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## Cosmopolitanism and the Body

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## Cosmopolitanism and the Body

Kevin McSorley

### Introduction

This paper attempts to think through some of the ways in which the relationships between cosmopolitanism and embodiment have been understood in social theory and analysis. The discourse of cosmopolitanism has been fertile ground for scholarship in the humanities and social and political sciences over recent decades. A vast, and ever proliferating, array of analyses have interrogated and elaborated the philosophical genealogies, conceptual boundaries and possible futures of cosmopolitanism. Although often criticized for being overly abstract and self-referential, analysis of cosmopolitanism has become a significant site for the investment of academic labour, the reimagining of political potential, and the envisioning of democratic alternatives. Cosmopolitanism has been a discourse through which a certain utopian promise of world citizenship has been articulated, even if this promise has often been rather indistinct and deferred, a foreshadowing of potential to come rather than any clear picture of the here-and-now. However, understood as a form of utopian social theory, much cosmopolitan discourse has attempted to interpret present conditions so as to reveal latent tendencies in the world, and hence 'to help realize the not-yet of human being'<sup>1</sup>.

Attempted enunciation of the cosmopolitan promise has a long history that reaches far back beyond the structural conditions of modernity, to the Enlightenment philosophy of Kant and further back to the Stoic discourses of Diogenes<sup>2</sup>. In

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<sup>1</sup> Jacobsen, Michael and Keith Tester 'Utopia as a topic for Social theory' in Michael Jacobsen and Keith Tester (eds) *Utopia: Social Theory and the Future* (Farnham: Ashgate 2012), 3

<sup>2</sup> While Kantian and Ancient cosmopolitanism thought have often been considered as primarily theoretical and normative in nature, as political philosophy essentially lacking in empirical referents and underpinnings, Inglis argues that this characterization is unhelpful and that 'there is a neglected but very significant dimension to Stoic-influenced and Kantian

contemporary social analysis, scholars such as Beck have argued that cosmopolitanism has become a defining feature of 'second modernity', a reflexive awareness that is part of the self-constituting nature of a social world that is inescapably shaped by the globalization of capital, massive transnational flows of networked communication, a growing worldwide recognition of shared risks such as planetary ecological emergency, and increasingly overlapping communities of fate<sup>3</sup>. Beck thus argues that multiple on-going processes of 'cosmopolitanization' are now central features of a dynamic social reality that is increasingly incapable of being grasped by a classical sociological grammar and a modernist ontology that emphasizes the continuing domination of the nation state.

However, particularly in the wake of the global financial crisis, recent years have also witnessed the reactive re-assertion of insular and brutally austere regimes of national governance. The widespread retrenchment of national welfare states has exacerbated extant trends towards heightened inequality and increased levels of structural violence. Both the developing and developed countries of the world have become even more marked by polarization, social exclusion and advanced urban marginality. For many, work, rights and lives have become increasingly precarious, with social control increasingly privatized, paramilitarized and militarized. Such conditions have been accompanied by structures of feeling marked by distrust, humiliation and paranoid fear of the other, the revival of populist xenophobia and logics of securitization that are increasingly nationalist. In such circumstances, the promise of a widespread cosmopolitan ethics and practice seems increasingly remote.

Bradotti, Blaagaard and Hanafin thus question whether such developments 'have rendered the ideal of belonging to a harmonious global community of cosmopolitan

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cosmopolitan philosophy which .. is actually rooted in empirical concerns as to how cosmopolitan norms and imperatives will or could be brought into tangible existence' (Inglis, David, 'Cosmopolitans and cosmopolitanism: Between and beyond sociology and political philosophy', *Journal of Sociology*, February 29, 2012, doi:10.1177/1440783312438788), 3

<sup>3</sup> Beck, Ulrich, 'The Cosmopolitan Perspective: Sociology of the Second Age of Modernity' in S. Vertovec and R.Cohen (eds) *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism – Theory, Context, Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2002); Beck, Ulrich, *The Cosmopolitan Vision* (Cambridge: Polity 2006); Beck, Ulrich and Edgar Grande, 'Varieties of second modernity: the cosmopolitan turn in social and political theory and research', *The British Journal of Sociology* (2010), 61, 3, 409-443; Beck, Ulrich and Natan Sznaider, 'Unpacking cosmopolitanism for the Social Sciences: A Research Agenda' *British Journal of Sociology* (2006), 57, 1, 1–23

citizens naïve at best, at worst simply futile'<sup>4</sup>. They contend that, at the very least, we have moved beyond any simple monolithic discourse of cosmopolitanism, and argue for a pluralistic reconstruction of the notion of cosmopolitanism that is more attentive to the specific, grounded material realities of our 'being-together-in-the-world'. In what follows, I will contribute to such a reconstruction by paying specific analytic attention to work that has considered cosmopolitanism not simply as an abstract discourse, but rather has attempted to explore how cosmopolitanism is specifically embodied in particular corporeal dispositions, structures of feeling and bodily performances of belonging.

### Embodied Cosmopolitanism

Before moving on to explore how the relationship between cosmopolitanism and embodiment is being fleshed out in social analysis, as well as considering how specific cosmopolitical projects may be embodied, I want to begin the discussion by considering Billig's instructive analysis of 'banal nationalism'<sup>5</sup>. For Billig, nationalism can be considered as an underlying framework for thought and action, explicitly articulated only rarely, but nonetheless reproduced and inculcated in everyday life at a continuous, subtle and often fundamentally embodied and affective level – for example, it is often deeply felt through the musical stirrings of national anthems. Banal nationalism can be best thought of then not as an explicit cognitive belief system but as an underlying and typically unexamined 'habitus' – a collective, socialized and inhabited orientation and sense of belonging which, as Bourdieu argues, is often beyond consciousness – incommunicable and inimitable<sup>6</sup>. As Scarry further argues, 'the body's loyalty to these political realms is likely to be [...] more permanently there, less easily shed, than those disembodied forms of patriotism that

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<sup>4</sup> Bradotti, Rosie, Bolette Blaagaard and Patrick Hanafin, 'Introduction' in Rosie Bradotti, Patrick Hanafin and Bolette Blaagaard (eds) *After Cosmopolitanism* (London: Routledge, 2012), 1

<sup>5</sup> Billig, Michael, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995)

<sup>6</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 94

exist in verbal habits or in thoughts about one's national identity. The political identity of the body is usually learned unconsciously, effortlessly and very early<sup>7</sup>.

As such, it may be a tricky task to detail or articulate the exact contours of such embodied forms of nationalism, but that a love of one's country is often a deeply felt loyalty is well recognized. Indeed, Anderson argues that in the modern political world, nationalism is 'the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time'<sup>8</sup>, that it is felt as a 'deep horizontal, comradeship ... it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings'<sup>9</sup>. For Anderson, such widespread strength of feeling does not yet exist beyond the administrative unit of the nation-state. And yet, as Robbins notes<sup>10</sup>, there is in theory no reason why this should remain the case, particularly if we follow Anderson's identification of the national press as the key material infrastructure underpinning the development of such national feeling. He argues that, 'If people can get as emotional as Anderson says they do about relations with fellow nationals they never see face-to-face, then now that print-capitalism has become electronic- and digital- capitalism .. it would be strange if people did *not* get emotional in much the same way, if not necessarily to the same degree, about others who are *not* fellow nationals, people bound to them by some transnational sort of fellowship'<sup>11</sup>. For Robbins then, nationalism and cosmopolitanism are far from mutually exclusive or necessarily antagonistic loyalties or structures of feeling<sup>12</sup>.

However the point that I wish to take from the discussion at this stage is not to consider exactly how trans-national loyalties and fellowships may overlap with national ones, or whether their intensities may be such that lives are also willingly risked for them, but simply to highlight that particular forms of belonging in the world are fundamentally felt, are affective and embodied, as well as being potentially

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<sup>7</sup> Scarry, Elaine, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 109

<sup>8</sup> Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2006), 3

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*, 7

<sup>10</sup> Robbins, Bruce, 'Introduction Part I: Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism', in Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins (eds) *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feelings Beyond the Nation*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998)

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*, 7

<sup>12</sup> See also Appiah, Kwame, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (London: Penguin, 2006)

incommunicable and even partly unknowable. In other words, to emphasize the importance of thinking about what ‘cosmopolitanism’ might *feel like*. In contrast to such an understanding, contemporary cosmopolitanism has regularly been characterized by many commentators in terms of a particular subjective outlook or *consciousness* of world citizenship and affiliations that go beyond the national and the parochial. Hannerz, for example, states that cosmopolitanism is ‘a perspective, a state of mind .. an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness towards divergent cultural experiences’<sup>13</sup>. However, any predominantly individualistic understanding of cosmopolitanism as a state of mind may undertheorize the crucial embodied, felt and unconscious intensities of belonging, and the social and processual dimensions to the emergence of such loyalties and dispositions. The model of subjectivity implied in such conceptions is overly static, Cartesian and self-aware.

As Stacey argues, ‘the idea of ‘an openness to difference’ posits a self that is transparent, accessible and fully intelligible to ourselves and others .. similarity and difference are wrongly seen to be self-evident, mutually recognizable and somehow the property of individuals, instead of the result of a relational intersubjectivity full of ambivalence and occlusions’<sup>14</sup>. For the Polish foreign correspondent Ryszard Kapuscinski<sup>15</sup>, drawing on the moral philosophy of Levinas, it is ultimately only in the ‘fundamental event’ of the embodied encounter with the face of the Other that cosmopolitan openness, and subjectivity itself, may be possible.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, for

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<sup>13</sup> Hannerz, Ulf, ‘Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture’, *Theory, Culture, and Society*, (1990, 7, 237–51), 238-39

<sup>14</sup> Stacey, Jackie, ‘Provocation’, presented at *Whose Cosmopolitanism? Research Institute for Cosmopolitan Cultures Conference*, Manchester March 2009, text at: <http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/ricc/aboutus/cosmopolitanism/documents/staceyProvocation.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Kapuscinski, Ryszard, *The Other* (London: Verso, 2008)

<sup>16</sup> Levinas’ philosophical concept of the face does not directly correspond to physical countenance, but rather refers to how the address of the other is always irreducible to any particular idea or representation: “The way in which the Other presents himself, exceeding *the idea of the other in me*, we name here face .. The face of the Other at each moment destroys and overflows the plastic image it leaves me .. It *expresses itself*” (Levinas, Emmanuel, *Totality and Infinity: an essay on exteriority*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 50-51, italics in original. As Silverstone notes then, Levinas’ concept of the face is not reducible to a corporeal reality, but implies its presence (Silverstone, Roger, *Media and Morality*. Cambridge: Polity, 2007). Similarly, Butler argues that ‘For Levinas, then, the human is not *represented* by the face. Rather, the human is indirectly affirmed in that very disjunction that makes representation impossible ... there is something unrepresentable that

Kapuscinski, in some respects himself the epitome of a particular cosmopolitan figure of the Cold War years, ‘the Self has been brought to the Other not only by words, but also by being close, by direct contact, by being together. Nothing is capable of taking the place of this experience’<sup>17</sup>. There is a debatable appeal in Kapuscinski’s formulation to the privileged status of a particular form of unmediated anthropological closeness and being-there, rather than any other mediated forms of embodied and affective resonance, but it is nonetheless important in its recognition of the fundamentally relational and intersubjective nature of selfhood.

It is peculiar that embodiment has received relatively scant attention in discussions of cosmopolitanism, especially given its significance as a theme in recent sociological discussions of subjectivity and belonging<sup>18</sup>. Molz argues that the relative neglect of the body in contemporary discussions of cosmopolitanism may stem in part from a culture/nature binary in original Kantian formulations, whereby the cosmopolitical was understood as a transcendent realm removed from the despotism of natural desires<sup>19</sup>. Cheah argues that ‘For Kant, cosmopolitan culture is precisely the realm in which humanity is able to free itself from the given, understood first as the passions and sensuous inclinations that subject human beings to nature, and second as the finitude of human existence’<sup>20</sup>. As Molz notes, this Kantian legacy may help to explain the predominance of discussions of intellectual, aesthetic or ethical aspects of cosmopolitanism over analyses that attempt to think through how cosmopolitanism may be manifested ‘in the flesh’.

One important analysis that does attempt to address the embodied and affective dimensions of a specific cosmopolitical project is Paul Gilroy’s discussion of the ‘cosmopolitan solidarity from below and afar [that] has been a notable feature of the

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we nevertheless seek to represent ... the face is not “effaced” in this failure of representation, but is constituted in that very possibility’ (Butler, Judith, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. London: Verso, 2006), 144

<sup>17</sup> Kapuscinski, *The Other*, 74

<sup>18</sup> See e.g. Shilling, Chris, *The Body and Social Theory*. (London: Sage, 1993); Shilling, Chris, *The Body in Culture, Technology and Society*. (London: Sage, 2004); Turner, Bryan, *The Body and Society*. (London: Sage, 1984)

<sup>19</sup> Molz, Jennie, ‘Cosmopolitan Bodies: Fit to Travel and Traveling to Fit’, *Body & Society* 2006, 12, 1, 1-21

<sup>20</sup> Cheah, Pheng, *Inhuman Conditions: On Cosmopolitanism and Human Rights*, (Harvard University Press, 2007), 96

global response to the Al-Asqa intifada in Palestine'<sup>21</sup>. Beginning from a discussion of *Civilization and its Discontents*, Gilroy initially rejects Freud's thesis that it is impossible, and causes unhappiness, to attempt to practice undifferentiated love for one's fellow humans. Rather he endorses a 'vulgar' or 'demotic' cosmopolitanism that recognizes the complex and irreducible struggles, ironies and glories of everyday encounters with diversity and hybridity, of ordinary 'conviviality', as well as the value of attempting to cultivate a degree of distance from one's own culture via temporary but purposive nomadism or exile. In discussing the activism of the members of the international solidarity movement in Gaza, a group often accused by their detractors of exhibiting privileged idealism and the practice of an ignorant and naïve interventionism, Gilroy by contrast commends not only their bravery and solidarity in bearing embodied witness to distant suffering and in placing their lives at risk by acting as corporeal human shields during incidents such as the demolitions of homes. He further argues that such a practical embodied cosmopolitics is actually instructive and revelatory of the racist and imperial logics at work in occupation. He writes, 'Its immediate tactical value derives from the fact that as far as unjust colonial force is concerned, its Gandhian practitioners appear to be different from the inhuman objects of brutality and arbitrary power that they set out to shield .. It is only racism that acknowledges the difference between their rights-bearing bodies and those of the rights-less people they protect by their presence'<sup>22</sup>. For Gilroy, such acts of solidarity, that tactically mobilize embodied difference, 'articulate a practical riposte to the despairing twentieth-century voices that wanted to discredit this sort of gesture by arguing that the openness and undifferentiated love from which it derives is tainted, ignoble and unpolitical'<sup>23</sup>. He ultimately argues that such a gesture is 'not, as we saw Freud argue, a devaluation of love, but its transmutation into the fragile, emergent substance of vital planetary humanism'<sup>24</sup>.

The motifs of bodily fragility, exposure to violence and mutual vulnerability to loss also underpin Judith Butler's<sup>25</sup> solemn reflections on the curtailed possibilities of

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<sup>21</sup> Gilroy, Paul, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (London: Routledge, 2004), 89

<sup>22</sup> *ibid*, 88-89

<sup>23</sup> *ibid*, 90

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*, 88

<sup>25</sup> Butler, Judith, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2006); Butler, Judith, *Frames of War*. (London: Verso, 2009)



cosmopolitan ethics and practices in a contemporary US situation characterized by the revitalization of sovereign power and the normalization of a state of exception, a situation where ‘the state of emergency is not only normalized but also begins to shape aspects of cultural as well as political and social life, with no end in sight’<sup>26</sup>. In this situation, Butler looks to ‘the ontology of the body .. as a point of departure for a rethinking of responsibility .. precisely because, in its surface and its depth, the body is a social phenomenon: it is exposed to others, vulnerable by definition’<sup>27</sup>. The context of Butler’s analysis includes the prosecution of seemingly endless war in Afghanistan, the global propagation of extra-legal incarceration, the political mobilization of intense discourses of xenophobic fear, and the proliferation of new forms of cultural militarization. In particular, Butler points to the pernicious discursive policing of affect and grief along specific patriotic and racial lines in times of war, such that ‘certain forms of grief become nationally recognized and amplified, whereas other losses become unthinkable’<sup>28</sup>. In wartime, Butler notes how it is only certain bodies that matter, that count and are counted, whereas other bodies and not-quite-lives are discursively foreclosed from being recognized as fully human, becoming effectively unintelligible and ‘ungrievable’<sup>29</sup>. This is crucial for Butler as grief is ultimately a force through which we are ‘undone’, that reveals the constitutive character of our ties with others, our fundamental emotional and existential entanglements as longing, interdependent beings. Grief awakens us to ‘what is precarious in another life or, rather, the precariousness of life itself’<sup>30</sup>.

Butler’s work thus attempts to think through how an alternative, more inclusive cosmopolitan ethics and politics, and an expanded critique of contemporary formations of violence, may emerge from a consideration of the ‘differential

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<sup>26</sup> McRobbie, Angela, ‘Vulnerability, violence and (cosmopolitan) ethics: Butler’s Precarious Life’, *The British Journal of Sociology* (2006, 57, 1, 69-86), 81

<sup>27</sup> Butler, *Frames of War*, 33

<sup>28</sup> Butler, *Precarious Life*, xiv

<sup>29</sup> Relatedly, even right at the dark heart of war, embodied presence and shared sensory and affective experiences may be potentially subversive, disrupting and undermining the binary oppositions that war sets up. Numerous accounts of frontline wartime experience emphasize how, when corporeal co-presence occurs, the boundaries of enmity and friendship blur, and an alternative empathetic understanding of humanity, rooted in the recognition of mutual vulnerability and bodily frailty, may emerge. See Cole, Sarah, ‘People in War’ in Kate McLoughlin (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to War Writing* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 25-37.

<sup>30</sup> Butler, *Precarious Life*, 134

distribution of precariousness and grievability'<sup>31</sup>. She ultimately argues for a more fluid social ontology, stating that 'liberal norms presupposing an ontology of discrete identity cannot yield the kinds of analytic vocabularies we need for thinking about global interdependency and the interlocking networks of power and position in contemporary life ... [where] part of the very problem ... is that not everyone counts as a subject'<sup>32</sup>. For Butler, such an analytic vocabulary, and new political alliances, may emerge from a renewed apprehension of the generalized precariousness of all life, of our universal potential to suffer, and our deep, mutual dependency on others, 'mobilizing our bodily vulnerability as a means of transcending the invoking of fear by government, so as to forge a connection with others who are daily exposed to such vulnerability'<sup>33</sup>. In Butler's work then there is the reimagining of a particular ethical promise based around the empathic recognition of the suffering of the Other and the embodied precariousness of all life<sup>34</sup>, alongside a sober appreciation of the current discursive and biopolitical repression of any such cosmopolitan potential, and an identification of the need for constant critical examination of the structuring of this foreclosure.

Sociological literature on cosmopolitanism has recently witnessed an empirical turn away from abstract discussion of universal normative ideals towards a more disaggregated analysis of how it is that 'actually existing cosmopolitanisms'<sup>35</sup> are embedded and embodied in multiple, everyday lives and concrete moments and practices. In this vein, Jennie Molz's<sup>36</sup> empirical work revisits one of the archetypal, if controversial, figures of contemporary cosmopolitanism, the round-the-world traveler, typically understood as a transient, mobile flâneur who seeks out exotic encounters and risks and consciously adopts a stance of openness towards other cultures. The experiences and motifs of travel, mobility, rootlessness and nomadism

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<sup>31</sup> Butler, *Frames of War*, 31

<sup>32</sup> *ibid*, 31

<sup>33</sup> McRobbie, *Vulnerability, violence and (cosmopolitan) ethics*, 84

<sup>34</sup> Turner similarly argues that, 'the vulnerability of the human body provides the starting point for an account of human commonality as the basis for a cosmopolitan ethic'. Turner, Bryan, *Vulnerability and Human Rights*, (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 63

<sup>35</sup> Robbins, *Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism*

<sup>36</sup> Molz, *Cosmopolitan Bodies*

have long been central to thinking about cosmopolitanism<sup>37</sup>. However, in her study Molz is interested in addressing the specific question of, ‘How might we think of this world citizen, not just as a political or cultural figure of global allegiance, but also as an embodied subject with a corporeal disposition toward the world as a whole?’<sup>38</sup>. She notes that the Western round-the-world traveler is clearly a privileged cosmopolitan figure but her main concern is with how such travelers attempt to *literally embody* the cosmopolitan characteristics of mobility, tolerance and openness to difference.

Molz argues that round-the-world travelers, through their assemblage, practice and consumption of exercise, equipment, clothing, vaccines and travel products, are engaged in a particular traveling body project designed to render them adaptable, fit for global travel and hence emotionally responsive to the new experiences and adventures that such travel offers. Such a project is on-going and precarious and their attempts to blend and ‘fit in’ are continually updated and ‘embedded in the materiality of local cultures as travelers consume and adapt local styles to cosmopolitan purposes’<sup>39</sup>. Molz thus argues that ‘the cosmopolitan characteristics of flexibility, adaptability and openness to difference and risk are not just cultural dispositions, but rather embodied performances of fitness and fitting in. Travelers literally embody cosmopolitanism’<sup>40</sup>. Molz is aware that the travelers in her study occupy a very

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<sup>37</sup> For example, in Calhoun’s memorable description of a particular cosmopolitan sensibility as ‘the class consciousness of frequent travelers’. Calhoun, Craig, ‘The Class Consciousness of Frequent Travelers: Towards a Critique of Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism’, in Vertovec, S. and Cohen, R. (eds) *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism – Theory, Context, Practice*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). Experiences and motifs of inertia, immobility and encampment have also been a significant counter-discourse in recent social theory. Turner for example points to a new set of what he calls ‘enclavement strategies’, in particular spatial security developments - prisons, detention centres, refugee camps, asylum holding centres, quarantine zones and so on - that constitute significant new forms of immobility in contemporary global societies. For Turner, we are witnessing a decline of hospitality and a marked turn against individual liberties in the ‘enclave society’, with a significant new xenophobia counteracting the cosmopolitanism that others have seen as an outcome of increased transnational movement and flows. Turner, Bryan, ‘The Enclave Society: Towards a Sociology of Immobility’ *European Journal of Social Theory*, (2007), 10, 2, 287-304; See also Shamir, Ronen, ‘Without Borders? Notes on Globalization as a Mobility Regime’, *Sociological Theory*, (2005), 23, 2, 197-217; Diken, Bulent and Carsten Laustsen *The Culture of Exception: Sociology Facing the Camp* (London: Routledge, 2005)

<sup>38</sup> Molz, *Cosmopolitan Bodies*, 1

<sup>39</sup> *ibid*, 14

<sup>40</sup> *ibid*, 17

particular privileged position in terms of having a rich store of financial, physical, social and technological capital, such that they are able to relatively easily traverse global mobility regimes. However, her study nonetheless provides one detailed account of the way that an admittedly elite version of cosmopolitanism is articulated through embodied practices as a particular way of being in and moving through the world.

Mica Nava provides a further example of work that pays particular attention to issues of embodiment and desire, but her analysis focuses on a more grounded, local form of cosmopolitanism that became embedded and embodied in the everyday lives of women in Britain during the interwar years<sup>41</sup>. Nava details an emergent cosmopolitan structure of feeling, a complex set of gendered longings and identifications with difference and otherness, including visceral desires to engage with the new and exotic, which were distributed across the domestic and everyday spheres of shopping, popular entertainment and the arts<sup>42</sup>. She argues that, ‘in this structure of feeling, cultural difference and the foreign constituted a source of interest, pleasure and counter-identification that existed in tension with more conservative outlooks’<sup>43</sup>. She further examines romantic encounters between white British women and ‘other’ men such as the black American soldiers stationed in Britain in the early 1940s. Nava argues that significant new gendered forms of emancipation, proto-feminist refusals of the constraints of both femininity and Englishness, were fostered through such relations and flirtations with difference. In both the cultural sphere and in intimate lives then, an explicit rejection of racial prejudice and a sense of solidarity with subordinate others were forged. For Nava, it was particularly through the fine texture of these everyday emotional intimacies, the domestication of difference via

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<sup>41</sup> Nava, Mica, ‘Cosmopolitan Modernity: Everyday Imaginaries and the Register of Difference’, *Theory, Culture and Society*, (2002), 19(1–2): 81–99; Nava, Mica, *Visceral Cosmopolitanism: Gender, Culture and the Normalization of Difference*, (Oxford: Berg, 2007).

<sup>42</sup> Nava notes that a specific sense of exoticism and cosmopolitan style was promoted in the department stores and popular consumer culture of the time, as part of a direct address to women to constitute themselves as consuming subjects in particular ways. However, she argues that vernacular cosmopolitanism cannot be reduced simply to the expression of marketing logics, and that ultimately its transformative power outstripped its commercial origins.

<sup>43</sup> Nava, *Cosmopolitan Modernity*, 86

‘innumerable small heroic acts’<sup>44</sup>, that a more widespread vernacular cosmopolitanism was ultimately established: ‘At the vanguard of English modernity, these young women and their fantasies of a better life laid the groundwork for a more liberal cosmopolitan culture’<sup>45</sup>.

Nava’s specific concern then is with what she identifies as ‘the unconscious, non-intellectual, emotional, inclusive features of cosmopolitanism, on feelings of attraction for, and identification with, otherness – on intimate and visceral cosmopolitanism’<sup>46</sup>. She emphasizes how this visceral cosmopolitanism was predominantly driven by women and even suggests that such ‘narratives of interracial interest illustrate more complex and perhaps unconscious processes of psychic identification and realignment: they indicate the growing identification and empathy of white women *as women* with the colonized and excluded racial other’<sup>47</sup>. Traditionally, psychoanalytic work has explored the unconscious drives and identifications that underpin and fuel aggression and racism towards others<sup>48</sup>. By contrast, Nava explores the *attractions* of cultural and racial difference, and posits potential feminist psychoanalytic explanations for the development of gendered differences in sympathy and desire for others. She argues that, ‘it is important to explore the complex non-rational dynamic in the parallel and contradictory history of antiracism: of inclusivity and eroticized identification with difference’<sup>49</sup>. For Nava then, the dynamic of cosmopolitanism is established and located in the non-rational, the embodied and the affective domains of intersubjective selfhood as much as it is in Hannerz’ reflexive and intellectual stance of openness<sup>50</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> Nava, *Visceral Cosmopolitan*, 74

<sup>45</sup> *ibid*, 94

<sup>46</sup> *ibid*, 8

<sup>47</sup> *ibid*, 91

<sup>48</sup> For example, Appadurai draws upon Freud’s theorization of the ‘narcissism of minor differences’ in his analysis of how recent large scale violence against ethnic minorities, often forensically focused around putative bodily differences, has become an increasingly important idiom for producing a form of ‘certainty’, and curtailing cosmopolitan tolerance and ambivalence, in an uncertain globalized world. Appadurai, Arjun, *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2006)

<sup>49</sup> Nava, *Visceral Cosmopolitan*, 64

<sup>50</sup> Likewise, Nowicka and Rovisco stress how people actually become more cosmopolitan in ways that are both reflexive *and* emotional. They argue that cosmopolitanism can be understood ‘as a mode of self-transformation [whereby] people reflexively rework the boundaries between self and other, us and them .. and, thus, come closer to the reality of others and the world taken as a whole in fields often loaded with tensions and emotions’.

Ann Laura Stoler's historical analysis of the techniques of Dutch colonial rule relatedly points out how the *threat* of cosmopolitan self-transformation, among the colonized *and* among the colonizers, was understood in terms of potential emotional contagion<sup>51</sup>. Stoler argues that colonialism was a viable project so long as its emotional pleasures were felt by the colonial administrators to be merely an allowance for the hardship of being abroad, but not as an equivalent to the pleasures of a real home. She thus points out how the Dutch colonial authorities were continually troubled by 'the distribution of sentiment, by both its excessive expression and the absence of it; of European fathers too attached to their mixed-blood offspring, of Indies-born European children devoid of attachment to their (Dutch) colonial origins, of European-educated children who, upon return to the Indies, held sympathies and sensibilities out of order and out of place'<sup>52</sup>. Stoler shows how the political rationalities of Dutch colonial authority were thus not purely based around reason, but that 'sentiment is the ground against which the figure of reason is drawn and measured'<sup>53</sup>. Both states of mind and sentiment were key concerns, and colonial political rationalities were grounded in techniques of affective control to deal with 'the fear of contagious emotions [which] prompted another fear: that those who remained too attached to the Indies would see themselves more as "world citizens" .. than as partisans of Dutch rule.'<sup>54</sup>

## Conclusion

The analyses in the preceding discussion, although diverse in their foci, all share a common concern to elaborate the various structures of feeling, bodily practices, emotional resonances and techniques of affective control through which cosmopolitanism may become embedded and just as importantly constrained in everyday lived experience. The aims of such an analytic orientation are deliberately

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Nowicka, Magdalena and Maria Rowisco 'Making sense of Cosmopolitanism' in Magdalena Nowicka and Maria Rowisco (eds) *Cosmopolitanism in Practice*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), 6

<sup>51</sup> Stoler, Ann Laura 'Affective States' in David Nugent & Joan Vincent (eds.), *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007)

<sup>52</sup> *ibid*, 5

<sup>53</sup> *ibid*, 18

<sup>54</sup> *ibid*, 17

more tentative and exploratory than many previous rational-critical discourses of cosmopolitanism, shorn of some of the political utopianism and normative claims that have been associated with disembodied, abstract and universal perspectives. As Bradotti, Hanafin and Blaagaard note, the extent to which emerging, pluralized definitions of cosmopolitanism may serve as a clear guide to action in our present social and political reality, or open up a new space to reimagine more representative models of democratic governance, is not always obvious<sup>55</sup>. However, tracing a more embodied and affective genealogy of cosmopolitanism, paying attention to the embodiment of specific cosmopolitical figurations and moments, may still be seen as a modest creative contribution to the political project of informing our understanding of ourselves and the modalities of our radical interdependence in contemporary times. Furthermore, if a reminder were needed of the crucial entanglements of embodied experience with key re-imaginings and transformations of the political, one need only look at how recent major international political events such as the Occupy movement or the uprisings of the ‘Arab spring’ were fundamentally constituted through and felt in the collective effervescence of hundreds of thousands of bodies on the streets and in emotional contagions that rapidly outstripped both national borders as well as our ability to rationally comprehend them. To conclude, one further issue may potentially be brought to the surface through a corporeal turn in thinking about cosmopolitanism.

This is that an analytic reorientation towards issues of embodied experience has recently offered a productive way of, and implies a renewed sensitivity towards, thinking through issues of violence<sup>56</sup>. As Fine argues, cosmopolitan theory must engage with the actuality of contemporary violence<sup>57</sup>, beyond simply the debate over whether a particular idea of humanitarian cosmopolitanism, far from being the ethical accompaniment to a global civilizing process extending the pacification of violent dispositions across the planet, has also become a key ideological legitimation for Western hegemony. Multiple forms of governmental belligerence and predatory new

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<sup>55</sup> Bradotti, Hanafin and Blaagaard, *After Cosmopolitanism*

<sup>56</sup> McSorley, Kevin ‘Rethinking War and the Body’ in Kevin McSorley (ed.) *War and the Body: Militarisation, Practice and Experience* (London: Routledge, 2012); Sylvester, Christine *War as Experience: Contributions from International Relations and Feminist Analysis* (London: Routledge, 2013)

<sup>57</sup> Fine, Robert ‘Cosmopolitanism and violence: difficulties of judgment’, *The British Journal of Sociology* 2006, 57, 1, 49-67

forms of organized violence are salient realities in our conflict-ridden world<sup>58</sup>. Recent years have seen the increasing normalization of forms of pre-emptive war, tolerance for state practices of torture and the enduring extension of states of exception. As noted earlier, Beck has called for a move beyond ‘methodological nationalism’, the predominance of nation-based modes of thinking in the social sciences<sup>59</sup>. But crucially, such nation-based modes of sociological thinking have also predominantly been traditions of pacific sociology. For example, although little in social or political life remains untouched by war, key concepts and issues in mainstream sociology such as stratification, inequality, belonging and subjectivity have long been studied without sustained reference to histories, experiences and legacies of organized violence and warfare<sup>60</sup>. A reorientation of cosmopolitan thinking towards affective and embodied experience may thus allow the elaboration of further theoretical and empirical resources that enable us to formulate and think about the multiple linkages between cosmopolitanism, violence and suffering in new ways. Such a reorientation may also offer possibilities for elaborating linkages not only between cosmopolitanism and the injuries and legacies of large scale collective violence, but also with traditions of thinking that develop from the analysis of structural and everyday violence<sup>61</sup>, that are fundamentally concerned with the actualities of what Françoise Héritier calls ‘the cloaked violences of economic domination, of capital-labour relations, of the great North-South divide’<sup>62</sup>, which grind just as brutally against the bodies of the poor, the weak and the dispossessed<sup>63</sup>. These are important questions and elaborations for

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<sup>58</sup> Kaldor, Mary *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*, Third Edition. (Cambridge: Polity, 2012)

<sup>59</sup> Beck, *The Cosmopolitan Vision*

<sup>60</sup> Malesevic, Sinisa, *The Sociology of War and Violence*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

<sup>61</sup> See for example Galtung, Johann ‘Violence, Peace, Peace Research’ *Journal of Peace Research* 1969, 6, 3, 167-191; Scheper-Hughes, Nancy ‘Specificities: Peace-Time Crimes’, *Social Identities*, 1997, 3: 3, 471-498

<sup>62</sup> Héritier, Françoise (ed.) *De la Violence*, (Paris: Éditions Odile Jacob, 1996)

<sup>63</sup> Although Cheah notably argues that, ‘while a degree of mass-based cosmopolitan solidarity has arisen in the domestic domains of Northern countries in response to exceptionally violent events such as the Vietnam War, the Rwandan genocide, or the war in Iraq, it is unlikely that this solidarity will be directed in a concerted manner towards ending economic inequality between countries because Northern civil societies derive their prodigious strength from this inequality. Indeed, we can even say that global economic inequality is simultaneously the material condition of possibility of democratic legitimation in the North Atlantic and that which hampers its achievement in the postcolonial South’. As such he questions whether ‘the



future work. For ultimately, as Frank reminds us, ‘Only bodies suffer. Only by studied concentration on the body can we bear adequate witness to this suffering. Only an ethics or a social science which witnesses suffering is worthy of our energies and attention’<sup>64</sup>.

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international division of labor [is] the unacknowledged condition and therefore also the non-transcendable limit of all new cosmopolitanisms’. Cheah, Pheng ‘Cosmopolitanism’, *Theory, Culture and Society*, (2006, 23, 2–3, 486–96), 494-95

<sup>64</sup> Frank, Arthur ‘For a Sociology of the Body: an Analytical Review’ in Mike Featherstone, Mike Hepworth, and Bryan Turner (eds) *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory* (London: Sage, 1991, 36-102), 96