Giulia Pelillo-Hestermeyer

1 Re-thinking Diversity and Transculturality: Introduction

At the origin of the cooperation that eventually led to this book, there is the idea of emphasizing the gap between the ordinariness of diversity, as it occurs in everyday life, and the many ways of representing and addressing it as something exceptional, independently of whether those representations and practices carry with them positive or negative connotations. On the one hand, it would be reasonable to consider diversity and otherness as constitutive characters, not only of any group, but also of any individual identity, since we all learn to see and think about ourselves by relying on other people's opinions, speech, behaviour. Identity is a never-ending process of construction of, respectively, "the self" and "the other", and as such it is anything but a homogeneous or stable entity. Consequently, as it has been rightly argued (s., among others, Fuchs, 2007, p. 20), it is not diversity, but the belief in an alleged homogeneity of cultures and cultural identities, that needs an explanation. On the other hand, diversity is *made* visible and addressed as extraordinary in many ways, ranging from political debates about the "limits of tolerance" to stereotyped forms of cultural hybridity in fashion or in the advertising business. Sometimes such representations (whether iconic, discursive, mediated, etc.) highlight the coolness, attractiveness, or even the efficiency of hybridity, such as, for example in the display of "exotic" beauty or innovative technologies. More often, especially if referring to societal developments, they pose a challenge to social unity and stability. Independently of which position is taken in this regard, representations of diversity and otherness carry with them emotional connotations and easily arouse emotions of many sorts, giving rise to various conflicts, both in public debate and in private conversations. Diversity has many faces and shapes, some of which are represented as prettier than others. The more diversity is thematized as something extraordinary and becomes a keyword in policies, organizational or marketing strategies, the more it appears to be regulated and standardized in ways that spread and strengthen ideas about how it "really" is or should be. This process of standardization and regulation contributes to the affirmation of *specific* forms of diversity over others, as shown by several contributions in this volume. For example, the "otherness" of a nomadic way of life is praised by high fashion as a form of globalized cosmopolitanism and modernity (Reichardt), whereas it is contrasted by political policies constraining nomadic ethnic groups within marginalized areas (Niccolai). Furthermore, hybridity is acknowledged and appreciated in *some* artistic, linguistic or bodily practices, and rejected, tabooed, repressed or even persecuted in others. Why this happens can only be answered by examining, case by case, the contexts in which these processes of differentiation take place, including the various forms of agency deriving from the power relationships at stake. Whether

differences are acknowledged or rejected, praised or criticized, and even what "different" stands for is contextually bounded.

This volume has been conceived with the purpose of examining as broad as possible a spectrum of contexts in which diversity and otherness are negotiated and have been negotiated in the past. In it we wish to stress the processes of regulation, standardization, and even homogenization which take place in their respective contexts, when specific socio-cultural features are made relevant to create asymmetries and hierarchies between individuals, groups and cultural resources. The variety of such *processes of differentiation* turns the ordinariness of diversity as a human condition into a particularly complex socio-cultural field, which has given rise in recent years to a distinctive area of studies. Processes such as globalization, decolonization, migration, and "mediatization"[1] have not only made diversity more visible in daily life, but have also placed it at the centre-stage of societal, political and cultural change, greatly attracting the attention of both scholarly and non-scholarly debates in the past two decades. Steven Vertovec (2007) has spoken, in this context, of *superdiversity*, meaning a "diversification of diversity", due to the multiple possibilities for people, goods and a variety of resources to cross, whether virtually or physically, territorial and cultural boundaries. Such diversification is also reflected by the range of terms and concepts related to the field of culture, which have arisen in different contexts of research, such as superculture (Lull, 2002), hybridity (García Canclini, 2005), transculturality (Welsch, 2005; Abu-Er-Rub et al., 2019a), and transdifference (Allolio-Näcke et al., 2005), just to name a few. These terms, while they differ in highlighting specific modes of difference among others, by privileging a particular perspective or methodological approach over others, are connected by the common goal of overcoming structuralist paradigms in favour of a constructivist approach, which is focused on cultural interconnectedness. All of them rely upon a plural conceptualization of culture, which seems to be the only suitable means to grasp conflicts, discrepancies and asymmetries arising in contexts of cultural contact, and, at the same time, to develop strategies for better handling, if not overcoming, such conflicts. On the one hand, the approach proposed by this volume to the study of diversity and otherness follows this perspective, while on the other hand it aims at further developing it by concentrating, thematically, on the mentioned gap between the diversity characterizing complex life-worlds, and the contingent processes of differentiation that take place in various contexts of practice. In this we intertwine the perspectives

1 The term "mediatization" has been coined in contemporary Media Studies to denote the stress which is currently given to the powerful influence of electronic media. Thus, whereas mediated communication mainly refers to the transmission of communication through any kind of medium, mediatized communication adds to this perspective the consideration of the institutions and the organizational structures involved in the production of media itself. For an overview of the concept of mediatization and its use in various academic fields, see Lundby (2009).

of, respectively, diversity and transcultural studies, as it will be further explained below. We are aware that both transculturality and diversity build particularly heterogeneous fields of research in themselves, displaying a range of asymmetries typical of interdisciplinary enterprises. With respect to diversity studies, for example, it has been observed that the vagueness of the term itself poses significative challenges. Vertovec (2015, pp. 2–3) identifies "at least six facets of 'diversity' discourses, policies and practices derived from a range of programmes, mission statements, campaigns and guidelines within institutions":

a) policies addressing a more equal redistribution of goods (jobs, education, housing etc.) towards minorities who have historically been the objects of discrimination;
b) policies aiming at fostering positive self-images of minorities and increasing their participation in social and political life;
c) actions for a better representativeness of minoritarian groups within institutions or a company or any other social environment;
d) programmes differentiating the offer of specific services, according to the heterogeneity of customers;
e) strategies aiming at increasing the market share of a company by taking advantage of the potential of a diverse workforce, with respect to a better understanding of different customers, or to a better image of the company in general;
f) diversity management policies designed for the achievement of the above-mentioned goals as well as maximizing the productivity of the enterprise.

The heterogeneity of the meanings and practices associated with the term 'diversity' represents one of the main challenges for scholars who aim to take a comprehensive look at differentiation processes. In this light, Brubaker (2012, as cited in Vertovec, 2015, p. 4) expresses the need for a clear distinction between diversity as, respectively, a category of analysis and a category of practice. Moreover, the use of the term to refer to multiple processes of both constructing social affiliations (e.g. class, gender, race, ethnicity, etc.) and handling differences (e.g. policies, programmes, etc.), challenges its usefulness with respect to classificatory operations. In response to this challenge, Vertovec (2015, pp. 10–14) suggests a focus on two main topics, which he calls, respectively, "modes of social differentiation" and "complex social environments". Whereas the first topic mainly relates to what has been addressed above as the social construction of differences—contributing, among others, to create and circulate specific concepts of diversity—the second focuses on the question of how "historically produced conditions comprising: social fields, structures of power, discursive idioms, institutional frameworks, system of access and denial, economic and material inequalities and spatial arrangements … affect the ongoing dynamics of different modes of social differentiation" (Vertovec, 2015, p. 14). In other words, the challenge resides in deepening the mutual relationships between the simplifying mechanisms of classification, which in most cases build on and emphasize dichotomies (e.g. women-men,

black-white, East-West, etc.), and the multiple social affiliations which characterize real-life contexts (e.g. living together in a neighbourhood).

In this volume, while we acknowledge the importance of distinguishing between the use of the term "diversity" for analytical vs. non-analytical purposes—such as normative, celebrative or common sense uses—we are also interested in a *comparison* between complex lived diversity, its regulation and standardization through a variety of practices, and the academic reflexion on both these aspects. Consequently, while we have adopted, whenever necessary, an epistemological distinction between diversity as a category of analysis vs. of practice, as suggested by Brubaker (2012, as cited in Vertovec, 2015, p. 4), we have also looked at scholarly approaches to diversity as a particular form of regulation and standardization itself, which are worthy, as such, of being critically addressed. This includes, for example, the questioning of established and/or outdated concepts that are applied in different fields to refer to cultural difference, which show their respective potential and limits from a comparative perspective.

In this context, Lisa Gaupp addresses diversity and otherness with respect to the study of culture in general, and, more specifically, in sociology of culture and cultural sociology. She identifies two main ways of approaching it: firstly, by focusing on individuals' overlapping social identities and secondly, with respect to processes of interweaving within cultural concepts. This chapter critically reviews the epistemological assumptions which often underlie discourses on cultural diversity, and highlights, among other aspects, how similar discourses can lead, paradoxically, to opposing attitudes towards diversity. As a result, a particularly wide range of processes of standardizing diversity and otherness becomes visible through her analysis, and are finally set in relation with their outcomes.

Next, Stefan Hirschauer critically reflects upon the study of cultural difference in the social sciences by examining three particular approaches to the idea of multiple affiliations: that is, respectively, the fields of intersectionality, the intersection of social circles, and hybridity. This chapter illustrates how each one of these areas, by devoting attention to specific features of difference such as inequality (intersectionality), functional differentiation due to individual membership (the intersection of social circles), and the crossing of boundaries (hybridity), has overestimated these aspects and neglected to take into account the contingency, temporariness, and multidimensionality of social distinctions. Here, the gap between normatively conceptualizing vs. lived diversity is highlighted by showing the contrast between scholarly approaches to cultural distinctions and their "socially constructed factuality", the latter of which consists of "practically executed 'real-world essentializations' that are materialized both bodily and situationally, and solidified institutionally". Against this background, the chapter suggestively emphasizes the contingency, temporariness and multidimensionality of diversity by investigating what differences

are made relevant in which contexts, proceeding in a more empirical and transdisciplinary direction that is able to grasp the *gradations* of membership, relevance and institutionalization.

By comparing theory and practice, the ambivalence between "doing diversity" vs. "doing otherness" in a variety of practices (conceptualizations, discourses, policies, etc.) that, while aiming at promoting diversity, end up homogenizing, standardizing or hierarchizing its constitutive categories, appears particularly striking.

Kijan Espahangizi clearly shows this problematic by displaying a critical historical perspective towards controversial usages of the term "diversity" in Switzerland. This chapter tracks a progressive "culturalization" of the debate on migration from the 1970s to the 1990s, which has determined a still unresolved dualism in the conceptualization of diversity, which exists independently of the opposing *for* and *against* positions regarding immigration. The former refers to the four linguistic communities which are historically rooted in Switzerland, and which therefore relate to a "traditional" Swiss identity, while the latter, as a result of more recent migration and trends in globalization, focuses on "post-migrant" diversity. This chapter illustrates how such a dualism, by emphasizing cultural aspects of demographic pluralization, is responsible for the overlooking of other important issues, such as the reduction of social inequality. This facilitates, in turn, contradictory approaches to social heterogeneity and hinders the advancement of solutions which would be more adequate to the post-migrant reality. The historical perspective of the chapter adds significant insights to considering the contradictory ways of handling diversity, especially in contexts in which, paradoxically, great resources are invested in its promotion.

In light of such and similar incongruities, the choice not to explicitly address culture is often regarded as the best strategy to avoid so-called "intercultural" conflicts. This volume suggests instead that a transcultural approach can help in such cases. By referring to transculturality, we are aware that the term has a transcultural history itself, which goes back to the publication of *Contrapuncteo Cubano del tabaco y del azúcar* by Fernando Ortiz in 1940, and has known ever since multiple interdisciplinary intersections with other terms, such as hybridity, creolization and métissage, in a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary discourses (Abu-Er-Rub et al., 2019b, pp. xxiii–xiiv, and Gaupp in this volume for an overview). Similar to what was previously said with respect to diversity, this volume has not developed one specific definition of transculturality, nor does it aim at offering one. It rather looks at this concept as a *method* to emphasize the contrast between discursively established and ideologically marked categorizations commonly addressed as (e.g. national, popular, feminine, etc.) cultures, and their contingent negotiations in the social world. This means addressing culture as an intrinsically dynamic category, while acknowledging, at the same time, that static constructions and ideological dichotomies such as "the western vs. the eastern", "the feminine vs. the masculine", despite their epistemological groundlessness, do matter in the social world insofar as, among other things, they strengthen asymmetries and inequalities. Axel Michaels (2019) suggests that we

distinguish between open, hidden and methodological transculturality in order to "overcome the aporia that one has to define culture or cultural elements which, transculturally seen, one has to deny" (p. 12). He indicates as open transculturality all the evident forms of cultural mixtures, whose elements can be clearly identified and separated, "since their historical process of amalgamation has been comparatively short. Indo-jazz, a mixture of hybridization of American jazz with influences from classical Indian music and instruments, would be such a form of open transculturality" (Michaels, 2019, p. 12). Hidden transculturality can be traced, instead, in all cultural forms, even if their elements are not immediately visible. He exemplifies this case by referring to the sarod used in Indo-jazz, which is not an "Indian" musical instrument but originally comes from Afghanistan. Michaels (2019) then concludes:

> It is only by using a methodological transculturality as a default mode or heuristic concept, i.e. by looking at the formative and transformative processes resulting in any given cultural manifestation, that we discover such cultural entanglements as a result of processes of negotiation, bargaining and competition which allow conclusions on monopoles of interpretation and power relationships. (Michaels, 2019, p. 12)

From this perspective, the application of a transcultural approach makes it possible to simultaneously recognize the fluidity of cultural entanglements (e.g. the crucial role of Afghan instruments in Indo-jazz) and the ways those entanglements become solidified in seemingly fixed categories (e.g. the "simple" cultural label "Indian" that gets attached to such music). The affinity between diversity and transcultural studies appears here to be particularly evident, insofar both fields are characterized by a particular "lens" to look at culture. Appadurai has described this specific approach by asserting that

> it [diversity] forces us to re-examine older ideas of culture and re-think some of the following questions: how does it work? How is it organized? What is culture as a system? How does its symbolism work? How do people get socialized into it or out of it? (Appadurai, 2009, as cited in Vertovec, 2015, p. 9)

By looking through such a lens, a second group of chapters focuses on different forms of "hidden" transculturality and highlight multiple negotiations of belongings, knowledge frameworks, ethics and forms of cultural capital in processes of cultural interconnectedness.

Joseph Ciaudo, for example, zooms in on the historical episode of the Chinese diplomat Wu Tingfang, who declined to adopt a Western dress code in his career at the beginning of the twentieth century. This chapter shows, through the comparison of a variety of texts by Wu, how his disapproval of Western clothing was not motivated by a conservative attitude towards the West in general. On the contrary, his profound knowledge of both "the East" and "the West" (that is, of the respective concepts of them circulating at the time) stimulated him to reflect comparatively upon a variety of

aspects related to clothing, ranging from social to hygienic issues. Ciaudo illustrates how the rejection of "Western" clothes by Wu did not derive from a refusal of foreign customs in general, nor did it aim at demonstrating the superiority of one culture upon another. Wu was rather negotiating a "transcultural Modernity": a Modernity that was neither a "Western", nor an "Eastern" category, but an ideal of Civilization transcending single cultures.

Next, Susanne Marten-Finnis reflects upon the performance of "Oriental Otherness" staged by the *Ballet Russes* at the beginning of the twentieth century, which was met by both its Paris and London audiences with great enthusiasm. This chapter sheds light on the fortunate contrast between the "Oriental Other" displayed by the producers, and that which was imagined by the audiences. Marten-Finnis demonstrates that the "Oriental" identity displayed by the producers arose as a result of their encounter with a corpus of knowledge about decorative and performing arts from the—recently annexed—Southern Asian periphery of Russia, a knowledge acquired by Russian scholars, especially ethnographers, and mostly disregarded by the nation's politicians. European audiences, who were not aware of it, appreciated the "Oriental" settings and narratives by reading them as a kind of allegory through the lens of Symbolism. In her analysis, this chapter deconstructs the multilayered "acquired and imagined knowledge" about the "Oriental" identity displayed by the *Ballet Russes*' performances, stressing the negotiation of its features and meanings between the twin processes of production and reception. To conclude, Marten-Finnis examines such discrepancies by referring to Foucault's "theory of Other Spaces" (*heterotopia*), thus considering the productions of the *Ballet Russes* as counter-spaces outside the ordinary which stimulate the imagination. Moreover, she stresses how the impact of the *Ballet Russes* on the public revealed itself to be much greater than only affecting their imagination, by the impact that it had on the development of European Modernism. Lastly, the chapter shows how theatre can become a space that plays host to the transcultural negotiation of identities, stereotypes and cultural norms.

Barbara Ursula Oettl analyses the work of the multimedia and performance artist ORLAN, which brings the reflection upon the fundamental role played by alterity in the definition of the Self to its extreme consequences. ORLAN questions the integrity of the *Self*, and pinpoints its hybrid and fragile nature, owing to the numerous possibilities of deconstructing and reconstructing it through biotechnological and medical practices. The artist's projects, in which she literally transforms her physical appearance and her personality by undergoing a series of surgical and psychotherapeutic treatments, pose significant ethical and legal questions, such as the stability of identity in the wake of such dramatic self-modifications. The chapter thus emphasizes in striking ways that in an era of increasing biotechnological and biomedical manipulation the contours of the *Self* and the *Other*, the human and the cyborg, become negotiated every time anew.

A last set of chapters particularly concentrate on how diversity is *made* visible in different contexts, and emphasize the contrast between normalizing, levelling or even stereotyping diversity, and emerging, transculturally sensitive approaches to it.

My chapter on linguistic diversity takes its cue from the contrast between the ordinariness of lived multilingualism and the various forms of linguistic standardization which take place in different forms of media communication. In this context, the chapter stresses the fundamental role played by media institutions and organizations in spreading linguistic ideologies. On the one hand, the mostly monolingual national public spheres contribute to strengthen monocultural attitudes by overlooking the growing presence of linguistic diversity in contemporary life-worlds. A similar attitude in resisting language mix can be observed in transnational public spheres, which are characterized by the simple juxtaposition of single—mostly national—languages, which exemplifies what has been called "parallel monolingualism" (Heller, 1999), or "pluralised monolingualism" (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007). In contrast with these practices, different sorts of linguistic hybridity are compared: on the one hand, the mix of Hindi and English in Indian cinema, which has known in recent times great success in globalized media industries, becoming a symbol of cosmopolitanism and modernity but also of "Murdochization" of the media worldwide. On the other, a number of alternative ways of handling language diversity in transnational mediascapes, which make *lived* multilingual realities more visible in public spheres. The chapter relates the different ways of handling linguistic diversity to respective cultural ideologies, some of them with a long tradition dating back to ideologies of modernity and to the formation of the nation state, others emerging in the context of current "meta-processes" (Krotz, 2009) as the globalization, commercialization, individualization and mediatization of culture.

The globalization of Hinglish can be compared, to some extent, to the globalization of Italian fashion, which is analysed by Dagmar Reichardt in the next chapter. Both cases show how specific forms of hybridity, by acquiring symbolic value on a globalized "market of cultural resources" (Bourdieu, 1982/1991) and thus becoming symbols of cosmopolitan life-styles, undergo various processes of regulation and standardization. Reichardt examines the negotiation of diversity and otherness in Italian fashion in the context of its transcultural circulation, by considering the multiple processes of re-writing the label "Italian fashion" in the framework of its de- and reterritorialization, "glocalization", re-appropriation of cultural symbols in- and outside the Italian context. She considers fashion as a semiotic language which is employed, today just as in the past, to negotiate a variety of cultural norms and traditions related to (even stereotyped) Italian identities. This chapter stresses the "polyphony" of the language of fashion, combining representations of class, gender, and race which circulate through power discourses, and which address both the socio-political and the artistic spheres, for example through street wear and high fashion. In this light Reichardt emphasizes how fashion can arouse imaginative spaces, which stimulate a confrontation with the *Self* and the *Other*, therein acquiring a subversive potential.

In a similar vein but in a different context, Marta Niccolai enquires into the reversing of perspectives in theatrical performances, in which Italian dramaturges such as Pino Petruzzelli, Fiorenza Menni and Andrea Mochi Sismondi, cooperate with members of Roma communities. Particular attention is devoted to the overthrowing of power relationships through the possibilities, offered by the theatre, to trade roles and perspectives, for example by displaying a marginalized minority, whose stories are usually narrated from the perspective of the majority, onto the stage. As a result, diversity and otherness, and the respective norms which define both categories, turn to be uncertain through their deconstruction on-stage.

Next, Marek Sancho Höhne critically discusses discrepancies between circulating hegemonic representations and self-narrations of trans_gendered identities in different contexts in Germany. In particular, by highlighting the striking contrast between medico-legal standards (which hold transsexuality to be a disease and aim to cure it) and self-narrations by interviewed trans_people, the author illuminates how complex negotiations of identities are dramatically simplified by the homogenizing power of widespread practices. Furthermore, by considering the intersection between gender, religious, race and national attributes in representing trans_gender people, the chapter questions circulating narratives, which strengthen stereotypes related to a variety of diversities, and deconstructs their multilayered nature. While highlighting the standardizing effect of widespread images of trans_gender individuals "from [the] outside"—that is, by deriving them from the binary distinction of female and male, as is experienced by the majority—the chapter compares them to the diversity of trans_gendered life-worlds.

Next, Lisa Gaupp records her discussion in interview with Claude Jansen (independent scholar, performer, dramaturge and curator) about the representation of diversity and otherness in globally active performing arts, music festivals, and cultural organizations in general. This chapter stresses the discrepancy between the ideal of a borderless, transcultural art world, and the reality of market strategies that tend to standardize diversity by promoting specific features of it and excluding others. Against this background, this chapter discusses future possibilities and strategies of opening "the curatorial" in a more emancipatory way, one which is able to overcome binary conceptualizations of diversity by drawing more closely to transcultural life-worlds in the attempt to decolonize global art worlds.

Lastly, Fabio Cismondi and I treat the diversity of scientific groups involved in large international projects. By drawing from an interview with Pietro Barabaschi, Head of Department at Fusion for Energy (F4E) and Director of the European-Japanese Broader Approach activities, this chapter investigates the different aspects which characterize the diversity of international scientific groups by going beyond the widespread habit of thinking of diversity as the sum of single identity groups (e.g. women, ethnic minorities, etc.). It emphasizes the variety of professional cultures that characterize the main laboratories and institutions involved in the projects, all of which are characterized by specific norms that regulate the cooperation (e.g.

processes of decision-making and communication, including the manner of handling hierarchies). The construction of a "common culture" and group identity around the strong driver of a clear common goal, without levelling the diversity of the cooperating partners, emerges as a fundamental means to achieving the goals of the project within the planned budget and time-schedule. The limited size of the core team and the opportunity of having personal exchange and developing mutual trust constitute a key element to overcome cultural stereotyping, and to avoid that projects fail because of alleged "intercultural problems". The chapter suggests overcoming binary approaches to diversity in organizations, which tend to endorse either the productivity or the representativeness of single identity groups. It encourages instead to look, case by case, at strategies that open up spaces for the transcultural negotiation of norms in all aspects of the cooperation, from the scientific development to the legal and administrative frameworks. In this connection, it stresses the role which is played by international actors from industry and politics as an important aspect to be considered by looking at the diversity of scientific environments. In this broader context, it suggests not to dichotomize between the achievement of social equality and the best scientific outcomes, by looking at scientific cooperation all in all as a transcultural enterprise.

To sum up, by highlighting the contrast between the various processes of standardization and regulation of diversity and their corresponding life-worlds, this volume addresses, on the one hand, the need—within as well as outside of academia—for categories offering orientation in understanding complex life-worlds, such as diversity, multiculturalism, hybridity, etc. On the other hand, it aims at stressing how contingent and limited any categorization and discourse appears to be with respect to such complexity. The space between the two opposite attitudes of denying vs. acknowledging diversity is a fuzzy one. By intertwining the perspectives of diversity and transcultural studies, the volume addresses this space as a *continuum* between the two opposite processes of, respectively, "doing otherness" vs. "doing diversity". Circulating ideologies which establish a correspondence between specific characters and their respective cultural features shape the ways in which diversity is perceived, experienced and practiced across a large variety of life-worlds. In turn, the spread of resulting representations and narratives contribute to strengthen or, on the contrary, to question hegemonic ideologies of cultural belonging. Diversity, as a category of practice, is thus *not*, per se, transcultural. The proposed approach, which builds on diversity as a category of analysis and transculturality as a method, offers a lens that reveals two opposite aspects characterizing the continuum between "doing diversity" and "doing otherness": on the one hand, the transculturality hidden behind any cultural form, including their respective, allegedly static categorizations; on the other, the various ways of levelling, standardizing and hierarchizing social groups and cultural resources, including those apparently aiming at promoting diversity. In this context, the term can have, among others, a "sensitizing" (Vertovec, 2015, p. 6) effect by highlighting both transculturally sensitive approaches across different

contexts and processes of exclusion based on the construction of differences with various purposes.

Every book is also the result of its specific context of production. In this case, the particular heterogeneity of the topics and approaches is related to the work that Lisa Gaupp and I have developed in the context of the section "Transcultural life-worlds" of the Kulturwissenschaftliche Gesellschaft between 2015 and 2019. By taking into account all the risks of inter- and transdisciplinarity, such as incompleteness and methodological or theoretical discrepancies, our main goal has not been to construct a comprehensive theory of diversity (assuming this would be a realistic goal for any enterprise) or to establish or de-limit a new field of study. It has been rather to reflect on problems and contradictions in handling diversity in different fields by learning from comparison, thus taking the chance to prove concepts and practices explicitly which are often taken for granted in (mono)disciplinary discourses. Moreover, it has been to critically reflect on the academic practice in light of diversity studies. This includes a comparative and critical review of scholarly terms, discourses and approaches, which, as often as they appear in daily discourse and representations, tend to prioritize certain aspects at the expense of others. Furthermore, it has aimed to transmit knowledge and approaches among different contexts of practice, not only between various academic disciplines but also in extra-academic environments. In fact, studying diversity within the academic framework can surely contribute to, but will not alone be able to promote, emancipatory processes of "doing diversity" in real life. As stressed by Stuart Hall (1981, p. 33), "ideology is a practice", and therefore processes of "doing diversity" need to take place in many fields of practice. We consider cultural studies, in the broadest sense of the term[2], to be the most suitable field for such an enterprise because of its capacity to bridge scholarly and extra-scholarly boundaries (e.g. by bringing different speakers, cultural brokers, researchers, institutional players, consumers, etc. onto a common ground). In this sense, this book is itself the result of transcultural encounters with diversity. May it stimulate more of them.

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2 Cultural studies as a field is *not* meant here as a mere translation of Kulturwissenschaft into English. However, while being aware of the discrepancies between cultural studies and Kulturwissenschaft(en), we have tried—in the work of the section "Transcultural Life-Worlds" and in this book—to approach the study of culture by intertwining the germanophone Kulturwissenschaft(en) with other approaches within and beyond anglophone cultural studies.

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