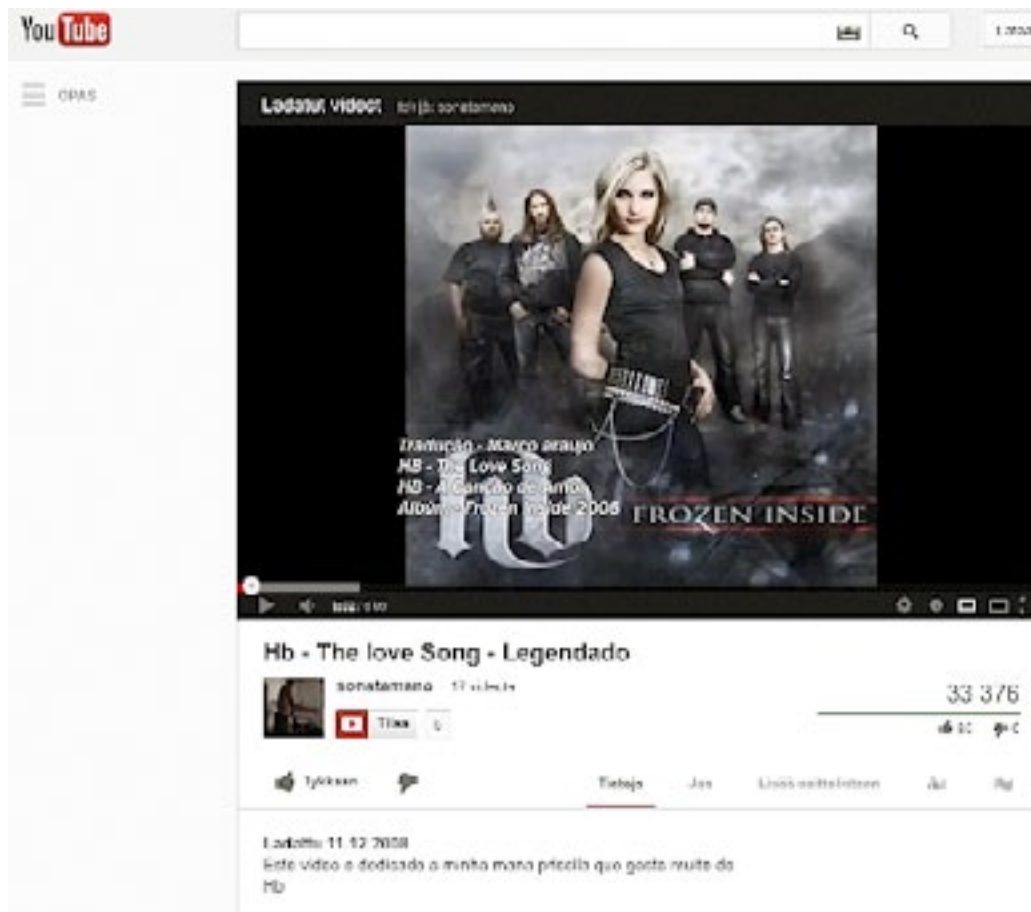
open channel for the band to identify with Evangelical religiosity, and Charismatic Christianity in particular.

### **Spreading the word: *HB*-centred videos on *YouTube***

In this section, I move on to analysing the reception of *YouTube* videos built around the music of *HB*. So far, this issue has not been addressed in the scholarly literature on media, music, religion or discourse, but I argue that by looking into such data we gain a window into naturally occurring discourse practices evoked by ‘border’ (sub)cultural videos around a controversial musical style, the oxymoron of CM (cf. Grönstrand this volume; Moberg 2009, 225–228). Such a view furthers the understanding of subculture in-the-making.

The audiences of *YouTube* videos around *HB*’s music are, of course, translocal in the sense that they are not geographically bound to any specific locality, which can be seen for instance by the fact that *YouTube* users from various national backgrounds in Europe, Asia, North America and South America (names of cities are not mentioned) have uploaded and commented on *HB*-related material therein. As mentioned, one of them is *sonatamano*, who reports to be from Brazil. So what we have is first a Finnish band translating (and modifying) one of their songs, previously published in Finnish, into English and dedicating it to the Lord; and a person from Brazil, a geographically distinct setting from Finland (and also one with an established metal music scene (Avelar 2003) and thriving Evangelical and Charismatic churches (Martin 1994); see also Moberg 2009, 172, 208), combining the soundtrack of *HB* performing *The Lovesong* with some band photos (live and promotional photos, album covers) and Portuguese subtitles for the lyrics, and using these to build up a *YouTube* video. Interestingly, on the basis of the opening screen (see Image 1), the user is not the translator of the lyrics as s/he gives the credit for doing that to *Marco araujo*.

Image 1.



The description below the video window reads *Este video e dedicado a minha mana priscila que gosta muito de Hb* 'This video is dedicated to my sister Priscila who likes HB very much'. As *sonatamano* dedicates the emergent video to his/her sister in this manner, the song becomes framed in a completely different way to its 'original' context (cf. Jousmäki 2012; Leppänen et. al. 2013, 2014). This said, the Portuguese subtitles, titled *A Canção de Amor* 'a love song', seem to retain the message set out by the band in the English version of the song (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** The lyrics of Lovesong on the left and their Portuguese translation in the YouTube video Hb – The love Song (Legendado) on the right.

For you alone my Father x4	Só Você meu Pai x4
For you alone have my love, oh Father	<i>Só Você tem o meu amor, oh Pai.</i>
You are love, from you comes all	<i>Você é amor, de você vêm tudo</i>
Even death could not hold you. (You live!)	<i>Nem sequer a morte pôde O segurar. (Você vive!)</i>
Now I know, I so love you	<i>Agora eu sei, eu Te amo</i>
Jesus you are my Saviour. You reign!	<i>Jesus você e meu Salvador. Você reina!</i>
There's no one else like you God x 2	<i>Não há nenhum outro como Você, Deus x 2</i>
There's no one else who can compare with you	<i>Não há nenhum outro Que possa se comparar a Você</i>
Hey, I want to be more like you Father,	<i>Ei, eu quero ser mais como Você Pai</i>
You are everything to me.	<i>Você e tudo mara mim.</i>
Still the good I should do I do not do	<i>Eu ainda não faco todo a bem que</i>
Weren't you everything to me?	<i>Eu deveria fazer Você não era tudo para mim?</i>
I know faith comes from you	
That's why I need you, so please fill me with your power	<i>Eu sei que a fé vem de Você Esse é o motivo de eu precisar de Você</i>
I don't wanna lose your loving presence,	<i>Então por favor me preencha com o Seu poder</i>
Disobeying your Holy Spirit.	<i>Eu não quero perder Sua adoravel presença, Desobedecendo Seu Espirito</i>
HB: Lovesong, Frozen Inside (2008)	<i>Você reina!</i>

The fact that the Portuguese lyrics correspond rather seamlessly to the English version in terms of content and form – except for the use of italics in the Portuguese version – suggests that the video maker and/or translator aim at loyally reproducing the lyrics in a language that also allows Portuguese speakers with little or no knowledge of English to understand the message. On the other hand, the video maker/translator also observes the final line which is sung, *He lives!*, which is not included in either the English or the Finnish lyrics. However, s/he does not quite succeed in this: instead of providing

a literal translation, the subtitles read *Você reina!* 'He reigns!'. This is probably not so much about the translator not knowing the right verb as it is about him mishearing what is sung. A third explanation, albeit an unlike one here, is the translator's wish to use the video for his/her own aims and purposes, for instance, for proclaiming God's triumph. Such a transformative practice does take place in quite a lot of *YouTube* videos where the recirculation of popular music is more complex than in this case; for example, when users insert non-artist-related visual material into the video, thereby using the music mainly as a resource for their own artistic expression (see e.g. Leppänen and Häkkinen 2012; Leppänen et al. 2013, 2014).

As to translocal religious identification, the different elements of this *YouTube* video – sound, photography, vocals in English, text in English and Portuguese – that have a strong 'local' relevance for various people on various sites had, in fact, become translocal already before being combined into an online video. This is because of the opportunities afforded by online media for the exhibition and promotion of products and ideas, and for interaction between various parties. This is also to say that moving these elements from offline to online (sheet of paper, memory card, recording studio, etc.) had not diminished the meaning they had locally. Rather, it had extended the meaningfulness of the elements and built linguistic, religious, and musical bridges between different localities. These four issues are also frequently addressed in the comments sections after *HB*-related videos, and this is what I will now turn to.

## **Discussing music, place, religiosity and language on *YouTube***

Apart from metal, music produced in Finland has not been especially successful outside the country: for example, many Finns can hardly forget the low level of success in the Eurovision song contest traditionally, interrupted in recent years only by the metal group *Lordi's* victory in 2006. By contrast, Finland is most often experienced as receiving popular and socio-cultural influences, especially from the Anglo-American world—this is the case with Charismatic religious practice, too (cf. Ketola et al. 2005, 69–71). However, it is exactly Finnish *metal* music that has gained success outside the country (Lukkarinen 2010; Rossi and Jervell 2013), and this is something that *YouTube* users watching videos on *HB* frequently acknowledge. Examples from comment threads around the four videos mentioned in the aim, data and method section include:

**1commono**

The Glory be to GOD, I was almost done hoping to ever find a good Christian metal band. they had to be from Finland of course.

**TheDiscipleShipPA**

I want to go to a Christian metal concert in Finland. This looks amazing.

**777kutless**

they must be from finland or somewhere in europe

The commentators above thus show positive evaluation of not only Finnish metal but of Finnish *Christian* metal, as well. As to the construction of translocal religious identification, there are some important insights to be gained from the comments section. In addition to showing respect for Finnish (Christian) metal in general, some commentators index their geographical place in relation to that of the band in, for example, the following ways:

**kellu12**

I just saw them in my school.

**MrSve9**

they where in norway this weekend !! loved it <3

**TheJeffevilboy**

Muito bom o som da HB. . . Nice song! I'm from Brazil ^^ and I listen HB everyday! GOD bless you!!

**MagisterJE**

The most beautiful song I've heard in my life.  
Greetings from the first fan of HB in Spain. God bless you all.

Through explicitly displaying their geographical proximity with/distance from *HB*, these commentators construct a translocal space in which some participants navigate effortlessly (e.g. *I just saw them in my school, I listen HB everyday!*) while others find it harder to manage and/or overcome the perceived distance:

**FlyingAxlade**

isn't this nice?

i want 40 cd's to pass out in Randolp, VERmont!

**Dnkan**

Great way to spread the word of God. I'd love this band to come to Costa Rica...

The comments above suggest these writers experience spatiality as a hindrance and themselves as passive victims of spatial circumstances when it comes to getting the most out of (the fandom of) *HB*: the first commentator explicitly and in a very straightforward fashion declares s/he *wants* 40 copies of the band's CD for distribution without telling others what specific album s/he is referring to – or, perhaps, s/he may not even know it him/herself but has only now come to heard of such a band and acts straight away. The second writer, furthermore, admires the way *HB spreads the word of God* – thereby identifying with the religiosity conveyed in *HB's* music – but continues with wishing the band would tour in the writer's country of residence. This is in contrast with those who are willing to travel to see their favourite band performing live, such as the North American *TheDiscipleShipPA* who says s/he *wants to go to a Christian metal concert in Finland*.

Often, this type of translocal space, which is constructed in, through and around videos on *HB*, gives rise to multilingual language practices evident not only in the videos *per se* but also in the comments section. Comments may, for example, be written mainly in Spanish or German but with some established English phrases, such as *Greetings from Germany* and *God bless* – often, these utilize religious discourse and evoke religious meanings and connotations. As to language as a theme, it is at times also addressed through meta-level talk. For example, having watched the video *HB – Jeremia* uploaded by user *Aline Sartori*, user *xxxMissRiskxxx* is but one of the users who has no clue as to what the vocalist is 'saying' in Finnish – in this video, there are no subtitles. However, not understanding the lyrics does not prevent her ('her', judging from the username), and many others, from enjoying the music:

**xxxMissRiskxxx**

woh.

i can hardly describe this.

they are very original.

and her voice, I could listen to her voice for like forever, so beautiful.

and well, I have no ideah what they're saying.xD

Another user shares her view of the vocalist having a beautiful voice but also expresses a more pronounced interest in 'language':

**Thuhn13**

who cares if u don't know what shes saying!!! her voice is beautiful and Finnish is an awesome language! i wanna learn just because of HB!!!!

ROCK ON!

GOD BLESS THEM!

User *Thuhn13* is among those commentators for whom the Finnish lyrics seem to work especially well. For him/her, *HB's* music seems to function as a source of inspiration for learning Finnish (*i wanna learn just because of HB!!!!*), as reported for instance in Balogh (2012). Therefore, it is not only music (metal), religiosity (Christianity and popular culture) and place (Finland), but also language (Finnish) that plays a role in the identification processes of these *YouTube* audiences, providing resources for their senses of affinity, alignment, emotional attachment and belonging. However, what often happens in *YouTube* discussions is that a more or less critical voice arises, at times even leading to the deletion of the most destructive comments by the administrator of the site. In these cases, it is not only about identification but about *disidentification* as well (cf. Leppänen et al. 2013). As regards the focal video in the analysis, *Hb – The love Song*, little critique occurs, but some effort is made to act authoritatively concerning the 'right' view on a central religious matter, salvation (cf. Jousmäki 2011):

**MirkaProduction**

This is the most beautiful christian metal song i've ever heard!! I am playing in a band in a church, i want to play this song so bad!! we're searching for good christian songs, and ive come up with this one, because this is some of the best i've ever heard!!

**Cristina Qzan**

Jesus is not best way to heaven. Jesus is ONE way to heaven !

**shadowlilly99**

Jesus is the ONLY way to Heaven.

User *MirkaProduction* praises the song as being *some of the best i've ever heard!!* To this, she gets the following reply from user *Cristina Qzan*: *Jesus is not best way to heaven. Jesus is ONE way to heaven !* Although the initial positive evaluation focused on the song and said nothing about Jesus, or about anything else for that matter, *Cristina Qzan* accuses *MirkaProduction* for claiming that Jesus is, among many, the best way to heaven. With the purpose of correcting her, *Cristina Qzan* writes *Jesus is ONE way to heaven* where the grammar, unfortunately, leads her to argue the same thing herself. A third user, *shadowlilly99*, responds to this by writing *Jesus is the ONLY way to Heaven* in a grammatically correct form. The way the use of such a perceived ungrammaticality leads *Cristina Qzan* to 'lose' her voice, in Blommaert's (2005, 255) sense of not being able to make oneself understood, in a discussion on spiritual salvation by someone with a better knowledge of English grammar illustrates the potential 'dangers' of multilingualism (Blommaert et al. 2012; Blommaert 2010, 103–106) on the one hand and the rise of new religious gatekeepers and peer authorities (Campbell 2012) on the other. While such negotiation of meaning and interpretation of theological issues as the one taking place between these three users is not exceptional, their exchange of words is particularly interesting as it highlights how religious identification intertwines with language practices in *YouTube* discussions.

## Conclusion

This chapter has focused on one typical *YouTube* video using music and lyrics by and photographs of the Finnish CM band *HB* and it has also looked at the comments around other similar videos. While the band has itself strived for success within and also beyond the national borders of Finland, *YouTube* has provided the band with unexpected audiences, reactions and interpretations independent of the band's own plans and wishes. The chapter has described how people in different localities (Finland, Brazil, Germany, Romania, Costa Rica, Philippines, etc.) participate in watching and commenting on these online music videos with a religious message, creating a translocal space where religiosity, music, language and place become points of identification for the users. On the basis of these observations, we begin to understand better the ways in which today's (young) people use social media for their projects of the self (Giddens 1991) where (commenting on) an online music video is an act and expression of attachment and identification, if only momentarily. Studying the comments (on comments) also adds to the understanding of religiosity today when it seems no longer to be solely

organized from above institutionally, nationally or historically but is, rather, negotiated translocally and at the grassroots level, person-to-person – or, better, one social media user to another.

This has several implications for research. Firstly, for media scholars, this chapter provides a detailed look into how a specific social media site is utilized translocally by regular people instead of professional music and media industries for disseminating music and a religious message. The latter is of relevance to religious studies, secondly; the chapter provides an example of a bottom-up approach to study how religious identification is ‘made’ in a situated, non-institutional popular cultural context – one of increasing importance especially for young people today. Thirdly, scholars of popular music benefit from the analysis of a specific music subculture from the perspective of online audiences and, for them, the chapter also provides an example of the relevance of analyzing lyrics both as an independent artifact and in the context of a song transmitted through an online video. Finally, for discourse studies, the chapter proposes, in the spirit of Brubaker and Cooper (2000) and Leppänen et al. (2013, 2014), a move from the analysis of ‘identity’ towards analyses of ‘identification’. To my knowledge, this chapter pioneers the applying of ‘identification’ to the study of the construction of religiosity. For this reason, I hope, future research will reassess, modify and push forward such an undertaking.

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