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Since its emergence, cosmopolitanism has undergone various changes in terms of its degrees of importance and perception; from an apparent absence from the conceptual stage up to its zestful resurgence in recent years, cosmopolitanism has (re)gained its place as a topic of discussion among thinkers. This shift came about after a considerable dormant period and, as it happened, it was superimposed on the new phases of economic globalization, massive migration movements, and the intensification of transactions in the cyberspace within a context set by the “rise of neonationalisms and religious fundamentalisms and the setbacks of regional integrations” (1), on the other hand. Different from other approaches that have received considerably more attention in the research fields in the last few decades, cosmopolitan studies bring to light various aspects that the other areas of interest could not uncover. On the one hand, Global/Globalization Studies, focusing on the “economy and accompanying changes in societies and ways of life”, trace a direction that remains grounded in regional histories of thought. World Literature, on the other hand, fails to make use of the cosmopolitan method of textual study, as it is more focused on the movement of texts, styles and themes. Another field of research, Contemporary Art Studies, implies either an achieved global aesthetic unity or the stimulation of an “unequal competition of glocalities” (1-2).

Attempting to map out transdisciplinary bridges, from underrepresented cosmopolitan studies to the more established fields of cosmopolitanism, the 2022 *Migrating Minds: Theories and Practices of Cultural Cosmopolitanism*, edited by Didier Coste, Christina Kkona and Nicoletta Pireddu, brings together fresh views in dialogue with contemporary sociologists, philosophers, political theorists and postcolonial scholars. Various migrating minds have contributed to this volume, as they

all strived to outline a cosmopolitan presence in the world and the representation of actual (utopian) cosmopolitan worlds with its limits.

Cosmopolitanism is the sense of responsibility derived in a democratic world, and it does not merely imply a sense of rootlessness. It is, in fact, “a way of inhabiting the world that entails constant self-interrogation, creative interaction with other peoples, cultures, and languages, and a political sense of justice always to come” (3). When it comes to migrating cosmopolitan thought and action, one aspect comes to the forefront: namely, culture, in itself, as a process of constant “cultivation” is never passive, but rather comes as a sustained reiteration and renewal of its core. A cosmopolitan point of view cannot validate a static interpretation of nature in the sense of it having invariable features that cannot be (re)actualized. Instead, cosmopolitanism requires retrospection and reinterpretation and, in this sense, the migrating minds “cosmopolitanize” various spaces, temporalities or artworks; they offer fresh interdisciplinary approaches to cosmopolitanism as a way of resisting binary thought.

As such, the 20 interconnected essays follow a logical advancement from the established political and philosophical foundation of the debate of cosmopolitanism to an interdisciplinary approach for an intended pedagogy of cosmopolitanism through modern studies of contemporary cultural practices and the simultaneous analysis of different prototypes of cosmopolitan identities from multiple locations. Part 1, “Cosmopolitan Theories, Contemporary Debates”, considers the philosophical and ethical principles underlying cosmopolitanism and the theoretical, intellectual history that contributed gradually to its contemporary significance, as they interlink the theoretical basis with cosmopolitan thinking. Part 2, “Cosmopolitics in Literature”, reinforces the concepts and ideas laid out in Part 1 by providing readings of a vast variety of literary and cultural texts that address cosmopolitanism through the prism of various genres that are connected with multifaceted matters such as nativism, exile, migration, borders, gender, race and class. Part 3, “The Teachings of Live Cosmopolitanism”, reflects on the diverse implications of cosmopolitanism (social, political and pedagogical), starting from issues and practices that emanate from the literary and cultural spheres, from plurilingualism and transnational identities to translation theory and the educational spirit of comparative and world literature. Finally, part 4, “A Writer’s Meditation on Migrancy and Cosmopolitanism”, closes the volume with the

autobiographical testimony of Chinese-Canadian writer Ying Chen, who contemplates issues such as place and homelessness, migration and translation.

The second part opens with Didier Coste's essay, "A Mixed Lot on the Margins: Mimetic Desires and Native Impersonations", which centers around the idea of nativeness and what "going native" actually implies on a much grander scale. Such an attempt would require a constant permutation of fragments in order to establish a solid identity, though not a static one, as hybridity would not impose permanency; the components would add up to a fluid and oftentimes ambiguous identity. This, he claims, can be considered "a cosmopolitan experience in a different but parallel way to that of more numerous postcolonial subjects, whether diasporic or engaged in a willful process of cultural mutation in their birthplace" (93). Starting from such (dis)locations, the central focus in his essay is to analyze and interpret the mimetic desire that carves its way in the paradoxical, "nativized" text of a de-centered author who is situated on the verge of two or more cultural worlds, without adhering completely to any of them, and he takes as his focal points two authors: Lev Nussimbaum (1905-1942) and Kurban Said.

The paradox surrounding Nussimbaum's persona, who went Eastern native in the West, might give the impression that his life and work were anecdotal in a sense, and less representative of the issue at hand. However, his case sheds light on other similar migrating minds who were confronted with a liminal existence, but what all of them have in common is their need for understanding, their unrelenting search for the meaning behind human existence that was not "given", but acquired through various means. At first, embarking on such a quest would give the illusion of futility as a blending between the two opposing parts of the world, the East and the West, would be improbable, if not unlikely. However, the nature of this higher interaction between the two can never be simply dismissed as binary, as they share different nuances that transcend such superficial visions. What is shared is a "cosmopolitan drive toward identification with the cultural/ethnic *other* minimally manifested at first as an interest, a desire, an attraction, or an implicit acceptance of the humanity of a culturally dissimilar other" (94).

These writers came up with a new position, a non-binary stance, that would reflect their ambiguous situation, namely writing "from the middle" (95). This is an innovative narrative strategy, as it refers to "a constantly shifting place, not recognized

by any institution or superior authority [... and] it demands that the literary work of the unstably positioned author be tailored to invent, to produce a similar readership” (95-96). From this hesitating, unstable consciousness, three different types of cosmopolitanism can emerge:

one of deliberate dispossession (Diogenes style), one rooted and developing in wider and wider circles (Appiah style), and finally one (the one I call “experimental”) with no single center, moving between several mental and sentimental positions or role-playing personalities (96).

Nussimbaum’s works engage in deconstructing nativism and the native condition from the inside by highlighting its fragility and how it is in fact a defensive construct that only contributes to building a pragmatic cosmopolitanism, one that would only give credit to the outward. Thus, at the core of his writings stands “dis-placement and re-placement (moving out, moving in, removing and substituting)” (101). When it comes to Essad Bey, the dialogue invoked relies heavily on the “rhetorical and narrative system used to prevent diversity as good in itself and all kinds of communal or national violence as absurd” (102), and the cultural worlds contained by Bey’s work prove to be a symbiosis, or an endless string of unfinished metamorphoses.

Mihaela Ursa’s essay in the third part of the volume, “Cosmopolis Today: Comparative Literature and Its Diacritical Marks”, takes into consideration the disparity that exists in the intrinsic axis of the cosmopolitanism of comparative literature, and how migrant intellectuals pertaining to the liminal spaces and cultures have left an imprint on literary studies. The cosmopolitan and comparative standpoints require a celebration of locality; hence, they shape new possibilities for thinking the relationship between space and movement. Comparative Literature in its core understanding maintains a paradoxical value: “while aiming to bring cultures together, Comparative Literature has always needed borders and local specificities to thrive as a discipline among the other literary studies” (219). In the midst of its subversive nature, the cosmopolitan principle can be unraveled as part of its historical definition. This essay attempts “an analysis of the intrinsic bond between cosmopolitanism and Comparative Literature from the perspective of their common relational focus and anti-nationalist stance” (219), with the purpose of concentrating on the role and function of migrant

intellectuals related to Comparative Literature, while referring to the displacement from liminal spaces and cultures, all of which have influenced notably the literary studies conducted from a cosmopolitan standpoint.

The idea of crisis comes into play when it comes to Comparative Literature practice, and one of its most remarkable results is “the revamping of the Goethean *world literature* (via Damrosch) into the world-literature theory of present-day comparatism” (222). Thus, the cosmopolitan standpoint implies a wider dialectic, more specifically an actualized sense of cultural location, while this essay converges on the role of Comparative Literatures and World Literatures in the disambiguation of “both national ideologies and global cosmopolitanism” (222), as a way to shed light on a more inclusive cosmopolitan emergence.

Migrant writers, carrying the weight of a unified form of globalization, present different interests, stemming from various sources and spanning across a multitude of spaces and cultures; they are simultaneously authors of good literature and also emblems of cosmopolitanism, carrying within the fluidity of electric worlds, always on the move. The aim should not be cosmopolitan unity achieved by what is collectively called “migrant authors”, but a sort of contemplation of what being an outsider actually implies. This position is closely related to “the cultural imprint of a particular *habitus* on all cultural and scholarly practices associated with it” (224). Setting aside the universalist illusion, the aforementioned variations in the sizes of cultures and literatures presuppose interesting consequences for Comparative Literature and cosmopolitanism, as the latter is always imagined as a middle passage.

Early cosmopolitan theory was shaped into a vessel for nationalism, as it has often served its purpose in the glorification of national cultural prestige, sometimes even holding great power and influence in shaping national identity. However, this is not the core of the cosmopolitan spirit, as some cultures might use it as a strategy to declare a national culture as “the ultimate hallmark of universalism”, such an example being the Romanian culture during the period of Late Romanticism in the nineteenth century, which “nurtures two different understandings of cosmopolitanism. One opposes it to nationalism, mainly to *the national genius* [...], while the other equates it with universal peace and equality in a specifically German connotation” (228). Contemporary understandings of cosmopolitanism tend to be skeptical towards the possibility of a

complete transcendence of borders, or even towards the idea that “we share *the same* Cosmopolis” (230). As such, it becomes increasingly important to shift the focus from the universal content to the particular one and to comprehend the fact that “it is precisely one’s situatedness in the world and within cultures that forges our relational imagination and our allegiances” (230).

The trajectory undertaken by the book aims to shape cosmopolitan thought and practice in a different light, one that would oppose the nationalist or communitarian complexes attached to it throughout the years. The main methodological direction of the book has to do with nesting a deeper understanding of the concept, not in the frame of relativity or globalization. The nature of our complex present requires such a stance, as the limits constantly shift and create various marginal spaces within these fields of study. The resistance to unification and universality is imperative in this context, and from this point of view the contributors to *Migrating Minds* maintain a much-needed diversity, which opens up the space for a fruitful and creative dialogue.