

Introduction: Cosmopolitanism in the Making

Torill Strand

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“... globalization is a set of designs to manage the world
while cosmopolitanism is a set of projects
towards planetary conviviality”
Walter Mignolo (2002)

I am proud to present this Special Issue on *Cosmopolitanism in the Making* that contains nine cutting edge articles exploring the many faces—pretty and ugly—of a new cosmopolitanism in the making. The term “cosmopolitanism” denotes a vision of the world that sees all humanity as belonging to the same community. The term derives from Greek *kosmo polités* (‘citizen of the world’) and evokes an image of coming generations holding global citizenships and forms of symbolic capital—a cosmopolitan ethos—that makes them strangers nowhere in the world (Nussbaum 1997). But the fact is that such a reality is yet to come. As an ideal, however, cosmopolitanism expresses the idea that all human beings—regardless of national, religious, cultural, or political affiliation—should be seen as members of the same community, and that this community should be cultivated. Taking this outlook, the global village becomes the locus of ethical, political, and educational concerns.

The fact that the world is becoming a smaller place promotes intensified contacts within, across and beyond national, social, political, cultural, and religious borders. But how do we cope with differences and conflicts? Is it possible to trace signs of a genuine global solidarity promoting “planetary conviviality”? There is a Korean myth on afterlife, in hell and in heaven. In hell everyone is seated around an unbelievable table set with numerous delicate dishes. But they are still hungry since their chopsticks are three meters long and no one is able to reach their own mouth. In heaven they are also seated around a fantastic table set with plenty of delicate dishes. Their chopsticks are also three meters long. But here everyone is content. Instead of unsuccessfully trying to reach their own mouths with the impossible chopsticks, they have learned to feed each other.

T. Strand (✉)

Institute of Educational Research, University of Oslo, P. O. Box 1092, Blindern, 0317 Oslo, Norway
e-mail: Torill.strand@ped.uio.no

This Korean myth provides a beautiful image of a global cordiality, illustrating how solidarity relations and practices should be seen as vital features of cosmopolitanism (i.e. Derpmann 2009). However, this Special Issue is also a reminder of the pitfalls of constructing an image of the world as it ought to be, without taking into considerations—and thus overlooking—the world as it is. The authors of this issue thus explore “cosmopolitanism” as an ambiguous and contested term carrying contradictory images and visions—of, for example, cosmopolitanism old and new; cosmopolitanism of the West versus cosmopolitanism of the rest; and between a cosmopolitanism from above versus a cosmopolitanism from below.

The current dispute on cosmopolitanism is first of all about cosmopolitanism old and new. Or, to be more exact, the promises and pitfalls of blindly adopting a name and vision deeply embedded in a long-lasting European philosophical discourse and to displace it into a new world order. Diogenes the Cynic (412–323 BC) is said to be the very first philosopher using the term. When asked where he came from, he replied: “I am a citizen of the world (*cosmo polités*)”—which was a radical claim in a world where a man’s identity was strongly connected to him as a member of a particular city state. Living in exile, as an outcast, and as a man without identity, Diogenes thus made a mark on his contemporaries. Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) later pictured cosmopolitan rights as the “right of hospitality” belonging to strangers in a foreign land (Kant 1795/2009). Jacques Derrida (1930–2007) followed this vision when he addressed the question of the cosmopolitan rights of asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants in a speech to the international parliament of writers in Strasbourg in 1996. There, Derrida revisited the issue of ‘open cities’ (*ville francaes*) or ‘refugee cities’ (*ville refugees*) where migrants may seek sanctuary from the pressures of persecution, intimidation and exile (Derrida 2001). With the emergence of a new world order—characterised by a decline of the nation states, manifestation of new supranational political institutions, new patterns of migration, transnational identities and multiple citizenships—there is now a resurgence of the cosmopolitan vision, followed by a common call for a cosmopolitan ethos. However, the authors of this special issue reminds of the pitfalls of blindly adopting the traditional images of cosmopolitanism within the unique historical moment of today.

There is also a dispute about whether a Western notion of cosmopolitanism overshadows non-Western visions. Current images of cosmopolitanism are often associated with the non-localised hybridity characterising processes of globalisation. However, several of the articles included in this issue point to the fact that images and visions of cosmopolitanism are embedded in both local and transnational practices and traditions. Consequently, different notions of cosmopolitanism may carry inconsistent images of how to attain planetary conviviality. Paralleling European cosmopolitanism with the modernist philosophers’ quest for certainty, Stephen Toulmin (1990) exposes the hidden, but yet persistent agenda of a cosmopolitanism of the West: A vision of society as rationally ordered as the Newtonian view of nature. Toulmin thus claims that the pursuit for abstract neatness and theoretical simplicity has “blinded the successors of Descartes to the unavoidable complexities of concrete human experience” (Toulmin 1990, p. 201). Toulmin’s analysis also reveals how Western cosmopolitanism carries a whole cosmogony; a deep-seated image of *creation*; a theory of how a perfect society can come into existence. A cosmogony of the West is hallmarked by having chaos (not nothingness) as its starting point and the rational word (not play, breath, or spirit) as its creative principle. Consequently, Western cosmopolitanism seems to oppose the lively and creative hubbub of a globalised world since it carries connotations of a perfect well-ordered society born out of chaos by the use of *words*. The contrasts between divergent cosmopolitan visions thus

come forward as a vital dilemma, since a biased cosmopolitanism of the West may well disturb and continue to marginalise non-Western representations, visions and experiences. Another vital dilemma is the ways in which a Western image of a harmonious, well-ordered, orderly, and rational global society contrasts the lively particulars of the worldly and creative cities of today.

Consequently, a concern of the current dispute is cosmopolitanism from above versus below. A vital dilemma is for example the tension between an abstract universalism from above versus a concrete moral commitment from below. Taking a sociological outlook, Marinus Ossewaarde (2007) argues that the new cosmopolitanism is a manifestation of the mindset of a global elite that have “more in common with partners in Manhattan, London, Singapore or Hong Kong than with locals or nationals that are not plugged into a network of global connectedness” (ibid., p. 373). The ethos of the new cosmopolitan, he holds, is about flexibility, objectivity, detachment and the ability to create a distance to cultural patterns and existing loyalties. Cosmopolitans render cultural differences superfluous as they “become friends of humanity”. In short, the new cosmopolitanism from above recognizes humanity before sociality. Martha Nussbaum (1997) also holds that cosmopolitanism is “an invitation to exile” (ibid., p. 7) as she opts for a stoic cosmopolitanism that transcends local loyalties and traditions. By contrast, Kwame Anthony Appiah (2007) argues for a cosmopolitanism flowing from, rather than transcending rooted ways of life. However, the tension between an abstract cosmopolitanism from above and a rooted cosmopolitanism from below remains one of the major problems of contemporary cosmopolitanism. Benhabib (2006) addressed the issue in her 2004 Berkeley Tanner lectures. Taking the dilemma between a somewhat abstract and enlightened morality on the one hand and the complex aspirations of the hybrid identities of citizens not belonging to any primordial community or nation on the other hand, she argued that the task of a normative cosmopolitanism should be to “mediate moral universalism with ethical particularism” (ibid., p. 19). But the dilemma remains unresolved. Several of the authors of this special issue therefore explore this dilemma when discussing how the new ideals of cosmopolitanism contain an impossible tension between an abstract universalism versus a concrete moral commitment guided by a strong versus a weak set of principles that serve to delimit and govern differences and diversities in a globalised world of change.

However, the current discourse on cosmopolitanism is even more complex. Within contemporary philosophy and social studies “cosmopolitanism” denotes on the one hand, *a way of the world*, a condition, an evolving and extremely complex social reality, on the other hand, *a way of seeing the world*, a form of consciousness, an ethos, and an emerging paradigm of social and political analysis. The emerging new cosmopolitanism thus comprises some of the most challenging contemporary problems of academic analysis, as the cosmopolitan experience and analysis are conjoint activities—mediating the conception of “*cosmopolitanism in the making*”. The authors of this special issue thus takes into account that cosmopolitanism is not known as some existing social fact or entity in the world that simply awaits a detailed description or systematic analysis. Within contemporary philosophy, social theory, and education the term “cosmopolitanism” seems to be used as a *metaphor* for a way of life; it signifies a many-faceted and contested moral, political and legal *ideal*; it also indicates an outlook or a *perspective* on our common and contemporary social reality. The nine cutting edge articles of this issue mirror these different notions of cosmopolitanism as they address questions concerning cosmopolitanism as an educative experience, cosmopolitanism as an educational ideal, and cosmopolitanism as a way of seeing the world; a perspective on and of educational theory and practice.

The first article of this issue—*Cosmopolitanism and the De-colonial option*—questions the universal cosmopolitan vision and colonialist knowledge. Here, Walter Mignolo, points to the fact that there is no safe place and no single topoi from where the universal can be articulated. One example is the ways in which Hindu nationalism and Western neo-liberalism are entangled in a long history of the logic of domination, oppression and exploitation hidden in the rhetorics of modernity ('salvation', 'civilization', 'progress', 'development', 'freedom and democracy'). Mignolo argues, however, for the needs and possibilities for Indians and Western progressive intellectuals working together to undermine and supersede the assumption that liberal thinkers in the West are better placed to understand what is the common good better than Indian thinkers in post-partition India. But as science (in the same ways as Christianity, Hinduism, Liberalism or Marxism) has been both imperial and liberating, the horizons of a de-colonial cosmopolitanism should be constituted by knowledge, rather than science; by gnoseology, rather than epistemology. A de-colonial cosmopolitanism opposes cosmopolitanism from a center. By contrast, a de-colonial cosmopolitanism is a proposal from the margins as it dwells in the borders, in exteriority, in the dissimilarities. De-colonial cosmopolitanism is a cosmopolitanism of multiple trajectories aiming at a trans-modern world based on pluriversity rather than universality.

The next three articles further explore notions of cosmopolitanism, old and new. The first of these three is an intriguing text on *Cosmopolitanism and Peace in Kant's essay on 'Perpetual Peace'*. Here, Jørgen Huggler offers an in-depth and critical reading of one of the most central texts to the philosophical discourse on cosmopolitanism. Huggler discloses how Kant, in his essay on Perpetual Peace (1795), actually rejects the idea of a world government—an idea that Kant had advocated earlier—and instead offers a substantial argument for cosmopolitan rights. Kant's argument is—according to Huggler—"the most rigorous philosophical formulation ever given of the limitations of the cosmopolitan law". The second of these three articles—*Cosmopolitanism and its predicaments*—also questions the very idea of cosmopolitanism. Analyzing the contemporary discourse on cosmopolitanism, Leszek Koczanowicz here reveals how different images of cosmopolitanism—left and right—can be seen as ideological motivated attempts to hide the actual contradictions of the world. Current discourses on cosmopolitanism can thus be seen as ideological tools to form a political field into its desirable shape, and to hide its inherent antagonisms. Koczanowicz thus calls for a reconceptualization of the very idea of cosmopolitanism, democracy and society. In the third of these three articles—*Chasing Butterflies Without a Net: Interpreting Cosmopolitanism*—David Hansen maps the current conceptions of cosmopolitanism and argues that it is—despite the lack of a unified conception—possible to trace a central motif: The capacity to fuse reflective openness to the new with a reflective loyalty to the known. These ever-evolving fusions are to him the butterflies that cosmopolitanism aspires to grasp. So, identifying cosmopolitanism as an educational experience and ideal, he argues that "cosmopolitanism points to the space between the known and the strange, the particular and the universal, the near and the far, that is constantly opened up by the contacts of life. It does not mean "transcending" the everyday for some "higher" realm of experience. In paradoxical terms, it is more a matter of ascending downward: of coming to penetrate or pay attention to local traditions more fully precisely by seeing them juxtaposing with other traditions". In this way, cosmopolitan education should be seen as transformative rather than additive.

The next two articles explicitly address issues of education within a new world order, although from quite opposite angles and perspectives. In *The universal right to education—freedom, equality and fraternity* Ylva Bergström analyses the universal right to education,

formulated and agreed on in international declarations and conventions, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (today, the Convention on the Rights on the Child is agreed on by 140 signature countries and 194 parties). But taking the fact that the supranational declarations and conventions contain some impossible dilemmas—between parents' rights versus children's rights; between social rights versus private autonomy rights; and between universal versus national citizenship rights—Bergström performs a sophisticated analysis that discloses some underlying assumptions that serve to justify a worldwide consensus on education: Her intriguing analysis reveal that there is a certain notion of what it means to be a human being—a child, a parent, a citizen, or a member of humanity—inscribed in the circle of universal access to rights and to education. This notion can be summed up in two words: “Not yet”.

The next article—*Transnational discourses on knowledge and learning in professional work; examples from computer engineering*—also concerns education within a new world order. But in contrast to Bergström's analysis of a rhetoric from above, Monika Nerland here analyses some micro-aspects of the new cosmopolitanism in the making: Namely how transnational discourses on knowledge and learning constitutes, shapes, and justifies professional workers energies, efforts and desires. Taking an empirical study on workplace learning of a group of data engineers and an analysis of some distinct characteristics of transnational discourses, she demonstrates the intersections of global/local epistemologies and how these intersections unavoidably generate altered epistemologies within and beyond the workplace. To Nerland, these changes are significant, since “the ways in which people envisage knowledge—its character, outreach and opportunities for engagement—become constitutive for social life”.

The last three articles included in this issue concerns different aspects of a new cosmopolitanism. In their article—*On doing justice to cosmopolitan values and the otherness of the other: Living with cosmopolitan skepticism*—Yusef Waghid and Paul Smeyers take the current situation in East Congo as a starting point when exploring and discussing one of the most vital dilemma of the new cosmopolitanism in the making. The situation in East Congo—where Hutu militias now reside and continue to harass the Congolese population in the same way as they tortured the Tutsis in Rwanda a decade ago—is an alarming event calling attention to the dangers of overlooking the humanity in the other. But instead of reintroducing some meta-narratives the authors suggest a “cosmopolitanism of skepticism”. Waghid and Smeyers then use the alarming and impossible situation in Congo as an example to illustrate Stanley Cavell's idea on “skepticism” and to reveal the ways in which a cosmopolitanism of skepticism is an educative, lived experience, impossible to disengage from the practical situation. One example is how the acknowledgment of others as human beings worthy of respect presupposes a simultaneous acknowledgment of myself as a person who should *exercise* respect: “... the other may be owed acknowledgement simply on the ground of his humanity, acknowledgement as a human being, for which nothing will do but my revealing myself to him as a human being, unrestrictedly, as his or her sheer other, his or her fellow, his or her *semblable*” (Cavell 1979, p. 435). A cosmopolitanism of skepticism thus comes forward as the exact opposite of the theoretical abstraction Waghid and Smeyers designate as “a theoretical cosmopolitanism” of indifference.

In the next article—*Living in a Dissonant World: Toward an Agonistic Cosmopolitanism for Education*—Sharon Todd explores an agonistic cosmopolitanism as a framework for addressing issues of cultural conflicts. Taking the perspectives of Chantal Mouffe, Bonnie Honig and Judith Butler she here provides a significant political understanding of what a cosmopolitan orientation to cultural difference can offer education. She points to how an

agonistic cosmopolitics is a more “wordly” response to the complexities of intercultural interaction, communication, and interdependency than the responses offered by other positions,—as for example multiculturalism. She also reveals, however, that an agonistic cosmopolitics is an outlook informed by a critical and political approach to cosmopolitanism itself. So when arguing for an agonistic cosmopolitics, Todd rejects a cosmopolitan vision of harmony while embracing the necessity of antagonism. In short, “an agonistic cosmopolitics diverges from cosmopolitanism’s view of dialogical models of democracy based on harmony and consensus and from its view of universalism as a non-political, immutable series of claims about rights and humanity. It instead embraces both democracy and universality, but with a strong emphasis on the pluralistic nature of social life”.

The very last article—*The Making of a New Cosmopolitanism*—takes a perspective on the perspectives of an emerging new cosmopolitics. Here, Torill Strand explores the current mantra of cosmopolitanism, and how it carries symbolic representations, new social images and epistemic shifts. In the first part of the article Strand maps the discourse, while portraying the new cosmopolitanism as a metaphor for a way of life, an ideal and an outlook. As a metaphor for a way of life, the new cosmopolitanism pictures the cosmopolitan as a stranger nowhere in the world. But the brute fact is that increasingly more people are now strangers wherever in the world. As an ideal, cosmopolitanism expresses the idea that all human beings should be seen as members of the same community. But traditional ideas and ideals of cosmopolitanism are now being contested by a developing world-wide and extremely complex social reality. By implication, we now experience an emerging cosmopolitan outlook within and beyond the sciences. This outlook signifies a new way of seeing the world and a new and emerging paradigm of social and political analysis. In other words, the cosmopolitan outlook carries an altered symbolic universe serving as instrument for naming, reading and knowing a globalised world of change.

In the second part of the article Strand moves beyond an encyclopedic mapping of the discourse, as she points to the ways in which this new outlook is a product of—and produces—a common sense, an alldoxa, and a symbolic universe representing and naming the world. “Cosmopolitanism” can thus be seen as a name carrying more or less hidden epistemic functions. But as the name and metaphor of cosmopolitanism assumes something which it is not, cosmopolitanism carries an inherent paradox. In the third part of the article Strand discusses the impossible possibilities of this paradox, which she sees as a riddle that surprises, bewilders, and educates. The surprise is in the new cosmopolitanisms deviation from current and most common ways of speech and in its borrowing from another realm. The bewilderment happens as the mantra of cosmopolitanism is bringing together logical opposites, jumbling categories and disturbing pre-existing modes of thought. The educational work of cosmopolitanism thus happens in forms of a violation of the cognitive framework and the logical categories generating the very modes of learning. Consequently, the vital work of the new cosmopolitanism in the making is not in the ways in which it contributes to a growth of knowledge. Rather, the vital work is in the ways in which the new cosmopolitanism institutes *radically new* modes of learning, and thus completely new ways of experiencing, seeing and knowing a globalised world of change. The new cosmopolitanism happens as an *invention*.

Consequently this article—as every article included in this special issue—should be read as a call for a continued and continuous, diligent, in-depth and critical inquiry of the many faces—pretty and ugly—of the new cosmopolitanism in the making.

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