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The Cosmopolitan Encounter – Social Anthropology and the Kindness of Strangers[1]

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Anthropology: a Cosmopolitan Discipline?

On the face of it, anthropology is *the* cosmopolitan subject *par excellence*. As a discipline devoted to the study of the diversity of world cultures, it is humanist and comparative. On each side of the Atlantic, the anthropological moieties that emerged in the twentieth century - British Social Anthropology versus American Cultural Anthropology – appeared to be divided by their opposed stress on universalism versus cultural relativism, comparative social science versus a holistic science of 'man'. This division led to exclusive associations, with the British ASA rejecting the four-field encompassment of the American AAA.[2] Nevertheless, on both sides of the Atlantic, modern social and cultural anthropologists since Malinowski and Boas argued mainly for non-evolutionary understandings of human societies across the globe, and hence for their comparability or equal status. They thus shared much in common, including, above all, respect for the integrity and viability of different ways of living. For both

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[1] This paper was first presented to the Workshop on 'Cosmopolitan Realism: towards a cosmopolitan social science', London School of Economics, February 19-20, 2004 and later as a public lecture at the Australian National University, at a workshop at the National University of Singapore's Asian Research Institute. It benefited greatly from comments by Joel Kahn, Roy Dilley and discussions with my husband, Dick Werbner, on the history and mission of anthropology.

[2] See David Mills (2003) and Stockikng (1995: 427-441) on the history of the ASA and its debates regarding the cooperation with, and the inclusion or exclusion of, American anthropologists.

social and cultural anthropologists, the fundamental project was that of imagining societies beyond the West in all their social and cultural complexity. The critical difference in approach related to whether 'culture' or 'society', patterns of meaning and consciousness or of social institutions were to be prioritised. There were also differences of regional focus, and these generated arcane debates and fierce arguments within each moiety about the limits of legitimate comparison: of the vision quest of American Indians, Indian caste, African segmentary systems, Melanesia gift exchange and so forth. But in reality, anthropologists on both sides of the Atlantic started from an assumption of difference within the broader context of resemblance. They also started from a particular anthropological stance: anthropologists were strangers seeking to understand unfamiliar cultures which were presumed to be as rich and complex as their own. Evans-Pritchard's classic study of Azande witchcraft was foundational in establishing anthropology as a discipline that takes the stance of the stranger in order to probe beneath the commonsense assumptions of everyday life in another society. The stranger's gaze was a precondition for insight into the social rules and implicit assumptions of another society, and – by implication – of our own society as well.[3]

Anthropologists: Cosmopolitan Subjects

Like the discipline itself, many of the most prominent members of the founding circle of modernist anthropology were immigrants, refugees, exiles or secular Jews, the archetypal cosmopolitans, and often all four. In Britain, they included at the LSE Bronislaw Malinowski (a Pole), and alongside him Isaac Schapera (a

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[3] This may well still be the most salient theoretical rebuff to the 'nativist' argument that only natives can understand and study other natives (Kuper 1994: 546-7)

South African Jew), and Raymond Firth (a New Zealander); at Cambridge, Meyer Fortes (another South African Jew); at SOAS, Christof von Fürer-Heimendorf (an Austrian), at Manchester, Max Gluckman (yet another South African Jew), Bill Epstein (an Irish Jew) and Clyde Mitchell (a South African); at LSE and Durham Siegfried Nadel (an Austrian Catholic convert). In the USA – Franz Boaz (a German Jew) was founding father of American cultural and psychological anthropology, and he surrounded himself by first and second-generation German speakers – Kroeber (a non-Jew), Lowie, Sapir, Radin, and Bunzel, the only immigrant woman (all Jews). In France, Claude Levi-Strauss, like Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, was a secular Jew. Some were marginal Englishmen: at Oxford, E.E. Evans-Pritchard was Welsh, while Victor Turner at Manchester was a Scottish Catholic convert. There were, of course, some English nationals among these early anthropologists: A.A. Radcliffe-Brown, Lucy Mair, Audrey Richards and Edmund Leach. Of these, Several, like Radcliffe-Brown, spent many years living and teaching abroad - in Cape Town, Sydney, Chicago, Sao Paulo, and Rhodes University, as well as Oxford (Stocking 1995: 298-366; also 1984: 131-191).

But are anthropologists cosmopolitans? And is cosmopolitanism a quality of *individuals?* In its aesthetic connotation, the word cosmopolitan evokes a certain kind of familiar cultural image or person. A cosmopolitan is someone, the anthropologist Ulf Hannerz has argued, open to and knowledgeable about other cultures. 'Genuine' cosmopolitanism, he claims,

> ...is first of all an orientation, 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. To become acquainted with more cultures is to turn into an *aficionado*, to view them as artworks. At the same, however, cosmopolitanism can be a matter of competence, and competence of both a generalised and more specialised kind. There is an aspect of a state of readiness, a personal ability to make one's way into other cultures, through listening, looking, intuiting, reflecting. And there is a cultural competence in the stricter sense of the term, a built-up skill in manoeuvring more or less expertly with a particular system of meanings.

In short, the cosmopolitan in Hannerz's definition is really an anthropologist! We might say that the anthropologist sees himself in the mirror of cosmopolitanism. But while this may be a fair depiction of anthropological fieldwork practices, does this really make anthropologists into cosmopolitans? Arguably not. Although they do, of course, familiarise themselves with another culture in all its intricacy, the disciplinary aim of many anthropologists is to remain a passive, invisible, fly-on-the-wall observer. Such anthropologists hope that their presence will be disattended to, and that it will not change the culture they study. Their cosmopolitan message is brought back to the metropolitan centre. It is there that anthropologists have forged a cosmopolitan language and discipline. And it is in the metropolis that anthropology has created a cosmopolitan discipline that has incurred postcolonial condemnation for its complicity with western hegemony[4]. This critique raises the question whether a cosmopolitan social science is possible at all, but before addressing this question, I want first to consider who the

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[4]   On this issue and consequent obstacles to fieldwork or dialogue with postcolonial bureaucrats and intellectuals that anthropologists encounter in postcolonial Malaysia see Joel Khan 2003 and 2005.

cosmopolitan is, not as an anthropologist or an idealistic sociologist or political scientist theorising on global citizenship and global justice, but as a familiar cultural figure, historically constituted in the popular imagination.

Elite Tastes and Cosmopolitan Worlds

Unlike the intrepid anthropological traveller or the world citizen, we normally associate cosmopolitans with cosmopolitan spaces, and with the creation of a transcendent culture, beyond the local. Indeed, cosmopolitans are often accused of disdaining the local. Paris in the early twentieth century was a classic example of a cosmopolitan city. Here, at this historic moment, a pan-European *avant garde* movement in art and literature emerged out of the interaction of writers and artists coming from all over Europe and the United States: Joyce, Beckett, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Picasso, Modigliani, Lipschitz, Chagall, Rivera, Brancusi. The 'art world' that emerged included creative artists and writers alongside an elite of consumers, publishers, gallery owners and agents on both sides of the Atlantic. Local French culture was merely the backdrop to the creative interaction among members of this artistic elite. In 1919 Marcel Duchamp purchased for his American patron a vial of Parisian air. As Jones tells us, "the air of Paris was, for anyone interested in the arts, the most precious substance in the world. It was magical, and redemptive. Paris could make you a genius. It made Gertrude Stein a genius..." (2004: 21).

Hence, another reason why the anthropology may not be a truly cosmopolitan discipline relates to the fact that cosmopolitanism contains hidden assumptions about the ranking of cultures. A cosmopolitan is, historically, an elect

member of his or her society, familiar with the languages and high cultural products of European and American literature, art and music, able to converse about world history, philosophy, classical music, ballet, theatre and human rights. Culturally, such a cosmopolitan is an aesthetic consumer, living an elegant lifestyle, a connoisseur of good wine, *haute cuisine* and *haute couture*; a fashionable person with immaculate table manners, a sophisticated conversationalist and *bon vivant, au fait* with the latest novels and world current affairs. In other words, the 'true' cosmopolitan – unlike many anthropologists - is a man or woman of the world, but of a very specific world - that of western, and especially European, elites. He or she is usually also a collector of world art. Indeed, like Levi-Strauss in the passage below, she or he may also have great depth of knowledge about primitive and non-Western art and its incommensurable value.

In what amounts to a manifesto of aesthetic cosmopolitanism, Claude Lévi-Strauss, describes the New York he encountered when arrived at there as a refugee in 1941 – an 'agglomeration' of ethnic villages in which he and fellow French intellectuals Max Ernst, André Breton and Georges Duthuit wandered, as in Ali Baba's cave, inspecting "exquisite masks from Teotihuacan and the magnificent wood carvings from the northwest Pacific coast'... Mochica, Nazca and Chimu vases, gold encrusted jewellery boxes flogged by Russian émigrés, Oriental rugs, Utamaro prints, Peruvian antiques" (1985: 259-61). Later, after the war, he urged the French consulate in vain to acquire pre-Columbian gold jewellery and Indian art. These great valuables ended up in American museums.

Trans-Ethnic Cosmopolitan Spaces

Against this image of the aesthetic cosmopolitan may be pitched a more sociological definition of cosmopolitan spaces: they are trans-ethnic, collectively emergent 'worlds', shared discourses that transcend cultural boundaries and parochial life styles. According to this definition, a cosmopolitan is a person who actively belongs to, participates in and contributes to the creation of such trans-ethnic cultural and ideological worlds.

Apparent here is a tension between two dominant definitions of cosmopolitanism. At one pole are academic disciplines, political, moral and social philosophy and much political theory and sociology of globalisation, which define cosmopolitanism in *normative* terms – as a transcendent world view about the possibility of creating a global cosmopolitan society in the Kantian sense, a space of peace rather than war, of neighbourly relations, open borders and hospitality to strangers and sojourners; a vision of global justice within a federal 'league of nations' of democratic republics (Kant 1784/1970)[5]. At the other pole are *cultural aesthetic* definitions by historians and literary or art critics who define cosmopolitanism as a space of cultural difference and toleration, multiple cultural competences and shared communication across cultures. Both strands in the cosmopolitan debate share cosmopolitan *conviction,* a Kantian faith in the necessity for open borders and the inalienable human right to move beyond one's own society. Arguably, anthropology is positioned on the cusp between these normative and cultural definitional approaches to cosmopolitanism.

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[5] It needs to be stressed, perhaps, against a common misrepresentation, that Kant did not advocate a 'world government' which he thought would be despotic, but a voluntary federation of like minded 'republics' practicing human rights and democracy. For a superb discussion of Kant's argument in *Perpetual Peace* see Benhabib 2004, especially Chapter 1 (pp. 25-48).

Two points need to be made here. First, both definitions of cosmopolitanism share a stress on blurred boundaries, whether political, cultural or social, and on the transcendence of social and cultural differences *without their effacement*. Second, and this is a point less often explicitly highlighted, in both approaches the primary stress is on *collective creativity*. Rather than a quality of individuals, cosmpolitanism emerges in both approaches as a joint, transcendent order, ethos and meta-culture, so that individual cosmopolitan actors, whether travellers or stay-at-homes, are to be regarded as products of this collective ethos and metaculture. Kant defined this ethos as a third sphere of cosmopolitan right, in between civil and international rights, applying to individuals and to states who as 'citizens of the earth' 'may be regarded as having the right to hospitality or temporary sojourn (Kant 1784/1970: 98-99; see also Kleingeld and Brown 2002).

Anthropology and anthropologists forging a language and discourse of comparative world cultures may be said to have collectively created such a cosmopolitan space, ethos and metaculture. Yet the comparative analysis of cultures in anthropological discourse, refined at the metropolitan centre, has led to an attack against anthropology, as though by objectifying the Other, the discipline is merely asserting – and indeed legitimising - the dominance of the West over the rest. In the postcolonial era, in response particularly to Said's orientalist critique, anthropology has been caught in a predicament that denies its cosmopolitan roots. It is a predicament that it shares with the new, normative cosmopolitanism espousing global human rights, world citizenship and governance. They too have

been accused of being the invisible hand of the new American expansionist imperialism, disguised in a human-rights, utopianist cosmopolitan language.[6]

The Crisis of Representation in Anthropology

Despite much evidence to the contrary, anthropology as a discipline has been subject to a major critique on methodological grounds. The crisis of representation in anthropology was inaugurated, perhaps, by Talal Asad (1973) and culminated in the work of the *Writing Culture* authors (Clifford and Marcus 1986, Marcus and Fischer 1986, Clifford 1988). What appeared to have been a somewhat utopian cosmopolitan project to reach out to a cultural and social Other and create a cross-cultural comparative discipline was reconstructed in this critique as an act of hegemonic domination. Anthropology was accused of being the handmaiden of colonialism. There were three strands to this challenge to cosmopolitan anthropology.

First, it was argued that anthropologists did not study societies as they presently were, but attempted to reconstruct a lost pristine past. They engaged in 'salvage' anthropology, obsessed by the idea that cultures were disappearing forever and must be recorded before this happened, like species in nature. Cultures were thus defined as bounded and whole. Against this, the critics argued, cultures are changing and inventive, not fixed. But just as this criticism distorted Boas and his followers' understanding of culture, so too it also evaded the – political - question whether the celebration of cultural inventiveness and hybridity

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[6] See, for example, in relation to Kosovo, Beck 2002: 37 and Habermas's critique of the work of Carl Schmitt, which adopts this line (Habermas 1998: 193-201).

was not merely a celebration of western modernizing forces that were indeed destroying the cultural autonomy and social self-sufficiency of vulnerable groups.

Second, the charge was that the impact of the colonial presence in the societies they studied was ignored and disguised by the anthropologists, especially those studying in Africa between the two world wars. So called 'colonial anthropology' constructed societies as pristine when in fact these societies were subject to colonial rule. This was certainly not universally true, as I show below, and the critics disattended to studies of towns and of the colonial encounter.

Finally, and perhaps most saliently, the critics questioned the right of anthropologists to study the Other from a dominant metropolitan position. The ethnographic authority of the cosmopolitan anthropologist was challenged and constructed as a form of domination. We see here the *politicising* of cosmopolitanism as a discourse and disciplinary approach. This politicising of cosmopolitan orientations in the academy is something that anthropology shares with Middle East studies, and with the new normative academic and transnational non-governmental cosmopolitan discourse of human rights, global justice and global governmentality, a predicament I return to below.

In addition to internal deconstructive critiques, postcolonial anthropology and the anthropology of the postcolony also had to contend with the emergence of a third world postcolonial literature and of postcolonial academic scholars. While the new literary works appeared to displace the anthropologist by invoking the images, ambience and experiences of postcolonial subjects, the new postcolonial scholars in the postcolonies (or in western academia to which many of them migrated) often claimed a disciplinary monopoly over the study of their own

societies, and rejected the intrusion and apparently objective claims of anthropologists from the ex-colonial metropolitan centre (see Kuper 1984). Kuper's rebuttal against this 'nativism' is to argue for a vision of social anthropology, not as a more, or less, adequate descriptive account of another 'culture', a collective, discursively forged, comparative intellectual project much as I argued above.

But the argument for a cosmopolitan anthropology is surely much more fundamental. It relates to the Kantian invocation of the natural right of cosmopolitan hospitality. All men, Kant proposes, 'are entitled to present themselves in the society of others by right to communal possession of the earth's surface' (Kant 1784/1970: 106). By 'attempting' to enter into relations with 'native inhabitants', he argues, distant continents may enter into peaceful mutual relations that will bring us 'nearer and nearer' to a 'cosmopolitan constitution' (ibid.). Kant strongly condemns imperial conquest which he defines as quite different from peaceful temporary sojourning (106-7). Often considered a racist, in *Perpetual Peace* he argues that no 'society of men', which 'like a tree has its own roots', can be possessed by another, 'terminating' its 'moral personality' and making it into a 'commodity' (94). He indicts the 'appalling' 'oppression of natives' in the name of trade, so that 'America, the negro countries, the Spice Islands, the Cape, etc.' he says, 'were looked upon at the time of their discovery as ownerless territories; for the native inhabitants were counted as nothing' and subjected to a 'whole litany of evil' (106-7; see also Wood 1998: 62-3).

If we recognise the cosmopolitan right to hospitality as a conditional universal moral right this raises the serious question of who is the cosmopolitan -

the anthropologist traveller sojourner or the peoples who historically have extended – and continue to extend - hospitality to her or him? Kant's moral sphere of cosmopolitan right includes both, in a dialogic move of mutual respect that enhances human interdependency across borders (Benhabib 2004: 37).

It is still quite rare to find anthropologists in developing countries studying beyond their own society. They prefer to study the internal Other, rather than seeking to study the Other beyond national boundaries. The latter *cosmopolitan* project remains a key feature of anthropology located at the metropolitan centre.[7]

Nevertheless, despite its limitations, the crisis of representation in anthropology have had positive as well as negative consequences. On the negative side, the critique has induced an anthropological failure of nerve, as anthropologists have accepted the self-definition imposed upon them by postmodernist anthropologists and postcolonial critics, namely, that the study of the Other, being a form of domination, is no longer a legitimate pursuit. This led, at least for a while, to the de-cosmopolitanization of anthropology as a discipline. Many anthropologists returned home, or turned to an historical documentation of the colonial encounter. They feared studying the ongoing traditions and customs of real people beyond the West.

On the positive side, the move has been towards a more dialogical anthropology, in which the process of fieldwork and the interactive dimensions of research have become a necessary feature of anthropological ethnographic

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[7] Arguably, as Britain's role in the world has diminished, the tendency has been to marginalise and shut down anthropology departments in provincial universities (Liverpool, Hull, Keele) beyond the core elite institutions. Many established red brick and new universities with large social science faculties (Leeds, Sheffield, Warwick, Leicester Lancaster, York, Essex, Exeter) never attempted to set up anthropology departments, although most foster 'development' or 'postcolonial' studies.

writing. There is far greater consciousness that the texts anthropologists produce are non-realist in the sense of being selective and politically charged. The danger here is a move towards romantic navel gazing, but at its best dialogical anthropology extends the cosmopolitan vision of anthropology by incorporating the other and the self into a single universe of discourse, shared though not necessarily (as my own fieldwork highlights) always harmonious.

Recent debates on cosmopolitanism in sociology and political science have confronted the need to revise basic assumptions, and in particular the unquestioned assumption that 'society' and the 'nation-state' coincide and are one and the same. Increasingly, sociologists are seeking to challenge this unwarranged conflation[8] (see Urry). Unlike sociology, anthropology has never assumed such a straightforward coincidence between 'society' and the nation-state. Instead, anthropology's unit of analysis has been part societies or social fields – ethnic groups, tribes, cultures, villages, cults – within, or cutting across, colonial and postcolonial states. The comparative task in anthropology was thus not defined by nations, as it was in sociology. This is evident in a famous passage on the 'Unit of Study' in which Radcliffe Brown argued that

> It is rarely that we find a community that is absolutely isolated, having no outside contact. At the present moment of history the network of social relations spreads over the whole world... This gives rise to the difficulty which I do not think that sociologists have really faced, the difficulty of defining what is meant by the term 'a society' They do commonly talk of societies as if they were distinguishable, discrete entities as, for example,

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[8]   Hence, Ulrich Beck in a recent paper envisages a 'cosmopolitan' social science in a three day workshop at the London School of Economics in March 2004 in which the present paper was first presented.

when we are told that a society is an organism. Is the British Empire a society or collection of societies? ..If we say that our subject is the study and comparison of human societies we ought to be able to say what are the unit entities with which we are concerned. If we take any convenient locality of a suitable size, we can study the structural system as it appears in and from a region, i.e. the network of relations connecting the inhabitants amongst themselves and with people of other regions (1952: 193)

In a sense, anthropology has moved in the opposite direction to sociology. An important advance in social anthropology has been the recognition that the study of part societies and cultures must take cognisance of the impact of colonial or postcolonial states and regimes on local, regional and transnational relations (see R. Werbner 1996). If sociology assumes implicitly an identification between culture, society and nation, anthropologists continue to study socially or culturally distinct part-societies, but as they relate to other such groups, and articulate with and across emergent postcolonial states.

The problem of boundaries is critical here. How do anthropologists define cultural boundaries as against social boundaries, and in what sense are boundaries blurred, situationally highlighted, permeable or violently marked? The distinction Fredrik Barth draws between social boundaries and the 'cultural stuff' they may or may not enclose (1969: 15) is key to many anthropological studies. As Barth says, boundaries persist despite a flow of personnel across them (ibid.: 9), and so too, cultural differences can persist despite interethnic contact and interdependency (10). Hence beyond the project of cross-cultural comparison, anthropology may claim to be as a cosmopolitan discipline because its subject

matter is not closed societies but interethnic interaction across permeable, blurred or situationally marked cultural and social boundaries.

Anthropology and the Study of Trans-ethnic Cosmopolitan Spaces

If we accept the definition of cosmopolitan spaces as a trans-ethnic, collectively emergent 'worlds', much flows from this regarding the contribution that anthropology can make towards a cosmopolitan social science. Most fundamentally, as I have argued elsewhere (Werbner 1999), anthropologists are particularly expert at depicting the demotic worlds of trans-ethnic and trans-national interaction and communication, a world populated by non-elite, working-class cosmopolitans. These migrants and transnationals meet on building sites and oil rigs in the Gulf, in mines and factories in Africa or India, in plantations in California or Fiji, to create new shared cultures, and even new creolised languages. They belong to global religious fraternities and to new diasporas proliferating throughout the world today. Diasporas are not intrinsically cosmopolitan (see Werbner 2000). Their members may be focused inwardly, on the national projects of their homelands, or join exclusive global religious movements. But many diasporans are open to the world, struggling for more inclusive forms of citizenship in their places of settlement, while diasporic artists and intellectuals create new, original cosmopolitan bridging worlds of art, music and literature. In Kantian terms, settled diasporas afford havens of hospitality and safety for travellers and refugees.

Whereas Hannerz appears to endorse an elitist definition of the cosmopolitan subject,[9] Clifford (1992, 1998) has argued for a view of 'discrepant' cosmopolitanisms, to include servants and migrants workers as well. Nevertheless, Clifford retains the stress on the individual traveller, rather than on the open, interethnic interaction across borders or the emergence of cosmopolitans spaces beyond the West. This is an interest anthropologists share with cultural historians and comparative sociologists. In a masterly account of cosmopolitanism, Sami Zubaida describes the cosmopolitan enclaves that emerged in Egyptian cities under colonial rule and in Istanbul, in which diplomats, missionaries, Christian minorities, traders, Muslim modernists, secular intellectuals (and one might add, Greeks and Jews) exchanged ideas and intermingled (Zubaida 1999). Sheldon Pollock describes the cosmopolitan world of Sanskrit literature and poetry that from the fifth century BC onwards stretched from today's Afghanistan to Java, Sri Lanka and Nepal. Paralleling this, he tells us, Latin was disseminated over an equally vast space, from Britannia in the East to Mesopotamia in the West (Pollock 2003, Pollock et al 2003). The "Sanskrit cosmopolis" was created, according to Pollock, "by the circulation of traders, literati, religious professionals and freelance adventurers" (2003: 26). So too, the love of Persian and later Urdu poetry and art stretched across a vast region during the reign of the Mughal empire and persisted during British colonial rule, even after its demise.

Such newly emergent worlds are necessarily culturally hybrid, boundary crossing and often iconoclastic. On the surface, they do not appear to constitute the kind of cultures normally thought to be studied by anthropologists. But this

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[9] But see his revision of this earlier view where he talks of 'cosmopolitanism from below (Hannerz 2004).

would be to misread the history of the subject as practised in Britain, in the way that postmodernist and postcolonial critics seem almost deliberately to have done. Against such critics, the need is thus first to clarify what social anthropology is not. It is not, and never has been, the study of closed, immutable, bounded and homogeneous cultural communities.[10] This is one of the most pernicious and persistent rumours directed at the discipline. Social anthropology has brn perennially concerned with how certain social boundaries, whether geographically, socially or culturally defined, were cut across by other forms of sociality.

This is evident in the classic study of Trobriand Islanders by Bronislow Malinowski, commonly regarded as the founder of modern social anthropology. As Marcel Mauss recognised so brilliantly (Mauss 1966: 19-20, 79-81), this was not, as might be assumed, an ethnography of a single island. It was the study of international commerce between islands, a cultural institution known as Kula (Malinowski 1922). So too, Evans-Pritchard's study of the Nuer, although apparently focused on a discrete ethnic group, in reality was a study of situationally shifting boundaring and nesting identities. It recognised the predatory movement of the Nuer in the Sudan, who incorporated neighbouring Dinka into their society through raiding and intermarriage, a process EP theorised as 'the 'python-like assimilation by the Nuer of vast numbers of Dinka' through the genealogical grafting of women on to dominant lineages (Evans-Pritchard 1951: 23; 1940: 227). A salient argument EP makes is that 'The limits of the tribe are therefore not the limits of social intercourse' (Evans-Pritchard 1940: 124). As a study of the dynamics of segmentary opposition and multiple shifting identities,

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[10] For a trenchant critique see Sahlins (1999). American cultural anthropologists, in particular Kroeber and Leslie White, did however see culture as a superorganic determinant of individual behaviour but others denied such cultural closure (ibid.: 409-410).

The Nuer laid the grounds for later research on urban ethnicity (or tribalism as it

was then called), among labour migrants on the Zambian Copperbelt by Clyde

Mitchel (1956), Bill Epstein (1958) and others. They showed that ethnic identities

and alliances were formed oppositionally through fission and fusion in the urban

context, anticipating later discussions of identity.

There were other early examples of the concern for cosmopolitan spaces

and blurred boundaries. Nadel studied a multi-ethnic state (1942), Fortes the

blurring of boundaries of the Tallensi generated by their ritual shrines, which

extended beyond any clear definition of tribe (1954, 1949; see also Werbner 2004:

136). From Schapera's study of the civic incorporation of strangers among

Tswana (1938: 118-124), to Leach analysis of the alternating cultural cum political

model of Highland Burma (Leach , the founding generation of British social

anthropology studied cross-ethnic engagements. Although Mary Douglas, a

Catholic, is famous for her analysis of the symbolic or ritual construction of

boundaries, in reality she too stressed the way that boundaries were

transgressed, and the peculiar qualities of symbolic figures of boundary

transgression – wives, witches or Pangolins (Douglas 1966, 1970). This points to

the fact that many of the arguments in anthropology were disagreements over the

permeability of boundaries or the kind of conceptual frameworks needed to study

multi-ethnic empires or pilgrimage flows and central places.

Some social anthropologists recognised early on the need to locate

cultures within nation-states. Radcliffe-Brown, for example, and following him

Gluckman, Schapera and Fortes, argued for a vision of a racially divided South

Africa as a single society. The anthropologist, Gluckman argued, "must work with

communities rather than customs... [with] a unit of life ...of common participation in the everyday political, economic and social life" (1958: 51). Such multi-ethnic, conflictual communities form a single, organised society, he proposed, rather than a social aggregation of heterogeneous cultural groups, as Malinowski would have it . Importantly, then, for Gluckman - as indeed for Fortes and Schapera - social relations, even those marked by difference, hierarchy and domination, nevertheless are constitutive of a shared 'social system': not as unified by a homogeneous set of beliefs, but as a fragmentary, contradictory and conflict-ridden social formation.

Analysing the opening of a new bridge in 1938 in modern Zululand, a harmonious event welcomed by blacks and whites alike, Gluckman highlights the *naturalness* of the ceremony for participants. The whites took it for granted that they should be drinking tea on the banks of the Black Umfolosi River just as the blacks took for granted the ceremonial cutting of a tape across the bridge, and the sacrificial beast offered them by the native commissioner. This naturalness of what Hobsbawm and Ranger have aptly called an invented tradition (1963) is referred to by Bakhtin as *organic hybridity* (1981: 358) is something which anthropologists increasingly began to study in the new postcolonies.

In his analysis, Gluckman recognises that as conflicts between black and white sharpened, new configurations of existing cultures tended to surface as means of social and political mobilisation which stressed cultural difference (1958: 61), an argument that later came to be known through the work of Abner Cohen as 'political ethnicity' (Cohen 1969). Yet such social movements, like radical Islam today, even when they announce their cultural purity and sharp distinction, are necessarily hybrid

culturally, since they arise from within the new social and cultural configurations of the historically transformed, organically hybridised community.

The harmony of the ceremony at the bridge was necessarily an ambivalent one, given the pervasive inequalities and separations between white and black in modern South Africa. As Homi K. Bhabha recognises, hybridity may be produced by a "doubling up of the sign", a "splitting" which is "less than one and double" (Bhabha 1994: 119). The same object or custom placed in a different context acquires quite new meanings while echoing old ones. Hence new cosmopolitan worlds studied by anthropologists are ones in which customs and objects displaced and de- or re-contextualised, are endowed with new meanings. British social anthropology, and particularly the Manchester School as it came to be known, has recognised this process of cultural change, movement and cosmopolitanisation.

Naive Holism and the Study of Pilgrimage and Regional Cults

The argument against an anthropology of closed, bounded cultural groups is one pursued by anthropologists of religion, denying the validity of certain 'closed' structural functional models. In South Asia the study of religious communalism and nationalism, of zones of interaction between different castes and religious or ethnic communities, is paralleled by studies elsewhere of regional cults and pilgrimage centres that often draw their followers from a vast region, across different ethnic communities. Such studies go against assumptions in anthropology of 'naive holism', according to which "essential relations with a wider context get stripped away when a small group, little community or tribe is studied as an isolated whole" (R. Werbner 1977: IX; R. Werbner 1989). In my recent study of Sufi mystical Islam

(Werbner 2003) I show that Sufi lodges and shrine complexes cannot be studied in isolation from the wider regional and transnational cult generated around the cult sacred centre, or the migratory and political contexts in which the cult operates.

When do culture and society coincide? 'Correspondence' theory, according to which different domains (ritual, political, economic) underwrite each other, so that ritual and belief become mere representations of political divisions or economic interests, increasingly came to be regarded with suspicion by anthropologists of religion in the 1970s (R.Werbner 1976.: XVIII). Such theories draw, Werbner argued, on simplistic readings of Durkheimian or Marxist texts. In the Sufi transnational cult I studied, the symbolic order cut across political divisions and remained in tension with the postcolonial and capitalist economies of modern-day Pakistan, and even more so in post-imperial Britain. The relationship between the political centre and the sacred centre is a changing, historically contingent one, and in this sense, as in others, pilgrimage centres and regional cults are historically evolving social formations, as Victor Turner recognised (1974). They enable the movement of strangers across territorial boundaries, often over vast distances, just as the diasporas formed by modern international migration generate the movement of people of objects across national boundaries.

Clearly, then, not only are anthropologists strangers in the societies they study. Many anthropologists have an enduring interest in strangerhood, ethnicity and boundary crossing. This is, of course, true of more recent historical anthropological studies of early cultural encounters with missionaries, colonial

officials, Captain Cook or the postcolonial state, or of studies of ethnic violence
and state terror.

Towards a 'grounded' cosmopolitanism

A central accusation often levelled against cosmopolitans is that of being
deracinated, uprooted, out of touch with and uncommitted to any nation, country
or community. Such accusations are levelled against both cosmopolitan
academics and postcolonial and diasporic intellectuals. In the academy today the
new cosmopolitan discourse of human rights and world citizenship is said to be
remote from the concerns of local citizens (on diasporic intellectuals see Friedman
1997). Its utopian ideals are not anchored in the real politics of any country, or
even in the bureaucratic structures of the United Nations. At its best it is merely a
vision of hope.[11] At its worst, human rights discourse is seen as a legitimising
discourse for imperialist invasion of other countries – Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq
(Beck 2002). This has led some cosmopolitan theorists to argue for the need to
locate the cosmopolitan in a particular political community.

In a much cited article, 'Cosmopolitan Patriots' (1998), Kwame Anthony
Appiah argues that cosmopolitanism is equally an argument *within* postcolonial
states on citizenship, equal dignity, cultural rights and the rule of law. Hence he
speaks of a 'rooted' cosmopolitanism, and, echoing the Roman Stoics, proposes
that cosmopolitans begin from membership in morally and emotionally significant
communities (families, ethnic groups) while espousing notions of toleration and

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[11] Habermas disagrees with this view, arguing more optimistically that 'The contemporary world situation can be understood at best as a transitional stage between international and cosmopolitan law', but that the world has gone a long way towards instituting legal mechanisms and conventions for a world polity (1998: 183).

openness to the world, the transcendence of ethnic difference and the moral incorporation of the other. The Stoics, according to Nussbaum, 'suggest that we think of ourselves not as devoid of local affiliations, but as surrounded by a series of concentric circles' (Nussbaum 1994: www p. 4). Such a vision opens up scope for a cosmopolitan anthropology which builds on anthropological strengths of fieldwork in particular locales.[12]

Throughout the developing world anthropologists encounter cosmopolitan elites who struggle to create or maintain basic democratic rights. Such men and women make evident that to possess a cosmopolitan subjectivity or consciousness a person must be motivated by cosmopolitan *conviction.* Exclusive religious fundamentalisms or xenophobias, however global, are *not* cosmopolitan. It remains to be asked whether cosmopolitans are always members of an elect elite. If we accept the Kantian notion of cosmopolitan right as the right to hospitality leading to greater interdependency and communication across boundaries, it becomes possible to argue that in a cosmopolitanising world of increased mobility, cosmopolitanism is no longer class specific. Just as the anthropologist sojourner was frequently the recipient of open hospitality from strangers, so too working class cosmopolitans throughout the developing world travel across continents and experience hospitality from strangers. They learn to share cosmopolitan convictions as they reach out beyond their local milieu.

But not only labour migrants and diasporics may become cosmopolitan. Workers in developing countries also develop a cosmopolitan consciousness. In

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[12] Borrowing this term, and a distinction made by Clifford Geertz between 'thick' and 'thin' description, Calhoun (2003) has drawn a parallel contrast between the 'thick' – and hence viable and long term - politics of community, anchored in specific cultural understandings, and the 'thin' politics of the new world citizen cosmopolitans.

Botswana, for example, the Manual Workers Union of Botswana, the subject of my recent study, has fought fiercely for their right to a minimum working wage through strike action, nation wide protests and appeals to the high court. These workers share a cosmopolitan sensibility, conviction and consciousness of workers' struggles elsewhere, expressed in union songs which speak of worker oppression, unity and solidarity.

Trade unions in Africa were historically extremely important civil society organisations in the colonial era, mobilising different ethnic and even national groups in demand of basic rights, in unitary opposition to colonial regimes. This was made evident in early anthropological studies of miners on the Zambian copperbelt (Epstein 1958), and on the railways in East Africa (Grillo, Parkin 1969). African nationalism arose on the back of such alliances, only to be subsumed and suppressed them after independence. In Botswana in the early years after independence, unions, never strong, were actively discouraged and the demand for workers rights construed as unpatriotic, striking at the country's development effort (Selolwane 2000: 89; see also Molokomme). It thus took an act of moral courage to challenge the status quo from the lowly position of a manual unskilled worker. Union workers may be uneducated but they are rights experts and this has made them unflinching, tenacious negotiators who have gained the respect of university educated top Batswana civil servants.

Conclusion: the new Anthropological Cosmopolitanism

Given the radical changes that have occurred in the developing world, and in the face of transactional migrations and so-called Islamic extremism and global terror, what might a cotemporary cosmopolitan anthropology look like? What kind of

vision and mission might such a cosmopolitan anthropology adopt? Is it to study vernacular forms of cosmopolitanism, cosmopolitan ethnicity, rooted or grounded cosmopolitanism, cosmofeminism, the intersection of the local with the global? Or is it to study demotic forms of cosmopolitanism, in trade unions, factories, building sites, mines and oil rigs, among Filipina carers in the West, or in international labour unions? Is it, as Ulf Hannerz suggests, the study international correspondents in Hong Kong, New York, Tokyo and Jerusalem? Or is it to study popular forms of cultural hybridity that travel from the US ghettos to Africa, Japan or Turkey?

Criticizing anthropology's abdication of its cosmopolitan mission, Kuper argues against postmodern critics of anthropology that we should aspire to contribute "a comparative dimension to the enlightenment project of a science of human variation in time and space. Our object must be to confront the models current in the social sciences with the experiences and models of our subjects, while insisting that this should be a two-way process" (1994:551).

It is evident that cosmopolitanism has become a highly politicised term, ever beleaguered by sceptics who doubt its utopian mission (see Archibugi 1998, Smith and Fine 2004). No longer able to achieve that naive cosmopolitan exhilaration of the early generation of anthropologists, the question of what a cosmopolitan anthropology might look like is not one easily answered. The magic of exotic anthropology, the experienced desire of the cosmopolitan anthropologist to study the Other as other and as self, to submerge oneself in another culture and understand it from within, is difficult to explain (given the frequent boredom and often inconvenient living conditions) and even more difficult to abandon in the

face of theoretical or political critiques. I do not think that the call for 'multi-sited' anthropology, or an anthropology of the media or internet, is the most useful way out of this impasse. Anthropology's methodological strength is in studying 'community' in all its complexity. This takes time and patience and requires intimate knowledge, trust and long-term involvement. The new 'grounded', 'rooted' cosmopolitanism recognises the strength and viability of community. It is obvious, however, that in studying the local today, anthropologists must take cognisance of the global, of the media, the internet, the press, international mobility, the postcolonial state, human rights, since this is the cultural and political environment in which the subjects of anthropology live their daily lives in the twenty first century.

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