

**Glick Schiller, Nina and Andrew Irving. 2017. *Whose Cosmopolitanism? Critical Perspectives, Relationalities and Discontents*. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books. 264 pp. Pb.: \$34.95/£24.00. ISBN: 9781785335068.**

The importance of this work (republished in 2017, the original published in 2015) stands undiminished gaining new significance given the recent rise of fundamentalism, intolerance and xenophobia in most parts of the world giving a lie to cosmopolitanism even in the region of its origin. It is perhaps in view of such developments that the editors have interrogated the concept with a question mark in the title of the book itself.

The first five brief yet highly significant essays raise the relevant theoretical queries that qualify the question mark in the title. These provocations deconstruct the given understanding of cosmopolitanism from its Kantian and Eurocentric roots, bringing in queries about subaltern situatedness, inequality, multiple situatednesses, the plural as against the monolithic construction of this concept, and questions of the transparency of the self and the other that can make possible the rather dubious process of “understanding”. There is the evocation of violence and war in the name of cosmopolitanism and the forced cosmopolitanism of refugees and victims of forced displacement; bringing into focus the multiple possibilities of this concept and, as suggested, the reality of cosmopolitanism as a process and also an elusive thing that is never done. It is both a possibility and also something that remains unattainable. Thus, while cosmopolitanism as an ideal is seen as vital for an increasingly globalising world, the violence and power hierarchies of neo-liberal economies and ruthless capitalism invest the concept with many negative hues.

The tone set by the first five provocations is met by the responses in the next section that also remain largely theoretical and brings in such concepts as “wounded cosmopolitanism” (Jacqueline Rose, *Chapter 6*) and of the wandering cosmopolitanism of those who do not belong anywhere in their striving for universal belongingness. As pointed out in this volume, the notion of “global citizenship” is a misnomer as no nation grants such rights to anyone; in other words, border crossing is a highly restricted procedure. The other responses also deal with the reconciliation of a concept that is ideally universalising, but which is situated in particular historical conditions of inequality and injustice. There remains the question of identities and how the particular can be realised without creating barriers to a common humanity and if at all this is possible. Then there is always the personal, “my cosmopolitanism” says one author (Sivamohan Valluvan, *Chapter 10*).

It is the next two sections based on ethnographic data from actual situations of movement, migration, and forced displacements that bring out the real answers to some of the interrogations. The meaning of an American “downtown” to a female Iranian refugee (Andrew Irving, *Chapter 13*) speaks volumes, and so does the liberating effects of NGO monetary aid to Tibetan refugees in a small Himalayan town (Atreyee Sen, *Chapter 11*). The liberating effects of relocation for those fleeing intolerable situations highlight the positive aspects of cosmopolitanism even as they continue to operate within the larger equations of intolerance and inequality. The experiential realities bring out the complexities of actual situations, highlighting both the positive and the negative.

Equally illuminating is the section on the creative and the aesthetic, cinema and literature, and the liberating, creative potential let loose by the process of being exiled, of assuming a cultural distance that leads to the ability for critical introspection and external analysis. The literature produced by the East European exiles after World War II, the questions of ethics and ambiguity depicted in the movie *Code Unknown* that reflects upon the possibilities of “dehumanization” even of otherwise “ethical” actions, the use of kinship in illegitimate border crossing and a film coming out of China’s “forced” cosmopolitanism; these are some of the poignant, often disturbing applications of the concept.

In the last section, the reader comes back to some innovative aspects of this term and its evaluation against current political situations across the world and the use of “collective personal memory” as against propagated “national memory”, the concepts of super-nationalism and the cosmopolitanism of the dispossessed, stimulate the reader into rethinking and re-evaluating a term that challenges and provokes with its multi-dimensionality and potentials. For example, the underplaying of European complicity in the violence of colonisation in global memory is one example of manipulated history, casting doubt on the Eurocentric origin of the term and the significance of the question mark on it.

This is a densely packed volume that is both provocative and illuminating; a reader that, with its multi-disciplinary character, is a near-complete interrogation of a difficult yet necessary concept.

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