

# Introduction

## What's in a Word? What's in a Question?

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*Nina Glick Schiller and Andrew Irving*

Ever since Diogenes (412–323 BC), an outcast, exile, slave and criminal, was asked where he was from and answered, ‘I am a citizen of the World’ (*kosmopolitês*), precise definitions of cosmopolitanism, whether as an idea, moral practice or form of action, have remained contentious and elusive. The history of cosmopolitanism is commonly traced from Diogenes to Kant to Levinas up to contemporary thinkers such as Ulrich Beck, Martha Nussbaum, Kwame Anthony Appiah and Judith Butler. Other genealogies might begin with Mohism, Mo Tzu’s (470–391 BC) alternative to Confucianism, which offered a critique of ancient China’s unequal social hierarchies and challenged the way rights and moral worth were accorded by the privileges of birth rather than based on deeds and actions. Cosmopolitan impulses can also be discerned in the Pan-Africanist project and similar movements of international solidarity and liberation in South America and Asia that have sought to reshape the social, economic and political landscape in the name of human aspirations for equality. Moreover, as Tariq Ramadan suggests (this volume), the world’s organized religions, although often committed to preserving distinctive moral codes, have also provided an impetus for struggles for social justice. However, in the long history of the concept of cosmopolitanism, there have been too few efforts to explore its embedded contradictions. Yet these are readily apparent in the invocation of Diogenes’s claim to be a cosmopolitan, the most cited narrative of the concept’s birth pangs. It proves useful to note that the concept of belonging to the world is remembered as having been first voiced by someone who was socially displaced, stigmatized and disempowered.

*Whose Cosmopolitanism? Critical Perspectives, Relationalities and Discontents* speaks to the tensions within this heritage as they remerge from

within differently situated relationships, discourses, representations and social movements. In so doing this book asks why cosmopolitanism has become an increasingly important and influential concept and is now referenced across a wide range of social, cultural and political settings and by a range of academic disciplines. From public institutions, popular media and national politics to international development agencies, urban regeneration projects and invocations of universal human rights, the term 'cosmopolitan' is routinely used both as a description of the contemporary world and an argument for transforming it into a better one. Various contemporary writers have addressed the potential of cosmopolitanism in terms of moral philosophy, ethical projects, research methodologies, humanitarianism, global studies and liberal democracy (Appiah 2006; Beck and Sznaider 2006; Benhabib 2008; Calhoun 2002; Cheah and Robbins 1998; Derrida 2001; Tan 2004).

It is not our purpose in this book to review the rich literature of recent decades, but rather to contribute to the growth of a critical and situated cosmopolitanism that speaks to the anxieties, contradictions and disparities in power that give rise to – and arise from – cosmopolitan projects and claims (Delanty 2006; Rumford 2008). In beginning with the query 'whose cosmopolitanism?' this book differs in its analytical stance from many of the contemporary readings of cosmopolitanism. Some scholars of cosmopolitanism argue that global media, new mobilities and consequent encounters with difference inevitably lead people around the world to step beyond the boundaries of national thinking to establish a shared cosmopolitan perspective (Beck and Sznaider 2006). As Gilroy (this volume) notes, references to a new universalism (Kaldor 2007) are increasingly deployed to invoke a new era of imperial military intervention in the name of human rights. A form of neoliberal cosmopolitanism, which focuses on lifestyles, a taste for the 'other' and the class outlook of 'elite travellers' (Hannerz 1990), has also become prominent. This cosmopolitanism sees the world divided between wealthy, mobile cosmopolitans who are open to the world and tradition-bound, impoverished and ethnocentric locals. Especially prominent in urban regeneration and branding exercises promoted by Richard Florida and his followers (2003), this consumerist cosmopolitanism has made the concept suspect for many (Calhoun 2002). In asking 'whose cosmopolitanism?' we question these currently prominent conceptualizations of the term and propose alternative paths of enquiry.

Another strand of contemporary cosmopolitan literature has conflated the migrant, the disposed or the exile with the cosmopolitan, who becomes open to the world by abandoning territory and rootedness. For example, Steven Vertovec (2009) has spoken of a cosmopolitan competency as a toolkit that migrants, regardless of their wealth, bring on their

journey. Ulrich Beck has argued that 'in the struggles over belonging, the actions of migrants and minorities provide examples of dialogic imaginative ways of life and everyday cosmopolitanism' (2002: 30). In describing the range of social contexts in which forms of cosmopolitan identity, practice or imagination arise within routine as well as extraordinary situations (Lamont and Aksartova 2002; Bayat 2008; Nowicka and Rovisco 2009), a growing literature highlights an array of alternative possibilities, including 'ghetto' (Nashashibi 2007; Schmidt 2012), 'diasporic' (Sinatti 2006), 'subaltern' (Featherstone 2012), 'rooted' (Appiah 2006), 'working class' (Werbner 1999) and 'vernacular' (Bhabha 1996) cosmopolitanism. Speaking from their different positionings, contributors to this book find these equations of mobility and cosmopolitanism or of subaltern positioning and cosmopolitanism too readily made and call for a critical engagement with concepts, representations and experiences of displacement (see also Glick Schiller and Salizar 2013).

*Whose Cosmopolitanism?* forcefully argues that cosmopolitanism does not inevitably accompany displacement, which emerges today from a myriad of sources including flight from war and unequal development, exposure to different lifestyles and access to global media. In fact, those displaced often find themselves in circumstances that close down their possibilities for openness or unsettle their aspirations for solidarity (Tihanov and Stacey, this volume).

Nonetheless, contributors note that partial, fleeting, uncertain and fragile domains of commonality, expressed as empathy, recognition and sociability, can be found in disparate locations and situations. Underlying the disparate contributions to this book is an understanding that cosmopolitanism is neither inevitable nor impossible. From this dual denial, the dialectic of this double negative, springs the search for moments, expressions and relations of openness that express human aspirations for justice and equality. However, as David Harvey cautions (this volume), any moral code applied in a world of difference is bound to create a hierarchy that supports some moral positions and interests while discriminating against others. Hence, to attempt to forge a basis for cosmopolitan action and engagement means to risk ending up thoroughly confused or disillusioned. Yet Harvey and the other contributors to this book argue for taking this risk.

To better enable readers to understand our stance as well as the structure of this book, a brief history of the book may prove useful. *Whose Cosmopolitanism?* developed out of the collaboration, discussions, seminars and debates of an interdisciplinary group of scholars who came together to found and build the Research Institute for Cosmopolitan Cultures (RICC) at the University of Manchester, UK. Whilst we faced the

task of forging a shared dialogue from our origins in disparate academic disciplines, social movements, gendered identities, political histories and national backgrounds, somewhat to our surprise we often found the disciplinary divides the most daunting. For example, although all of us were concerned with how identities are represented and misread, anthropologists spoke readily of methodology and 'lived experience', whereas RICC members coming from the perspective of film studies were critical of the conceptual repertoires embedded within social scientific approaches. The dilemma was apparent and rather ironic. If we couldn't even speak to each other, how was it possible not only to develop our institute as a site of critical cosmopolitanism, but also to envision and develop a 'cosmopolitics' (Cheah and Robbins 1998) that might speak to the world situation? Yet it also became clear over five years of concerted conversations that certain common themes and aspirations underlay our differences.

Our shared starting point for establishing an ongoing cross-disciplinary discussion on the role of contemporary cosmopolitanism were the concerns and contradictions in the world around us: crisis, war, displacement and migration in a period of global interconnection. We confronted the need to explore the fundamentalisms often unleashed by nationalism and religion as well as the opportunity presented by the current moment to explore new forms of openness. We approached this conjuncture with a common commitment to examine the distinctive features and contradictory meanings of contemporary cosmopolitanism as a contested, situated and ongoing process. Suspicious of the universalism from above that allowed the justification of wars in the interests of Europe and North America in the name of a humanitarian cosmopolitanism, we came to understand and to build this book upon the understanding that the question central to cosmopolitan research was 'whose cosmopolitanism?' Hence, the development of this book and its structuring offers a case study of the limitations, frailties, tensions and possibilities of a situated critical cosmopolitanism.

### **Situating Critical Cosmopolitanism: Methodologies and Theory Building**

*Whose Cosmopolitanism?* not only contributes to descriptions of 'actually existing cosmopolitanism' (Robbins 1998), but also attempts to understand the many kinds of social positionings and situations from which cosmopolitans act and speak. To situate cosmopolitanism is to recognize that people's actions are rooted in their corporeal being. Simply to have a body that lives, moves and interacts with its surroundings is to continually be affected by, and have an effect on, other persons, society and the environ-

ment. Hence, social life implies some form of practical or moral framework for governing action. Contributors highlight contexts and situations where individuals and groups make choices about how they engage with and act towards other human beings. In the perspective of this book cosmopolitanism turns out not only to be about belonging to the world, but also to be about belonging to it in a particular way, one in which a person's situated positioning creates a domain of commonality – however partial, fleeting or contradictory – across categorical identities such as ethnicity, class, sexuality, status, gender and religion.

Consequently, the book's mediations on cosmopolitanism are resonant with the 'border thinking' of Walter Dignolo (2002: 174), who argues that the 'recognition and the transformation of hegemonic imagery from the perspective of people in subaltern positions ... becomes a "tool" of critical cosmopolitanism'. The term 'critical cosmopolitanism', now increasingly deployed in the literature, signals a rejection of universalizing narratives of cosmopolitanism and an affirmation of a stance towards human openness that is processual, socially situated, aspirational, self-problematizing and aware of the incomplete and contested nature of any cosmopolitan claim. This stance allows for the possibility that difference, uncertainty and otherness can be simultaneous with, rather than opposite to, shared understanding. For Delanty (2006: 25), 'critical cosmopolitanism is an emerging direction in social theory. ... As a methodologically grounded approach, critical cosmopolitan sociology has a very specific task: to discern or make sense of social transformation by identifying new or emergent social realities.'

However, we believe that more than critique is needed: contributions to theory and methodology emerge from research, and consequently, *Whose Cosmopolitanism?* offers research that contributes to this next step in cosmopolitan studies. A crucial component in this research is the understanding that, as Delanty emphasizes, critical cosmopolitan enquiries can constitute a counterhegemonic methodology (see also Beck and Sznaider 2006; Gilroy 2004; Rumford 2008; Spencer 2011). Andrew Irving's two interventions (this volume) specifically speak to the development of a *methodology of social connectedness*. Other contributors offer other entry points, reflecting their own disciplinary perspectives and their particular ways of seeing, but in each case offering a means of locating and at least partially apprehending the contradictions and tensions that emerge from disparate displacements as well as multiple belongings. In its specification of entry points, in its focus on relationality and in its explicit attention to questions of social positioning, place, time and programme, *Whose Cosmopolitanism?* develops the concept of a cosmopolitan methodology. These multiple ways of seeing explicated in this book open insights into the necessary

conditions and limiting factors that make possible, or prevent, mutual recognition and understanding among persons whose experiences and understandings of the world reflect social and cultural distinctions that are sometimes incommensurable.

In exploring situations, relationships and representations that produce or negate mutual understandings, affect and solidarities, *Whose Cosmopolitanism?* goes beyond the formulaic 'tolerance of the other' that currently permeates cosmopolitan enquiry (Hannerz 1990; Sandercock 2003; Werbner 2008). Instead, we explore the social processes and complex moral shifts that are necessary for moments of mutual recognition and relationality to emerge or be denied within social and cultural contexts. This process may vary from fleeting to ongoing encounters and may be generated through domains as disparate as viewing a film, reading a book, working in an organization, walking down a city street or sharing another's pain. In other words, whether through our social relationships or various filmic or literary mediations about the social, each of us may come to appreciate aspects of each other's shared humanity. Or we may not. Cosmopolitanism can neither be foreclosed nor offered as a guaranteed outcome.

The unity and disparity of perspectives on cosmopolitanism offered by this book reflects Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblance. As with any other family, there are mutual interests and perspectives as well as fundamental disagreements and ongoing tensions among those interested in cosmopolitanism. Here, our approach resonates with Cheah and Robbins's (2008) notion of cosmopolitanism as a diversity of related conceptualizations but lends further substance to it. By focusing on the social and political position of the narrator, as well as the narration, we critically expose the power dimensions within any iteration of a cosmopolitan vision, project or programme.

## **Part I: Provocations and Responses**

The first part of the book invites readers into the passionate analysis that constitutes the contemporary debates about cosmopolitanism by addressing whether or not cosmopolitanism has been or could be an emancipatory project. Responding to the question of 'whose cosmopolitanism?' from their different disciplinary perspectives, Nina Glick Schiller (social anthropology), RICC director, and Gyan Prakash (history), Galin Tihanov (comparative literature and intellectual history) and Jackie Stacey (cultural studies), who codirected RICC, present a set of 'Provocations' that served to launch the institute. These provocations, plus a contribution by Robert Spencer (postcolonial literature), begin this book.

In the opening provocation, Gyan Prakash observes that it is difficult to speak of a cosmopolitan attachment to a human community in the old sense or in terms of Kantian ideals rooted in European values. For Prakash, colonialism, empire, slavery, capitalist exploitation, world wars and the Holocaust ended the cosmopolitan project as originally conceived. Consequently, to reclaim the concept of cosmopolitanism and pluralize it, we need to engage in a different reading of history, of human capacity and of 'who we might be'. Then we can recognize 'the globally enmeshed lives that we live, and have lived for several centuries'.

Continuing this focus on history but also drawing on literature and philosophy, Galin Tihanov notes the way cosmopolitanism has presented human nature in overtly optimistic and ameliorative terms. Tracing an alternative 'negative' genealogy in which cosmopolitanism emerged alongside European capitalism, he engages with thorny issues, asking whether violence can be justifiable on humanitarian grounds and whether war can be the vehicle for a growing cosmopolitan consciousness of the world. For Tihanov, conflict is a complex form of exchange in a modern globalized world in which there may be no universal human rights.

Responding to abstract philosophical readings of cosmopolitanism and human nature, Nina Glick Schiller offers an anthropology of relationality. She calls for a critical cosmopolitanism built upon analyses of situated and differentially empowered social relations. Glick Schiller asks, 'What if we posit that cosmopolitans are all of us who, out of our multiple differences, rejoice in our times, moments and places of commonality and struggle to expand those possibilities of being human together?' Such domains of commonality may express a desire for 'a world in which everyone's capacities and potentialities are valued'.

In the fourth provocation, Jackie Stacey, critiquing definitions of cosmopolitanism that offer an untenable and overidealized model of human beings, echoes Tihanov's cautionary note. In practice humans often find themselves struggling with conflicting demands. Hence, openness is neither a permanent state of consciousness nor sustainable as a mode of sociality. Rather than totally abandoning cosmopolitan aspirations for a better world, Stacey reframes the discussion. She urges us to recognize the uncertain and often ambivalent responses of human beings, who navigate a complex, indeterminate world with incomplete knowledge about themselves and others.

In concluding the provocations and their interrogation of whose cosmopolitanism should be referenced, Robert Spencer continues the discussion of a world in conflict, a theme that unites the chapters in Part I. Spencer identifies current upheavals as the outcome of the continuing 'coloniality of power' (Quijano 2000) as it is constituted by contemporary neoliberal

capitalism and its regime of global exploitation. He offers engagements with literature as a means not only of contributing to struggles against current forms of oppression but also as a means of self-transformation. As we transform ourselves, cosmopolitan imaginaries become possibilities.

Collectively, and across the disciplines, the five provocations, each in a different timbre, yet each with a passion that moves beyond the academic, hold on to cosmopolitanism as a concept, even as each author acknowledges the baggage of the concept's colonial past, its negative genealogy and its utopianism. Authors contend that impermanence, contradiction, human imperfectability and disorientation must be as much a part of the concept of cosmopolitanism as its resonance with social justice.

These opening 'Provocations' set the stage for the 'Responses', most of them also presented initially at the RICC launch. The responders include Jacqueline Rose (English and Freudian studies), David Harvey (geography and Marxism), Tariq Ramadan (theology and Islamic studies), Andrew Irving (ethnography and visual anthropology) and Sivamohan Valluvan (sociology and cultural studies). Each responder brings to the common conversation viewpoints shaped by their different disciplinary, geographical, gendered, class, religious and racialized positionings. All responders share a sense of the uncertainty, uneasiness and ambivalence that underlie calls for engagement in cosmopolitan projects and yet all are fully engaged.

Continuing the misgivings voiced by Stacey about any projection of a singular self, Jacqueline Rose suggests that, when acting out of character, caught between different demands or submitting to irrational desires and fantasies, we are not only strangers to others but also often strangers to ourselves. Rose's warning does not signal her abandonment of a cosmopolitan project but rather a recasting of the West's 'wounded cosmopolitanism', which in its very nature contains the 'most damaging elements of both history and who we are'. She is aware that despite our self-alienation, the word 'cosmopolitanism' haunts us with an 'aura' that seems to hover somewhere between an assertion about the content and character of the contemporary world and a desire for a different, more equal, kinder world. We are required to suspend our disbelief and imagine another world. Although any such cosmopolitan stance must be 'troubling, disabling and destabilizing', Rose suggests, 'we need to begin'.

Continuing this query, David Harvey asks whether there is a reason beyond academic fashion and marketing that the question of cosmopolitanism keeps recurring. Harvey, a geographer, suggests that cosmopolitanism keeps coming back as a topic of concern because seemingly abstract philosophical questions are ultimately material and political. He observes that crucial questions of land, population, ecology and resource

distribution are becoming more and more compelling as time goes on. Therefore, any contemporary kind of moral code, cosmopolitan or liberal, when practised in a world of difference and unequal power may create and justify injustices and forms of discrimination in the name of universal values. Reframing the foundational question of this book, Harvey asks, '[W]hose cosmopolitical project are you going to back?'

Tariq Ramadan responds by contemplating how a critical cosmopolitanism might inform contemporary thought and practice. In this he harkens back to the original cosmopolitan 'citizen of the world', Diogenes, who maintained that human qualities, such as virtue or morality, were better revealed in someone's actions in daily life than debated in abstract terms or philosophical theory. For Ramadan, cosmopolitan theory – in fact any theory – needs to be applied and judged in terms of its relationship to the tensions that lie within our lived experience of daily life. We find ourselves caught between universal moral values and the need for practical action within a pluralized world replete with social, cultural and moral differences. It is from this perspective that we need to think about and understand different identities within contemporary societies. The task is urgent.

Also engaged with how to apprehend the everyday, Andrew Irving, the fourth responder, takes up Ulrich Beck's (2002) challenge to contemplate a methodological cosmopolitanism. To do this we must move beyond abstract theoretical presuppositions about the state of mind of others, an approach he characterizes as 'ventriloquism'. Irving's methodology is constituted through collaborative face-to-face modes of investigation that establish mutually defined areas of interest, shared research aims and joint projects of understanding. To be successful, it is necessary that persons recognize themselves and their lives in the essays, novels, films and politics that describe their experiences. Though he begins with ethnography, Irving suggests the possibility of finding practical, imaginative and literary means for understanding cosmopolitan thought and action among the persons and places we purport to explain.

Agreeing with Stacey's critique of a problematic cosmopolitanism, Sivamohan Valluvan provides the final response and closing argument of Part I by critically interrogating the 'a priori premises that render certain differences readily intelligible, absolute and certain'. In resonance with Irving, he looks to social relationships as a terrain of cosmopolitanism, as well as a domain of future aspiration. Valluvan notes the multiplicities that each of us uneasily and dynamically may find within ourselves even as we relate to the multiplicity in others. Yet going beyond Ramadan and Irving's invocation of the mundane aspects of everyday encounters, Valluvan, as does Glick Schiller, highlights a conviviality that enables an

expanded ethical gaze. As our 'horizons of interconnectedness expand [they] ... *must* take the world in its entirety as its rightful canvas'.

## Part II: Towards a Processual Situated Cosmopolitanism

Whilst all the 'Provocations' and 'Responses' call for a cosmopolitanism that reflects the specificity of actors enmeshed in time and place, these chapters leave much unresolved. By delving into three interrelated queries that are too rarely explored in the cosmopolitan literature, the thirteen chapters that constitute the second part of the book further develop a situated processual approach to cosmopolitanism. They offer a much-needed critical analytic that centres on key domains of enquiry: *where* and *when* is cosmopolitanism to be found, *how* does cosmopolitanism work, and *whether* cosmopolitanism provides an alternative way of thinking about persons or political moral programmes. Based on original research by RICC members,<sup>1</sup> these chapters take up but go beyond the foundational question of this book, 'whose cosmopolitanism?'

Contributors investigate the emergence as well as the ruptures of cosmopolitan sociabilities, imageries and language. They draw their understandings from particular historic or contemporary circumstances, locations, filmic genres and literary narratives. As in Part I, differences in disciplinary perspectives and cosmopolitanism, emerging as methodology and embedded theory, enrich authors' enquiries into the diverse, sometimes discrepant, forms that cosmopolitanism takes from within wide-ranging global settings – including North America, China, Eastern Europe, Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan, the Indian/Tibetan border and the UK.

### *Where and When Is Cosmopolitanism to be Found?*

As they ask 'whose cosmopolitanism?' the chapters in Part II introduce insights that emerge when we ask where and when cosmopolitanism is to be found. This is because to ask 'whose cosmopolitanism?' not only challenges abstract universalism with questions about agency and the social positioning of cosmopolitan actors, but also helps make manifest differentials of space and time within which cosmopolitanism both waxes and wanes. As it does, our sense of place and time is shaped and changed, even as cosmopolitanism itself is shaped within specific places and times. When we approach cosmopolitanism processually, whether within social relationships or representations, we are able to comprehend geographic and social space and historical and ongoing change as both interdependent and conceptually distinct.

In exploring the whens and wheres of cosmopolitan sensibilities, representations and relationships, place can be variously understood. Cinema, media and literature can be apprehended as critical sites that contain diverse discursive and imaginative possibilities (Chan, Stacey and Latimer). These both articulate and disarticulate cosmopolitan aspirations and processual transformations (Spencer and Tihanov).

Place also can be thought of as an emplacement within socially structured and historically specific multifaceted positionings from which each of us understands, negotiates and acts upon the world (Gilroy and Tihanov). In this reading of emplacement, unequal power and inequality merge two seemingly distinct aspects of place – the social and legal restrictions that being from a certain place or country imposes, and the physical placement of a subject, its embodiment. The consequences of this conflation are many. For instance, people originating from all parts of the globe find their bodies are designated as ‘other’ and are not allowed to pass, whether through borders or social barriers.

However, being born on the wrong soil or without money or the ‘right kind’ of body does not prohibit citizens of the world from conceiving of a life replete with health, meaning, security and existential possibility that they could lead if it were not for the circumstances of their birth. They can actively imagine a different kind of life – and thereby transcend embodied, social, economic, legal, metropolitan or national borders. By challenging a sense of belonging defined by borders and their boundaries, it is possible for those displaced and excluded to articulate transformative commonalities enabling projects of analysis, critique and social action (Glick Schiller, Gilroy, Irving, Ochman and Sen).

For others who explore a processual situated cosmopolitanism, ‘place’ is understood as constructed within what Doreen Massey (2005: 64) has called a ‘power geometry’, a socially constituted geographic location, with space understood as the shifting product of multiple interrelated trajectories of differential power. Such enquiries into where cosmopolitanism might be found disrupt the long-held distinction in the social sciences between the cosmopolitan city and the rural, portrayed as isolated and traditional (Redfield 1947). A range of locations can provide the sites from which to experience or imagine such possibilities – including ‘globally’ powerful metropolises such as Paris (Stacey), New York (Latimer) and Beijing (Chan), the globally renowned city of Montreal (Irving), capital of culture cities such as Tallinn (Ochman), deindustrialized but regenerating cities such as Manchester in the UK (Glick Schiller) and Gliwice in Poland (Ochman), the Indian border town of Dharamsala (Sen), and the rural region of the Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan border (Reeves). All of these places offer encounters, representations or memories of stigmatized difference,

conflict, inequality, isolation, precarity and fear. However, none of these places can be unilaterally dismissed as locations without cosmopolitan possibilities and relationships. In each of these instances, place, as it is constructed within local, national and transnational fields of power, is an active agent in the emergence of cosmopolitan moments or relationships. In their different ways, each place contains the potentialities of openness, global ethical connections and mutual affect.

However, emplacement, whether representational, geographic or social, is never fixed and thus never timeless. Therefore, the cosmopolitan enquiries in this volume highlight fluidity, instability, transition and transformation. Authors make clear that to speak of time is not to impose a single linear narrative of progress or decline. To construct or speak about instances of situated cosmopolitanism, it is necessary to be cognizant of the historical moment as well as of momentous periods of conjuncture and transformative possibilities (Ochman). Instability and political and economic crisis and restructuring are frequently accompanied by repression, more explicit forms of nationalist and religious fundamentalism or discrimination, as well as by social upheaval, uprisings and aspirations for equality and justice.

Moreover, asking when cosmopolitanism is to be found, as our authors do, allows those of us with cosmopolitan aspirations to understand how to use the contested past as a starting point for future-oriented collaborative projects. A processual approach also makes us more aware of those times when experience or perception may open up broader ethical possibilities through fleeting connections (Stacey). It also makes possible the exploration of shared contingencies of experience within an urban ambience (Irving), or engagements with media representations that stimulate cosmopolitan practices, sensibilities and aspirations (Latimer, Chan and Stacey). The 'when' question also underlies those moments in which cosmopolitan possibilities are foreclosed (Chan, Tihanov, Latimer, Ochman and Stacey).

### *How Does Cosmopolitanism Work?*

If many different cosmopolitanism possibilities and problematics can be found in different parts of the world, then can we even ask about how cosmopolitanism works? As with the other questions discussed here, the answer seems freighted with the intellectual baggage of past discussions, yet at the same time current and pressing. As Andrew Irving signals in his response and develops in his research chapter in Part II, issues of methodology are imprecated within the performativity or perception of cosmopolitanism. Our authors are able to explore cosmopolitanism as practice or representation through their choice of questions, locations and actors

as well as their focus on situated social relations in process. Within filmic representation and analysis or social description they explicate the processes through which people can and do connect with one another. For example, in an insightful analysis of productivity of contradictions, Stacey suggests that perhaps it is within engagements of dehumanization that cosmopolitan compassion emerges. She is consistently cognizant that processes of mutual connection and cosmopolitan compassion are not a matter of abstract tolerance; she stands against the superiority of good intentions.

Authors make visible how disparate persons find ways to engage with each other and resist social boundaries, modes of stigmatization or confining stereotypes that restrict their life possibilities (Glick Schiller). The partial mutualities they construct reflect desires for social justice and respect that can connect diverse individuals to each other. Engaging in 'cosmospeak', locals, exiles and outsiders can come together to strategically embrace cosmopolitan identities and discourses for a range of different purposes, most significantly as a means of interaction, interpretation and assertion (Sen). Harnessing memory for cosmopolitan projects of mutual understanding seems to work best when integrated with people's local and ongoing concerns (Ochman).

### *Whether Cosmopolitanism Offers a Political or Moral Programme?*

When Gyan Prakash and Tariq Ramadan begin this volume by warning that cosmopolitanism must move from the abstract to practices grounded in people's everyday lives, they leave unanswered the question of whether cosmopolitanism can ever serve as a political or moral programme. In the second part of this book contributors examine the past decade of initiatives that claim to build cosmopolitan unities and solidarities in order to provide insights into whether cosmopolitanism ever offers a redemptive programme. They note that such initiatives often reflect and transmit the political agendas of powerful actors detached from the interests, participations and aspirations of the disempowered (Reeves and Ochman). Often rhetorics of cosmopolitanism conceal the continuing and differential power of various states. As they do so, such seemingly practical applied cosmopolitanism and the scholarship that accompanies it tend to 'depoliticize the sources of discontent' by sidestepping issues that stem from the extreme political or economic imbalances of uneven globalization (Reeves).

Yet some situations engender a situated processual cosmopolitanism. Consequently, several of the research chapters in this book indicate that it is possible to find substantive examples of Paul Gilroy's contrast between,

on the one hand, humanitarian interventionism in the name of cosmopolitan values and, on the other hand, a cosmopolitan planetary humanism (Irving, Ochman, Glick Schiller and Sen). This alternative cosmopolitanism builds on a consciousness of the tragedy, fragility and brevity of individual human existence.

## Exploring Central Issues of Critical Cosmopolitan Studies

The second part of the book is organized into thematic sections that highlight key issues of contemporary cosmopolitan studies: (1) 'Encounters, Landscapes and Displacements', (2) 'Cinema, Literature and the Social Imagination', and (3) 'Endless War or Domains of Sociability? Conflict, Instabilities and Aspirations.' Each section highlights specific domains in which cosmopolitan interactions or engagements might take place in today's socially interconnected and technologically mediated world wherein people are consistently required to negotiate and respond to new or different ways of thinking and being. Each of these domains concretely illustrates how cosmopolitanism has the potential to form connections or aggravate differences. However, each section builds on the insights of different arrays of disciplines.

### *Encounters, Landscapes and Displacements*

In 'Encounters, Landscapes and Displacements', Atreyee Sen, Nina Glick Schiller and Andrew Irving examine the dynamic relationships between place, social relationships and identity. Using primary ethnography and building on their backgrounds in social anthropology, the authors consider people's experiences of movement, migration or displacement in order to explore how locals, immigrants or exiles encounter and attempt to understand one another. In doing so, they understand situated, face-to-face encounters as critical sites of communication, action and evaluation in which people reconfigure their senses of self, others and belonging while responding to new or changing social landscapes.

Atreyee Sen's chapter, "'It's Cool to Be Cosmo": Tibetan Refugees, Indian Hosts, Richard Gere and "Crude Cosmopolitanism" in Dharamsala', takes us to a small Indian town on the Indian-Tibetan border. It would be an unremarkable town had it not become a refuge for Tibetans fleeing oppressive political and religious conditions. Instead, the town became an ongoing site of world media scrutiny in which 'cosmospeak' permeated the daily conversations heard around the town between people from

different sociocultural backgrounds and across all political and economic spectrums – including local residents, Tibetan youth raised in the town, monks, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), celebrity activists and former political prisoners who have been tortured. Cosmopolitanism served not as a form of highlighting difference but the means of navigating and communicating within a place reconfigured by suffering generated by a multiplicity of losses and desires. Sen provides an example of Indian Hindu mothers of Dharamsala sharing moments of mothering with Tibetan Buddhist former political prisoners whose torturers stripped them of the capacity to bear children.

Encounters that construct place but move people to think beyond local and particular identities and aspirations are also central to Nina Glick Schiller's chapter, 'Diasporic Cosmopolitanism: Migrants, Sociabilities and City Making.' Drawing on research in Manchester, UK, she deploys a concept of 'diasporic cosmopolitanism' to explore varying relationships that develop within particular cities between refugees and those who consider themselves natives. For Glick Schiller, the concept of diasporic cosmopolitanism joins together and highlights the creative political synergies that can arise when those who have experienced multiple displacements draw on their differences to forge domains of mutual affective commonalities and aspirations for social and economic justice. Her work challenges assumptions that people who are being marginalized and displaced by neoliberal restructuring of urban life are either not or inherently are cosmopolitan. Much in the vein of Valluvan, Glick Schiller differentiates between ordinary processes of sociability through which refugees contribute to city making and instances of diasporic cosmopolitan that raise the possibilities of planetary humanism.

In Andrew Irving's 'Freedom and Laughter in an Uncertain World: Language, Expression and Cosmopolitan Experience', what constitutes 'cosmopolitan experience' becomes a practical research question that is addressed by the researcher together with persons 'in the field'. Illustrating and also providing a methodological rumination on cosmopolitanism as process, Irving portrays the unvoiced but sometimes radical changes in being, belief and perception that accompany social life. He asks how experiences of movement and migration are mediated by streams of inner speech, imagery and emotional reverie, each rooted in a person's ongoing existential situation and concerns. He takes as a case in point the processes through which young women, whose familial origins lie in the Middle East (Iran and Syria), negotiate social life, make moral decisions and craft new senses of self in a Western city, namely, Montreal. In doing so, Irving explores how cosmopolitan experiences come to life, take shape and become

meaningful as they are embodied through moves across international borders, domestic and public spaces, and various social relationships.

### *Cinema, Literature and the Social Imagination*

The second section, 'Cinema, Literature and the Social Imagination', explores literature and cinema as key means through which characters and audiences negotiate representations of self and others. This section critically analyses the potentials and limits of literary and cinematic expression as sites where cosmopolitanism is made possible. Galin Tihanov, Jackie Stacey, Heather Latimer and Felicia Chan, united by an interest in literary and film studies, consider how works of creativity and imagination can describe, transgress and reinscribe existing perceptions of class, body, gender, nation and difference. In doing so literature and cinema are simultaneously understood as expressive practices and important sites of cultural flow in which the aesthetic imagination often meets the political, ethical and economic.

Continuing the discussion of displacement begun in the previous section, in 'Narratives of Exile: Cosmopolitanism beyond the Liberal Imagination', Galin Tihanov elucidates the multiple, and often contradictory, inscriptions of exile in current debates on cosmopolitanism. Arguing that exile captures the bifurcating moment in which one's lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*) may redefine the possibilities of forming interconnections, he warns against romanticizing exile as an unfailing engine for the production of cosmopolitan attitudes. Such an approach fails to consider the constraints and limitations imposed by new cultural frameworks, the imperatives of translation, and the loss and trauma intrinsic in this process of transition. Tihanov's explication draws on the history of the discipline of comparative literature and historic European experiences of exile. He includes the 1930s to the 1940s, the 'East-East exilic experience', that is, the exile of leftist Central and Eastern European intellectuals in Stalin's Moscow in the same period (1930s to the 1940s), and the recent notion of 'enforced cosmopolitanism'. Countering the everyday sociabilities and their cosmopolitan sensibilities documented in the places and times explored by Sen, Glick Schiller and Irving, Tihanov's perusal of intellectual histories demonstrates that translating and accommodating one's experience and lifeworld may fail when the participation in a new polis proves beyond reach.

Continuing this line of argument in her chapter 'The Uneasy Cosmopolitans of *Code Unknown*', Jackie Stacey challenges the assumption that positions of alterity readily provide the basis for new or expanded forms of relationality. Drawing on key vignettes from Michael Haneke's film

*Code Unknown* (2000), she discusses the anxieties, conflicting moral demands, ambiguities and prejudices that shape encounters with difference in claustrophobic urban spaces. Stacey is concerned with the viewer's affective and visceral sensations. These encompass psychic and muscular aversions as well as feelings of sociability, mutuality and affability, which combine to generate an uncomfortable, embodied spectatorship that is felt on the skin and in the nerves of the viewer. Highlighting the tense misreadings that stem from our inability to fully comprehend our own or others' intentions, she argues that openness is best understood as a transitory, often fragile aspiration. However, the doubt and disappointment that infuse cosmopolitanism sometimes allow persons to forge partial recognition, which, though fleeting, may combat our mutual dehumanization.

In her chapter 'Pregnant Possibilities: Cosmopolitanism, Kinship and Reproductive Futurism in *Maria Full of Grace* and *In America*', Heather Latimer continues the exploration of displacement through querying filmic representations. These films reflect, refract and respond to the world's ongoing legal, political and moral struggles over issues such as national identity, fertility and parenthood as these are played out in relation to categories such as class, gender and ethnicity. Both of these Hollywood films' main female characters are illegal migrants who are pregnant. Both women hope to achieve legal status and their dreams of a more stable, economically viable future through the birth of their children. Their pregnancies link the reproductive body to a kind of cosmopolitan aspiration for the future. Latimer questions the intentions and outcomes of filmmakers' efforts to assume that cosmopolitan possibilities can occur within the constraints of gendered naturalized linking of birth, citizenship and the nation-state. Here she reinforces Irving's and Reeves's concerns for the way various actors participate in state narratives that fix and essentialize categories of difference.

Felicia Chan's chapter, 'Backstage/Onstage Cosmopolitanism: Zhangke Jia's *The World*', also addresses a filmic narration of cosmopolitanism. Jia's film depicts the relationships between migrants who work at an amusement park and the park's celebration of the world's different cultures for the consumption of Chinese tourists. The film's narrative resists endorsing the clichéd cosmopolitanism of the theme park but also refuses to condemn it. Although the park's workers are instruments of their own exploitation, they are also agents who possess aspirations for a better life and use the park for their own ends. Chan observes how a critique of the cosmopolitan ideal – both as a means for shaping people's aspirations and mediating global difference – can be discerned within the film's narrative. This critique extends beyond the frame insofar as films such as Jia's *The World* are mostly shown at international festivals and specialized art house cinemas.

Whilst these circuits need to be understood as mechanisms of control, categorization and the commercialization of aesthetic values, cinema's complicity in these markets does not detract from the power of film to act as a medium of cultural translation and transnational critical cosmopolitanism. In ways that resonate with Spencer's explication of the cosmopolitan possibilities of literary projects, Chan sees transnational cinema's potential to expand and transform the scope of viewers' identifications.

*Endless War or Domains of Sociability?  
Conflict, Instabilities and Aspirations*

In the volume's closing section, 'Endless War or Domains of Sociability? Conflict, Instabilities and Aspirations', Madeleine Reeves (social anthropology), Ewa Ochman (history) and Paul Gilroy (cultural studies) address the seemingly perpetual state of war and ideological conflict that not only characterized much of the twentieth century but also is now shaping the relation between persons and nations in the ongoing crisis of the post-Soviet, postcolonial and post-9/11 period. In asking whose cosmopolitanism is being deployed, these three authors draw on the different analytic strengths of their disciplines to deconstruct narratives of cosmopolitan humanitarianism. The chapters examine the Janus-faced tension of the cosmopolitan imagination in which the transformational potential of human connections may be mobilized to legitimate forms of oppression, domination and the consolidation of power.

Their vantage point is the perspective of people who face daily displacements, impoverishment and disillusion while powerful interests promote aggrandizing agendas as cosmopolitan peacemaking. Complementing the book's previous contributions, these authors address the current grim moment to indicate, without false optimism, when and where the social connections constitutive of a situated cosmopolitanism can be found and the processes through which they are produced. While differences between persons are often intensified at moments of crisis and restructuring (see Gilroy and Reeves), they may also elicit social movements and transnational projects that work for social and environmental justice, reconciliation and shared moral values.

Madeleine Reeves's chapter, 'Politics, Cosmopolitics and Preventive Development at the Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Border', extends Sen's consideration of NGOs as agents of cosmopolitanism. Reeves offers a detailed ethnographic critique of the 'preventive development' programmes fostered by international NGOs in a border region a hundred miles or so north of Afghanistan and west of China. These NGOs strive to anticipate and stave off possible intercommunal conflicts through 'consensus building' in

communities deemed at risk of conflict. Reeves emphasizes that such borderland conflict prevention projects reflect 'normative cosmopolitanism scholarship' that 'depoliticize the sources of discontent' by sidestepping issues that stem from the extreme political or economic imbalances of uneven globalization. She argues that such imbalances demand investigation not only into the normative projects that often animate externally driven programmes, but also of the statist political imaginaries of the politically marginalized (cf. Cheah 1998). Reinforcing the critique of an imaginary of ethnic difference (Valluvan and Glick Schiller), Reeves contrasts the organized efforts to foster consensus between static and polarized ethnic communities with the rather more practically oriented locally situated processual discourse of *yntymak*, or harmonious coexistence.

Situated in the context of Eastern Europe, in 'Memory of War and Cosmopolitan Solidarity', Ewa Ochman substantiates Reeves's critique of project-based cosmopolitanism. Reiterating Irving's imbrication of methodology and perception, she notes that efforts to constitute mutual understanding, new solidarities or cosmopolitanism within remembrance are always situated within mechanisms and domains of power. Ochman considers three very different memory projects. She argues that two cases – the commemoration of the end of World War II in Moscow in 2005 and the 2001–2 controversy over efforts to memorialize the murder of 1,600 Jews in Jedwabne, Poland, in 1941 – highlighted past silenced loss and sharpened current antagonisms. In her third example, Ochman describes a project for Polish, Russian and Ukrainian drug users in which participants were able to acknowledge the mutuality of their painful history of destructive substance abuse. This openness provided them with the basis to create transnational solidarities and common historical memories. Echoing Glick Schiller's exploration of domains of commonality and Irving's experiential sociability, Ochman observes that it is by addressing people's present-day circumstances, problems and aspirations that attempts to identify 'what we have in common and not what divides us' are translated into meaningful memories and representations.

Ochman's and Reeves's chapters explicate the cosmopolitics of the opening 'Provocations' and 'Responses'. In 'Cosmopolitanism and Conviviality in an Age of Perpetual War', the final chapter, Paul Gilroy further develops a contemporary critical cosmopolitics. Gilroy outlines the power dynamics at work in legitimating past and current atrocities in the name of humanitarian intervention. He urges consideration of the relationship between the seemingly interminable war that is being waged across different parts of the world and its legitimation through a cosmopolitan ideal. Intervention becomes a humanitarian act performed in the name of saving women, children, homosexuals, religious minorities and other vulnera-

ble groups from barbarism. The antecedents justifying such actions hark back to European colonialism, in which slavery was seen as an antidote to 'savagery'. From a postcolonial position of critique of what has previously constituted Europe's idea of humanitarian action and its intimate linkages to Holocaust atrocities, Gilroy seeks a position from which critical situated theories of cosmopolitanism can be renewed. Gilroy calls for new forms of processual analysis and action that are emphatically both postcolonial and cosmopolitan, and do not accept an impossible tolerance for the unbearable or a privileging of the contingencies of birth, nationality and ethnicity.

### **Relevance of 'Whose Cosmopolitanism?': Towards Cosmopolitanism for Our Times**

Collectively, *Whose Cosmopolitanism? Critical Perspectives, Relationalities and Discontents* argues that it is more necessary than ever to engage with cosmopolitan enquiries. By making 'whose cosmopolitanism?' – with a particular emphasis on the questions of *where, when, how* and *whether* (in the sense of for *what purpose or programme*) cosmopolitanism is being evoked – the central concern of this book, we have put aside a universalism and taken on the question of differential and situated power and resultant differences and inequities. By adopting a processual approach to the question of what is at stake and what commitments are involved when describing oneself as a cosmopolitan 'citizen of the world', we have deployed a power geometry to extend current approaches of critical cosmopolitanism. This has allowed us to bring to the surface doubts, tensions and misgivings about the cosmopolitan project. We have asked what might be gained, what might be lost and what else is at risk. Furthermore, we have considered how cosmopolitanism is currently constituted in the contemporary globalized, politicized and technologically mediated world.

We are left with varieties of *lived cosmopolitanism* that rest upon the discovery that none of us live as an 'island, entire of itself', to echo John Donne's seventeenth-century meditations. Human life is predicated and dependent upon ongoing interconnections with others, both face-to-face and via mediated representations. These interdependencies produce emotional and moral resonances that span the whole spectrum, from suspicion, mistrust, aversion and hatred to shared affectivities, communal feelings and ethical connections. Cosmopolitanism is not a fixed state, but is continually being generated, tested and reworked through social interaction and works of the imagination.

Hence, it is important to theorize the situated nature of human experience and the capabilities and limitations of human quests and desires for

justice. In a world in which cultural difference becomes a commodity that serves as a source of commerce, a flippant explanation for conflict or inequality, or a gloss for discrimination and dehumanization, the valuation of humanness as an ongoing process of sociability that challenges differential power is a project worth contemplating. The judgement of worth is not a product of Western or Enlightenment history, but rather a continuing echo reempowered by proverbial wisdom from around the world. In Haitian Kreyol people say, 'If you drink water from a glass, respect the glass' (*bwe dlo nan ve, respekte ve*). This can be read as a call for respect for the contributions of the many, as well a critique of inequities and the privileges of the few. If such a perspective can be understood as situated processual cosmopolitanism's primary ontological and ethical commitment, then its political manifesto and aspirational agenda is to work towards a world in which, regardless of how they have been defined, categorized or localized, all human beings are accorded equal rights, opportunities and respect.

## Notes

1. Our thanks to Paul Gilroy, who was not an official member of RICC.

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