

The cosmopolitan continuum: locating cosmopolitanism in media and cultural studies

Jonathan Corpus Ong

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, UK

Media and cultural studies have witnessed quite a dramatic moral-ethical 'turn' in recent years. The writings of Roger Silverstone (1999, 2002, 2006), Nick Couldry (2006) and Lilie Chouliaraki (2006), among others, present not merely insightful judgments on the work of the media as enabling or disabling a moral-ethical disposition among individuals; their polemics are furthermore loud, clear and unanimous about the centrality of morality in the project of media and cultural studies. As Silverstone stresses:

In so far as the relations between human beings now depend on their mediation electronically, and our treatment of each other ... depends on their communication through the same media ... then we have to accept the challenge. If we are to understand ... in Berlin's words, the 'often violent world in which we live', and our media's role in that world, then we are *de facto* engaged in ethical inquiry. (1999: 142)

And the 'we' who are engaged in ethical inquiry, Couldry (2006: 141) demands, should not simply be academic scholars, journalists or media owners, but also '*all* citizens and *all* who would be citizens' (emphasis mine).

I describe this 'turn' as dramatic simply because media and cultural studies have had an historically estranged relationship with the word *morality*. Scholars from the classical social sciences of sociology and anthropology have long derided our field for being 'morally cretinous, because it is the bastard child of the media it claims to expose.... Once a critical force, it has become facile and useless ... about nothing other than [itself]' (Tester, 1994: 3-10). Indeed, for some time, scholarship from cultural studies, especially from North America, veered to populism and relativism, naively celebrating audiences' agency and resistance, glossing over issues of power and inequality along the way (e.g. Fiske, 1987). The solipsism of textual analysis and the

obfuscation of postmodern criticism further fed into this image of media scholars as egocentric and deprived of any moral agenda. After all, on the few occasions where morality is even mentioned in the field, the discourse is either characterized by the screech of 'moral panics' - subsequently and rightfully silenced (see Drotner, 1992) - or the modesty of 'moral economy', which Silverstone (1999: 140) later confessed constituted a 'discussion of morality with a very small and non-judgmental m'.

This is why the emergence of a significant and forceful agenda of media and morality, I believe, reflects a seismic shift in both the conceptualization and the application of the word *morality* within the field. Morality here is concerned with the Other. Capital *O*, as Silverstone may be likely to remind us. The Other across media space, the Other represented and representing, the Other invisible in media space, the Other disabled and distorted.

And morality here is thus concerned with the status of the cosmopolitan, and how he or she may be constituted (or not) by the work of the media. The cosmopolitan is described in many different ways, as we shall see below. But perhaps the common thread that ties together the many cosmopolitanisms that have been depicted in the literature is a fundamental orientation to the stranger, a welcoming of difference. In Hannerz's (1990: 239) famous words, it is: 'a willingness to engage with the other. It entails an intellectual and aesthetic openness towards divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity.'

The cosmopolitan is a figure that has emerged in media and cultural studies alongside the new literature on media and morality. The cosmopolitan - literally, 'citizen of the world' - is, for instance, sought out by Chouliaraki (2006) in the spectatorship of suffering. In her groundbreaking analysis of a series of news narratives of suffering, she theorizes that one can acquire an identity of cosmopolitanism (*moral*) or communitarianism (*less moral*) based on the type of news that is viewed. 'Adventure news' and 'ecstatic news', she argues, employ a communitarian logic in their representations of suffering; adventure news blocks 'the option of pity for the suffering of people who are not like "us"', whereas ecstatic news enacts the communitarian logic by expanding globally a demand for action on suffering that is "our" own' (2006: 196). These contrast with the cosmopolitan potentiality of 'emergency news', whereby the other's difference is neither exaggerated nor erased in the image, whereby viewers are encouraged to develop a politics of pity and enact action-at-a-distance (2006: 196-7).

Chouliaraki's writings evoke the notion of proper distance that Silverstone applies in his analysis of media work. Borrowing from Hannah Arendt and Emmanuel Levinas, Silverstone defines proper distance as:

... [the] understanding [of] the more or less precise degree of proximity required in our mediated interrelationships if we are to create and sustain a sense of the other sufficient not just for reciprocity but for a duty of care, obligation and responsibility, as well as understanding. Proper distance preserves the other through difference as well as through shared identity. (2006: 47)

In his incisive account of the rhetoric of evil in American popular culture, he describes how the Other is pushed beyond the pale of humanity, subsequently disabling the cosmopolitan ethic (2006: 56-79). Cosmopolitanism in media spaces, for Silverstone, is primarily constituted by the virtue of unconditional hospitality (2006: 139-4), which takes him far from Immanuel Kant's original conception of cosmopolitan virtue as deriving from reason and duty. Cosmopolitanism, for Chouliaraki and Silverstone, is a model identity that we should strive for as participants in the global space of appearance, as we engage with the Other in a dialectic of proximity and distance in processes of mediation.

But we are getting ahead of ourselves.

The point is this: media and morality, as an emerging sub-field in media and cultural studies, has given media scholars a critical new vocabulary by which to describe, analyse, and criticize the work of the media. Media and morality, borrowing heavily from moral philosophy and sociology, has provided us with elaborate textual analyses and phenomenological accounts of the 'pollution' of the media environment (see Silverstone, 2006) - from the indifference of dots-on-the-map news (Chouliaraki, 2006: 101) to the limits of editorial accountability (Couldry, 2006: 139).

However, media and morality, I would argue, currently lacks a sophisticated and grounded *theorization* and *examination* of the relationship between the media and the development of a moral *identity* - an identity that has come to be described as *cosmopolitan*. And if cosmopolitanism is assumed by media scholars to be an everyday and real positioning rather than an abstract ideal, then it is crucial to study cosmopolitanism as an identity - an identity that is lived and performed in everyday life.

While I greatly admire the work of the media and morality scholars that I have reviewed above, it is evident that this sub-field will benefit from bottom-up empirical work which can greatly supplement the rich textual and phenomenological analyses already carried out. The problem of the existing literature of course lies with the perils of making dangerous assumptions. When one deduces the effects of A to B from a close reading of A rather than a dialogue with B, one commits what John Thompson (1990) once called a 'fallacy of internalism'. Though I still believe that the study of representations is highly significant, the field of media and morality - and its polemic for moral responsibility of all those implicated in media work - should begin with *lived experience*. At home. With the world. Through the media. I. And the Other. In communication.

Cosmopolitanism, as I have mentioned, has been theorized from a variety of disciplines. And scholars today are at pains to emphasize that there is not one but *many* - even *discrepant* - cosmopolitanisms (Beck, 2006; Clifford, 1998). The purpose of this article is to provide not only a review of how cosmopolitanism has been theorized in the past by sociology, anthropology, moral philosophy and cultural studies; it also aims to propose a new way of thinking about cosmopolitanism. It maps out the existing literature - with its many contradictions - in a

new way such that cosmopolitanism can be conceptualized as an already-existing identity. It is an identity, furthermore, that lies in a continuum, whereby individuals weave in and out of different expressions of cosmopolitanism according to particular contexts. Crucially, it is also a fundamentally moral identity that is hinged on an engagement with the Other, acknowledging the Other as the same and at the same time as different from the self (Silverstone, 2006). The cosmopolitan identity, finally, is not an essence but a performance; it is '[in] relation to something or someone else that the boundary is drawn' (Madianou, 2005: 24). And below I argue that the twin traditions of 'reception' and 'everyday life' within media audience research should be used side by side in searching for the cosmopolitan in the media space.

Conceiving cosmopolitanism*)

The insistent chatter on cosmopolitanism in the social sciences might lead one to believe that the concept is a product of late modernity. Processes of globalization - the increasing awareness of a world 'where there are no "others"' (Giddens, 1991: 27) - seem to necessitate a new kind of identity politics for a world marked by complex interdependencies and everyday encounters of difference.

Cosmopolitanism, however, is an ancient term that has its roots back in the 3rd century BC (Pollock et al., 2000: 586). The philosophy of the Stoics, which spread from Athens throughout the Roman Empire, placed primacy on reason over emotion and espoused universal over local principles which could be deduced from 'natural law'. As Socrates famously declared: 'I am not an Athenian or a Greek, but a citizen of the world.'

Immanuel Kant's reinvention of cosmopolitanism in the late 1700s is largely recognized as a Utopian treatise for universal citizenship. Kant's writings proved influential to the disciplines we would now call 'moral philosophy' and 'political theory,' as he outlined in 'Perpetual Peace' his vision for a cosmopolitan society, where 'individuals and states, co-existing in an external relationship of mutual influences, may be regarded as citizens of a universal state of mankind' (Kant, 1991 [1797]: 98-9). According to Cheah (1998: 23), this was a significant turning point in intellectual thought in feudal Europe, where 'moral politics or political morality [was] formulated beyond the *polis* or state form, the point at which 'the political' becomes, by moral necessity, "cosmopolitical"'. Kant espoused against the formation of a representative federation of states that would stand against slavery, serfdom and imperialism. And like the Stoics, he sees that reason is the most fundamental human faculty, as it is through reason that human beings recognize their moral duty (Wood, 1998: 69).

This brief historical excursion, I should now profess, is merely a review of the history of the *term* 'cosmopolitanism' and not the *idea* of cosmopolitanism. As Pollock et al. complain:

Most discussions of cosmopolitanism as a concept and activity largely predetermine the outcome by their very choice of materials. If it is already clear that cosmopolitanism begins with the Stoics, who invented the term, or with Kant, who reinvented it, then philosophical reflection on these moments is going to enable us always to find what we are looking for. Yet what if we were to try to be archivally cosmopolitan and to say, 'Let's simply look at the world across time and space and see how people have thought and acted beyond the local.' We would then encounter an extravagant array of possibilities. (2000: 585-6)

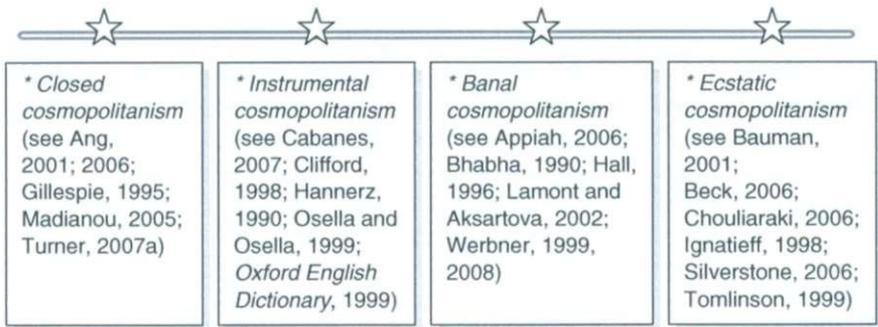
Acting beyond the local, after all, is not a property of time (late modernity, the Enlightenment, or 3rd century BC) nor place (the West, Europe, Athenian *polis*); it is a practice that can be seen in non-Western contexts throughout history as well. Pollock et al. (2000: 586), for instance, give the example of a translocal culture that developed in parts of Asia from the circulation of Sanskrit poetry in the first millennium.

Pollock et al.'s challenge, while it may seem directed to historians of intellectual thought, is nonetheless relevant to our study of cosmopolitanism as an identity. In a search for the cosmopolitan in the fabric of everyday life, it is crucial to think of the expressions of cosmopolitanism as always-already plural. Whereby we begin with a more or less 'singular' foundational idea of cosmopolitanism - as *thinking beyond the local*, as *searching for contrasts* - empirically we have to be sensitive to the 'extravagant array of possibilities' of *who* performs this orientation and *how* this orientation is performed. For instance, while its intellectual roots in Stoicism and Kantian philosophy are profoundly secular, cosmopolitanism remains a potentiality for religious individuals, despite popular essentialist pronouncements of a closed 'Muslim mind' (e.g. Huntington, 2002). And in spite of the gendered history of the cosmopolitan as an *homme du monde* in opposition to the *mujer en la casa* (Tomlinson, 1999: 187), the de-Westernizing, feminist and cultural approach that we take here enables us to 'rescue' the *idea* of cosmopolitanism as an analytical tool without the historical baggage of the *term* 'cosmopolitanism'. As an analytical tool, the idea of cosmopolitanism can be empirically used to crack open the complex relationship between the global and the local, between the media and identities. From a bottom-up perspective, we can see how the underlying ethic of cosmopolitanism is enabled or disabled by media images and media practices, and thus expressed by individuals in creative and unpredictable ways.

Cosmopolitanism now

In this section, I begin to outline the ways in which cosmopolitanism is currently theorized and examined in various disciplines. I show here the many cosmopolitanisms that are thought through in sociology, anthropology, and media and cultural studies. These cosmopolitanisms however, I argue, do not describe different ideas; they instead describe different expressions of the core idea of

FIGURE 1
The cosmopolitan continuum



cosmopolitanism as an 'openness to the world'. Taking the idea of identity as a symbolic project (Thompson, 1995), a way of being and becoming (Hall, 1996), I argue that cosmopolitanism is an identity that we develop in particular contexts and express in different ways to suit particular purposes and, crucially, can be examined empirically by reception and ethnographic approaches.

Closed cosmopolitanism

In analysing such an unwieldy, multifaceted idea such as cosmopolitanism, it is perhaps fruitful to describe first its absences and failures. Closed cosmopolitanism is the identity performance when individuals *reject* the ideal of openness and fall back on the comforts of the similar and the predictable, separating 'self' from 'other'. While the basic idea of cosmopolitanism is premised on permissibility, closed cosmopolitanism is premised on impenetrability. Its geographies are borders, barriers and boundaries, walls and firewalls, fences and fortresses; its temporalities are the historical, the original and the traditional, the past, the preceding and the pure. And as Silverstone (2006) might say, its mantra is 'always, always on my terms'. In concrete terms, this is the type of identity politics that is particularist, exclusionary and determinist (Ang, 2001: 150), often associated with fundamentalism, conservatism and 'enclave societies' (Turner, 2007a).

Enclave societies are increasingly recognized in much sociological and anthropological literature. Perhaps initially seen as an aberration or 'the underbelly' (Harindranath, 2005) in processes of globalization, now these gated societies, ghettos, camps, etc. are seen as, on the one hand, expressions of cultural *reterritorialization* and, on the other, expressions of retreat to 'tropes of the tribe'. Turner (2007a), for instance, cites how enclave societies are both bottom-up reactions to homogenizing forces of globalization and top-down

productions of nation-states. For Turner, globalization has produced a new regime of spatial regulation in nation-states, as they attempt to make sense of and manage the rapid movement of persons, cultures, goods and services. Certainly, inhabitants of a homogeneous, inward-looking and defensive enclave society - often thought of as a small community of non-Western people in a Western country - are disabled from expressing the ideal of a cosmopolitan openness to the world. Ang (2001: 14), for one, identifies that there is still an irresistible appeal of the homeland myth among transnational communities, which intensifies anti-cosmopolitan feelings of ethnic absolutism and exclusionism. Patai's (2002) controversial bestseller *The Arab Mind* dangerously racializes this concept by asserting that Arab culture and history - and the influence of Islam - promote a 'tendency toward extremes of behavior', of which Arab nationalism and cultural enclavement are major constituent parts. The Arab mind', apparently, is biologically biased for closed cosmopolitanism.

With regard to media consumption, closed cosmopolitanism is often seen in the rituals of diasporic communities nostalgic for a real and/or imagined homeland. Georgiou's (2006) study of the Cypriot Community Centre in London describes how the public consumption of satellite television renews and reaffirms Greek Cypriot identity for older, first-generation migrants. She contrasts this with younger-generation migrants who tend to feed from a wider diet of British and international media than their parents and grandparents. She furthermore argues that diasporic television usually functions within the homeland project of assimilation for diasporic populations (2006: 69-71). While she does not explicitly use the term 'cosmopolitanism', we can apply here the term *closed cosmopolitanism* to individuals with restrictively particularistic diets of media forms. Certainly, if we are to fall back on the idea of cosmopolitanism as a *search for contrasts* and the assumption that the media is a flow of new imaginaries and possibilities that lift us out from our particular positionings, then the consumption of a healthy diet of a *variety* of media forms is enabling for cosmopolitanism.

An oscillation between 'opening up' and 'closing in' as regards individuals' identity construction vis-a-vis media consumption is actually highly documented in the literature on transnational audiences. In her ethnography, Gillespie (1995) discovers that media representing several cultures are available in young Punjabis' homes in Southall, London. A critical observation that Gillespie makes that is relevant to our discussion arises when she discusses how Punjabi teenagers continually seek to redefine their ethnicity in their reception of media products. She identifies that, in their talk about Coca-Cola and McDonald's TV ads, there is an expressed desire to transcend ethnic difference. However, in their reception of TV news about the Gulf War, they 'lose' this cosmopolitan orientation and become trapped in binary thinking of us and them, of friend and foe. Madianou's (2005) study of news consumption of Greek- and Turkish-speaking audiences in Greece reveals that, when identities are challenged, audiences tend to revert to dominant, essentialist discourses about their identities. This she surmises from a

close reading of audiences' media talk in relation to a textual analysis of the news reports themselves.

The retreat to tropes of nationalism and tribalism in the context of globalization has been previously described in anthropology (Clifford, 1998: 369). Media studies, especially audience studies of transnational audiences, have proved particularly productive in noticing how restrictive regimes of representation - that is, exclusionary and essentialist images of 'nation' and 'culture' - tend to promote expressions of closed cosmopolitanism among audiences. Ethnographies of individuals' diets of global, regional, national, and local media forms have also shown how people may come to have cosmopolitan or particularistic orientations. Future research in media and cultural studies should perhaps heed Livingstone's (1998) call for more comparative research in answering the questions: when else do individuals develop closed cosmopolitanisms?' Aside from images of conflict and restrictive media diets, what other media contexts and socio-economic contexts disable cosmopolitanism? What groups are more likely to develop closed cosmopolitanisms and why?

Instrumental cosmopolitanism

It is perhaps the women's glossy publication rather than academic publication that has promoted an understanding of the cosmopolitan as the elite, worldly consumerholic. Even the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1999) defines cosmopolitan as 'having an exciting and glamorous character associated with travel and mixture of cultures'. From this perspective, cosmopolitanism is a property of class and commerce, a way of being that consciously draws from, internalizes and displays a luxurious cultural capital. Crucially, compared to other expressions of cosmopolitanism, instrumental cosmopolitanism is the most conscious mode of self-(re)presentation, as it is a social - and ultimately, *political* - performance of superiority which is hinged on a binary between the cosmopolitan and 'the local'. One is rich, the other poor. One is transient and mobile. The other is rooted and fixed. One enjoys limitless options. The other opts for the limits of locality.

It is this definition of cosmopolitanism that has led the cultural geographer Doreen Massey (1994) to decry that the cosmopolitan virtue is actually a predominantly *white* and *First World* take on things. Tomlinson (1999) adds that this definition is gender-biased as well.

Instrumental cosmopolitanism is an important category because it captures a rather selfish expression of the cosmopolitan 'openness to others'. While it is not its absence, as with closed cosmopolitanism, instrumental cosmopolitanism makes use of one's knowledge of the world to promote oneself. In other words, it uses otherness for the sake of the self and to further delineate self from other.

In anthropological literature, Filippo Osella and Caroline Osella (1999) assume 'instrumental cosmopolitanism' in studying the consumption habits of labor migrants returning to South India. In their ethnography, they describe how

returnee migrants assert their social status by displaying ownership of material goods from abroad. In cultural studies, Aihwa Ong's famous work 'Flexible Citizenship' (1998) analyses how diasporic Chinese entrepreneurs attempt to subvert repressive biopolitics of citizenship within their 'host countries' by deploying economic capital as a weapon for identity politics. As trade ambassadors, they have embraced the image of being 'bridge builders' as they are able to 'convert political constraints in one field into economic opportunities in another' (A. Ong, 1998: 156). In media studies, Jason Cabanes' (2007) 'nethnography' of how Filipino migrants in Singapore represent themselves in blogs identifies three strategies of performing (instrumental) cosmopolitanism: (1) displaying knowledge of Singaporean customs and culture, (2) boasting about travel experiences and (3) asserting separateness from 'ordinary Filipinos'. Rather than being critical of such self-conscious displays of prestige and power however, the Osellas', Ong's and Cabanes' studies are actually quite sympathetic about the exigencies of such modes of self-representation. This is Cabanes' wistful reflection:

Although it cannot be denied that their [representations] inadvertently stressed the chasm that separates their social status and, even more importantly, their social capital, from the rest of their compatriots back home, it must be remembered as well that many of them are striving to make the world acknowledge what they perceive to be the unique worth and contribution of Filipinos. In the end then, their routes are still intertwined with their roots. (2007: 18)

Indeed, it is difficult to disentangle cosmopolitanism from its conceptual chain-link to *capital*. We can after all trace the linkage between cosmopolitanism and commerce to Kant's 'Perpetual Peace' (1991 [1797]), where he posits that peaceful cosmopolitan coexistence is a consequence of a mutually shared 'spirit of commerce'. Classism is also quite evident in Hannerz's (1990) famous essay on cosmopolitanism, where he makes a rigid distinction between cosmopolitans and 'locals'. He even identifies that labor migrants and refugees are not cosmopolitans as their involvement with other cultures is 'but a necessary cost to be kept as low as possible'. In addition, cosmopolitanism only seems to be located in the *city*, if the bias for urban over rural experiences from sociological and anthropological literature is any indication, as Reiker (2007) complains. Economic and educational privilege is also said to be evident in cultural studies' depiction of the cosmopolitan diasporic intellectual (e.g. Hall, 1996; Said, 2000). The cosmopolitan as a condition that pertains only to metropolitan intellectuals sitting atop their ivory tower is an image that fits instrumental cosmopolitanism. And, shamefully, media scholars are singled out for being the biggest snobs in all of social science: 'The anthropologist arrives in the city on foot, the sociologist by car and via the main highway, the communications specialist by plane' (Garcia Canclini, 1995:4).

Certainly, the analysis of performances of instrumental cosmopolitanism is productive in bringing to the fore issues of power in the context of everyday life. From the thick descriptions of the manners by which individuals represent

themselves as cosmopolitans over less privileged locals, we see the continuities and discontinuities of inequalities in processes of motion and mediation. In the context of globalization, with its multiple scales, spatialities and trajectories, audience studies must be attentive to how individuals 'turn displacement into advantageous placement *in different sites*' (A. Ong, 1998: 156, emphasis mine). Such an analysis would entail not an apolitical celebration of agency over structure but a critique of everyday micro-politics where differences are increasingly asserted, with political consequences. Nevertheless, studying cosmopolitanism within this one frame alone, I would argue, loses much of the idea's analytical depth and rigor. The close-up on social class employed by this lens leaves out an expansive landscape littered with other thorny issues. For instance, this perspective assumes that individuals are primarily self-interested economic beings, yet this would not explain the selfless, moral-ethical disposition that we sometimes tend to adopt in particular contexts. To see cosmopolitanism simply as power (instrumental cosmopolitanism) is to ignore how the *search for contrasts* can also contain a moral dimension, or can also be carried out with less overtly political ends. In the next two expressions of cosmopolitanism, we begin to move up the moral hierarchy of cosmopolitanism and see its potential for being an other-centered identity.

Banal cosmopolitanism

My frequent hailing of identity as a performance may lead us to think of cosmopolitanism as theatrics - belonging only to the stage, the cinema, the media event. Subjected to the spotlight of the luminous event or the curious glances of (high) society, one's *willingness to engage with the Other* is greatly, directly challenged, and therefore made visible. So, yes, we play, we perform for other people to *see*. Furthermore, cosmopolitanism - of the closed, prestige and ecstatic kinds - are exactly the roles that people actually *notice*, as they are often self-conscious dramatics whose emotions are pity and pleasure, fear and envy, love and hate.

But identity too is a performance of nuance and subtlety - defined as much by the ordinary as it is by the extraordinary. And so we turn to the mundane, the quotidian, the everyday. We examine the unremarkable, the common, the practical: habits of eating, manners of speaking, ways of seeing. In and around the media. And reflect on what conditions may enable us to experience, if not assert, a 'distanced identity' (Tomlinson, 1999). Tomlinson recognizes that mundane deterritorialization - 'changes in our actual physical environments ... the penetration of our homes by media and communications technology, multiculturalism as increasingly the norm, increased mobility and foreign travel, even the effects of the "cosmopolitanizing" of food culture' - cultivate an 'awareness of the wider world as significant for us in our locality' (1999: 200).

In many ways, this more microscopic lens in the analysis of cosmopolitanism is a reaction to the elitist narrative of instrumental cosmopolitanism. The cultural sociologists Michele Lamont and Sada Aksartova (2002) call for a theorization of

'ordinary cosmopolitanisms' in their interviews with working-class men - an idea that Richard Werbner (2008), in another context, calls 'new cosmopolitanisms'. Indeed the anthropologist Pnina Werbner (1999: 17) takes issue with the 'hidden Eurocentric and class bias' inherent in the prevailing narrative of cosmopolitanism. She argues that cosmopolitanism can actually be a potential identity for working-class labor migrants, settlers and refugees as they *'inevitably must engage* with social processes of "opening up to the world," even if that world is still relatively circumscribed culturally' (1999: 18, emphasis mine). She draws heavily on Arjun Appadurai's (1990) arguments about globalization as having no singular or fixed center and peripheries, enabling individuals from various socio-economic, political and geographical contexts to develop 'post-national' identities in processes of migration and mediation. More interestingly, Werbner highlights the many unreflexive, unremarkable ways of being cosmopolitanized through everyday practices. It is productive to quote her at length:

The Gulf highway is one along which many different nations travel, meet, and interact, getting to know one another in the intimate context of work side-by-side. Such work, often dangerous or demanding physical labor, creates close encounters between people from different nationalities, and results in an *esprit de corps*, a collective sentiment of interdependency. In my view, what evolves is not simply another transnational culture, such as that created by meetings of diplomats or professional elites. While the latter come equipped with prior professional knowledge, in the Gulf, it seems, technical know-how, cultural knowledge, and the forging of cross-national social relationships are acquired on site, in the relatively neutral context in which almost everyone is a foreigner. (Werbner, 1999: 23)

One example of these cross-national social relationships is inter-caste or inter-racial marriage for Pakistanis in Britain and in the Gulf, which she later presents. This is in accordance with Turner's (2007b) remark that, if he were to compile an index that would 'measure' cosmopolitanism, inter-racial marriage would be one major indicator. It must be noted here that Rantanen (2005) has compiled her own five-point list (in which her bias to media and communication is revealed), as has Beck (2006), whose tickboxes run to 13.

Werbner's empirical work, as well as Appadurai's, Rantanen's and Beck's pronouncements of any kind of transnational life as enabling cosmopolitanism, deeply resonates with the elaborations of cultural studies scholars who describe the creative conditions of hybridity and diaspora. Homi Bhabha valorizes migrants' potential to 'reinvent themselves continuously in the post-colonial situation of cultural hybridity' (in Van der Veer, 1996: 76-7). Georgiou (2006: 156) also cites that 'hybrid imagined communities' are 'never secluded and bounded away from the Other'. In postcolonial literature, the 'third space' - the space of the margins - is celebrated as being the most productive, after all (Bhabha, 1990).

Indeed, we can see that hybrid individuals find themselves constantly in conversation with the Other in everyday life. Levinas (1969) would point to such encounters as an opportunity for the subject to be 'decentered' and may

thus become a springboard for redefining boundaries of 'us' and 'them'. Repeated encounters with difference in the banality of daily life, the philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah argues, have the potential to transform the way we deal with others over time. Using the example of the increasing presence of 'openly gay' people in social life and in the media over the past 30 years, he relates that the *mere presence* of the Other makes it 'harder to deny these people their respect and their concern' (Appiah, 2006: 77).

Here it is fruitful to bring in Adams and Burke's controversial study that investigates the reception of news about September 11 among audiences of dominant white ethnicity with limited direct personal experiences of cultural diversity. Gillespie (2006: 917), in summarizing their work, worries that the white audience's expression of ambivalence towards difference may 'legitimize the findings of other articles concerning Muslim fears of a racist backlash ... on the part of their white fellow-citizens'. Though it is reckless to generalize, we can at least speculate here that the relative lack of banal cosmopolitanism in this arguably monocultural community *may* have been one disabling factor in developing a cosmopolitan identity.

For empirical research, banal cosmopolitanism, as the most ordinary expression of cosmopolitan identity, is, paradoxically, the most noticeable and at the same time most slippery category to examine. If one were to rely on prescriptive cosmopolitan indicators (e.g. Beck, 2006; Rantanen, 2005), then we can simply turn our gaze to consumption habits, pathways of material/cultural/symbolic goods, even everyday gossip - the many ways in which culture is deterritorialized and reterritorialized. But at the same time, it is crucial to keep in mind that personal contexts only enable or disable, but *never determine*, the construction of identities. For future research on banal cosmopolitanism, one needs to adopt a *both/and* rather than an *either/or* perspective in examining everyday life and its many tensions and contradictions. The condition of hybridity is not to be taken for granted, in spite of the rosy celebrations of diasporic intellectuals. Rather, a critical examination of cosmopolitanism in the quotidian entails an exploration of the collisions and collusions of tradition and translation, of global and local, of self and other, of media and identity, in the 'texture of experience' (Berlin in Silverstone, 1999).

Ecstatic cosmopolitanism

I call the final, penultimate expression of cosmopolitan identity *ecstatic cosmopolitanism*. Ecstatic cosmopolitanism is the kind of cosmopolitanism that is passionately described in the media and morality literature. As discussed earlier, Silverstone (2006) and Chouliaraki (2006), in their meditation on the consequences of mediation, are largely responsible for appropriating the idea to our discipline. However, the issues that they raise, with regard to the asymmetry of power in the relationship between spectator/voyeur/consumer and the image/sufferer/other, are not entirely new. The sociologist Zygmunt Bauman has famously said:

The moral problem of our globalizing world is rooted in that abysmal gap between what we see and our ability to help the sufferers.... While our hands have not grown any longer, we have acquired 'artificial eyes' which enable us to see what our own eyes never would. (2001: 1)

Information and communication technologies, then, for all their claims to connectivity, proximity, reach and velocity, are recognized as inherently flawed, if not fraudulent. The most extreme naysayers here are skeptical post-modernists such as Jean Baudrillard (1983: 2), who claims that mediation creates simulacra of images without origin or reality. Needless to say, post-modernists would not think cosmopolitan orientation as possible due to the explosion of images in the media: postmodern life would either be defined by malaise and meaninglessness (e.g. Baudrillard, 1983), or fluff and flattery (e.g. de Zengotita, 2005).

The journalist Michael Ignatieff is more optimistic about the role of television in particular in the enlargement of audiences' conscience. He cites that since the introduction of television, we have witnessed a new kind of politics - a 'politics that takes the world rather than the nation as its political space' (Ignatieff, 1998: 21). The audio-visual quality of the medium is particularly well suited to what may be called a cosmopolitan conscience: 'At its best, television's morality is the morality of the war correspondent ... who learns in the end to pay attention only to the victims' (1998: 22).

At the same time, he notices that routine practices of representation - parading corpses onscreen, Hitting promiscuously from one news item to the next - can also disable this conscience and create 'compassion fatigue'. An important observation needs to be recorded here: unlike postmodernists who see any and all mediated encounters as directly leading to non-cosmopolitan identities, realist thinkers admit that it is the *form* or the *quality* of the representation that leads to cosmopolitan (or non-cosmopolitan) sensibilities. Ignatieff (1998: 30, 32), for instance, posits that the best documentaries achieve 'the prerequisite of moral vision itself while the 90-second slice of news 'dishonors' the world's horrors. As mentioned before, Silverstone (2006) advocates representations premised on 'proper distance', just as Chouliaraki (2006) situates 'emergency news' at the top of her moral hierarchy. Chouliaraki, whose work has not yet been directly challenged, is certainly opposed by other thinkers. I noticed that Tester's (2004) study on September 11, for instance, claims that the reason why September 11 enabled compassion among viewers is precisely because it *lacked* a predictable and coherent narrative that we have come to expect from the news. Pinchevski's (2005) reading of Levinas is similarly provocative in that he claims, paradoxically, it is in the 'breaks', 'ruptures' and 'interruptions' in processes of communication that we have the most genuine encounters with the Other - and not from any prior, proper or perfect mode of representation.

The moral-ethical cosmopolitan identity described here remains the 'ideal type' and performance of cosmopolitanism in everyday life. The other expressions of cosmopolitanism, as we have seen, shed the normativity of the idea that the

cosmopolitan has a "distantiated identity" ... a sense of what unites us as human beings, of common risks and possibilities, of mutual responsibilities' (Tomlinson, 1999: 194). Certainly, the either expressions lack the moral maximalism of unconditional hospitality that Silverstone (2006) prescribes in the 'mediapolis'.

Media and cultural studies discuss ecstatic cosmopolitanism not only from textual and phenomenological analyses; in recent years there have been attempts to study this from reception analysis. Hoijer's (2004) analysis of Swedish audiences' responses to suffering is a timely attempt to empirically qualify the compassion fatigue thesis. She discovers that it is not simply an either/or case of audiences having compassion or having no compassion, compassion is expressed in a variety of ways - even more than those previously identified in Boltanski's (1999) typology. Compassion, Hoijer argues, is dependent on 'ideal victim images' in the media and is expressed differently in male and female audiences - pointing us to the dialectic of media contexts *and* local contexts as simultaneously enabling/disabling in determining cosmopolitanism. In my own study (Corpus Ong, forthcoming), I examined how Filipino children represent other children's 'problems' from a drawing exercise, and at the same time interpret international news images of distant suffering children using reception analysis. Using the concept of proper distance, I argue that children's talk weaves in and out of this type of relationship with the other at particular times. I also noticed that social class is a significant factor in the kind of discourses about 'us' and 'them' that came up during the exercise. And, interestingly, I identified that adults'/parents' responses to distant suffering greatly affected how children themselves felt pity, guilt or indifference to distant others.

The explicitly normative definition of cosmopolitanism in this category does not lend itself well to a longitudinal ethnographic study that specifically studies this expression alone. Ecstatic cosmopolitanism might be better suited for 'focused' reception approaches. But certainly we can also investigate here how the media may play a role in inviting participation in transnational social movements such as humanitarian organizations that seek to address global inequality. And if we go back to the original argument and study cosmopolitan identity as a scale, with varying expressions in varying contexts, then an ethnographic study would be able to specify *when* ecstatic cosmopolitanism is performed, *how* it is performed and *where* the media is significant or not.

Wherefore art thou, Cosmopolitan?

In this article, I have outlined how cosmopolitanism has been variously described, theorized and studied across several disciplines. Cosmopolitanism, as a new buzzword in the social sciences, is hotly contested, as it is pushed and pulled to explain modalities of modernity, or, specifically, the modalities of *multiple modernities*. In media studies however, it has often been deployed only to analyse the relationship between media consumption and moral

consciousness. While this expression of cosmopolitanism, what I have termed ecstatic cosmopolitanism, is the cosmopolitan identity that rests atop the moral hierarchy, it is also an expression that leaves out many other ways by which individuals in a globalizing world relate with difference. Cosmopolitanism is a concept that can be made to do many things, and indeed, we have to stretch it out further in future empirical work.

Individual empirical studies currently select one 'definition' of cosmopolitanism from the four that I have described and apply it to particular situations (e.g. reception of suffering, ethnographies of urban spaces, surveys of consumption habits, etc.). And each of these inevitably has different specific questions or issues to probe (e.g. compassion fatigue and the media, transnationalism and new social relationships, globalization and new inequalities, etc.). However, the reason why I have come to call for a more expansive theory of cosmopolitanism and its subsequent empirical analysis is the observation that, at the core of all these studies, there is an attendant concern to our relationship with the Other. A call to study cosmopolitanism across this continuum enables us to see the varied spatialities and temporalities of encounters between self and Other, with each one having its unique geography of power.

Media studies has elaborated on the asymmetry of the relation between the 'armchair Columbus' and the mediated spectacle. Anthropology and cultural geography have narrated the unevenness of processes of globalization. Sociology has disclosed structures of discrimination and modes of managing difference. And moral philosophy, political theory, even cultural studies, have sounded the call for a new politics of difference that goes beyond the violence of assimilation or the false hopes of multiculturalism. And while each of these has employed different definitions of cosmopolitanism to describe particular situations, it is perhaps fruitful to see the *continuity* of cosmopolitanism - how we weave in and out of being open and closed to difference - in the rhythm of daily life. To see the expressions of cosmopolitanism as a continuous flow, rather than moments of disparate performances, enables us to better appreciate the dynamics of identity, the dialectics of being and becoming.

Cosmopolitanism is a contextual, fragile identity. It is variously enabled and disabled by a host of factors. If we are to accept Silverstone's call from the other side of death that 'the Other is present for us, whether we like it or know it or see it, or not. And by virtue of our own status as subjects in the world, we cannot refuse the Other's claims on us' (2006: 133-4), then it is imperative that empirical work - that is, comparative, ethnographic and multi-sited - critically examine *in what contexts* do we more fully acknowledge and engage with the Other in her sameness and difference. When, why, and how does our *fear of touch* transfigure to a responsible *caress* for the Other? And where is the media in all this? Which media platforms and media representations encourage the moral-ethical ideal, and which ones prompt us to fall back on the scale?

At the core of cosmopolitanism is a multiplicity of tensions. The tensions between proximity and distance, between attachment and commitment,

between global and local, between universals and particulars, between us and them, between media and identity. To trace these tensions longitudinally, cross-culturally, and critically across time and space would allow us to find not the cosmopolitan, in her fixity and singularity. But, crucially, we may discover the *conditions* that enable and disable cosmopolitan hospitality in a society desperately seeking to make sense of itself.

Notes

1. It might be argued that *closed cosmopolitanism* sounds like an oxymoron, especially when I myself have argued that it is the absence of cosmopolitanism. However, I situate this particular performance of cosmopolitanism *within* the cosmopolitan continuum that I have made in order to stress that people *weave in and out* of this identity. To situate 'closed cosmopolitanism' outside the scale is tantamount to saying that individuals who perform this are not cosmopolitan at all. The argument that I'm making is that people are not cosmopolitan in particular contexts. That is, they can perform 'closed cosmopolitanism' on some occasions but can perform other cosmopolitan identities in others.

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Jonathan Corpus Ong is a PhD student in Sociology at Corpus Christi College, University of Cambridge, where he is also a Bill Gates Scholar. He lectures in media studies in the Department of Communication at the Ateneo de Manila University. His research interests include media and morality, media and migration, and mediated public participation. His works appear in *Journal of Children and the Media*, *Journal of Media and Cultural Politics and Communication*, *Culture & Critique*. Address: Corpus Christi College, Trumpington Street, University of Cambridge CB2 1RH. [email: jo296@cam.ac.uk]