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A transnational cosmopolitan

An interview with Ulf Hannerz

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June 6 2005 in Stockholm. For the first time, the Swedes are celebrating a new national holiday *Sveriges nationaldag* (Sweden's National Day) that has now replaced the final day of the old three-day Whitsuntide holiday. At the *Kungliga Slottet* (Royal Castle) I see families carrying Swedish flags and women wearing national costumes. In a truly democratic manner, they are also having their picnics in the castle courtyard. The media is dutifully re-constructing an imagined Swedish community à la Benedict Anderson (1983), even interviewing anthropologists about the significance of the transformation.

Coincidentally, I am in Stockholm to interview Ulf Hannerz, Professor of Social Anthropology at Stockholm University. He is Sweden's most famous anthropologist and well known internationally for his contribution to the anthropological study of globalization. Hannerz (born in 1942) is also recognized for his research on complex urban societies, media cultures and transnational cultural processes. Among his works are *Soulside* (1969), *Exploring the City* (1980), *Cultural Complexity* (1992), *Transnational Connections* (1996) and *Foreign News* (2004a). Hannerz's career ranges from urban studies from around the world to transnational systems. His work on globalization and transnational cultural processes is distinguished, as the University of Oslo eloquently put it when Hannerz was made *Doctor Honoris Causa* there in 2005, by his exceptional ability to develop syntheses and analytic frameworks which reach beyond disciplinary boundaries while remaining thoroughly anthropological.[1] Hannerz has also written about the media, and was himself a media celebrity at the age of 14. Nicknamed as *Hajen* (Shark) he was a contestant in a TV programme, *Kvitt eller dubbelt* (a Swedish version of *64000 Dollar Question*), as an expert on tropical aquarium fish and

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won 10000 crowns.[2] Hannerz and his spouse, colleague and fellow anthropologist Helena Wulff,[3] live at Kronobergsparken, in the beautiful old part of Stockholm. Wulff herself has also done very interesting work on the new media (see, for example, Garsten and Wulff, 2003), and I was hoping to interview them both. However, as it turns out, she has decided she prefers not to be included in the interview as a spouse. Before Helena leaves to have dinner with her female colleague and their mutual boss, we compare notes, while Ulf is making coffee, about how it is to be married to another academic. In the middle of all this, I discover I am accidentally sitting on a cushion given to them by Arjun Appadurai (Rantanen, 2005). Helena and Ulf first met Appadurai and his wife Carol Breckenridge some 20 years ago at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Palo Alto. Helena was finishing her PhD, and Ulf and Arjun were beginning to discuss globalization, although working on very different issues. They have remained friends ever since.

From globalization to transnationalization

TR: You just mentioned Appadurai (Rantanen, 2005) who also used the concept of globalization. Were you two the only anthropologists among early users of the concept, or was this something that anthropology as a field embraced early?

UH: I think the two of us may have been among the earliest users in anthropology of the term globalization. There is another anthropologist who has been involved in global studies for approximately the same length of time, Jonathan Friedman (1990), but he has mostly been against the concept of globalization, perhaps because he is rather more Wallersteinian (Wallerstein, 1974) in his own preferences anyway. I think he has tended to take some sort of narrow view of the term globalization. But then, what you have in anthropology is a number of people who were doing migration studies, especially labour migration, not least from the Third World to the First World, from Latin America and the Caribbean to the US. The term transnational was used quite early by that group.

TR: Why is transnationalization better than globalization?

UH: I am not sure it is always better, but then to begin with we have been dealing with many phenomena which are border-crossing, and thus transnational, but hardly fully global in scope. Then I think in my

continuous conversation with Arjun Appadurai and Carol Breckenridge I came to agree with them that we needed to have the term 'transnational' to contrast with the old and overextended term 'international'.

TR: When did you start using globalization?

UH: I'm not really quite sure. To begin with, when I got interested in this, the word globalization was not really used very much. Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) was of course already around, with his world-system theory which had a broad influence in the social sciences. I described my first project in this area as a study of 'the world system of culture', because that was a term that I could come up with. But in the 1980s I was really working more with the notion of creolization, which related to certain contacts I had way back. And so, globalization probably showed up as a term in my awareness some time in the late 1980s. I may have had it rather more from Roland Robertson (1992) than from anybody else.

TR: Did you know him personally?

UH: I met him for the first time at a conference in Binghamton, NY, in early 1989, but I had been reading him before he really got on to globalization, when he was working on the sociology of culture, even in the late 1970s. A small book edited by a British sociologist named Anthony King (1991) came out of that conference, and I do remember that that was when I first met Roland. He had been using the term, I think, for a while and then his book *Globalization* came out in 1992 (Robertson, 1992).

TR: What made you use the term, made you interested in it? Was it a term you immediately started using?

UH: I'm not quite sure when it shows up in anything I wrote, actually. I guess when the term started becoming current I just accepted it without giving all that much attention to it, because it seemed a short and accessible term. When I started using it, I don't think it had such strong overtones of economic globalization and the expansion of markets and all that. It was much more in the way that Robertson had been using it: a matter of increasing interconnectedness, on the one hand, and increasing awareness of the world as one place, as Robertson says. This I had no trouble with. And then, I guess, some time in the early 1990s,

the economic understanding of the term globalization became increasingly prevalent and one might have started having second thoughts about the term from then on. Rather than giving it up, I stayed with the emphasis on globalization as not just a matter of the market and so on, but in a more general sense of increasing interconnectedness, diversifying the nature of transnational contacts. And then I also picked up the term transnational as an, at least, overlapping term.

Paradigm change?

TR: And did its use imply a changing paradigm? Was it not only the use of the term, but a different kind of theorization?

UH: The trend towards globalization and transnational thinking? I think in anthropology some of this had an early start because of the interest in long-distance migration, in the 1970s or even in the 1960s. One anthropologist who was then at SOAS, James Watson (1977), edited a book on migration where he made the point that all the contributors to this book had actually done field research at both ends of the migration chain, that is, in two countries. That was before globalization and related concepts became big in anthropology and other disciplines.

But I think one could make the point that anthropology as a discipline was never as committed to the national level of things as some other disciplines. Ulrich Beck (Rantanen, 2005b) has recently criticized what he describes as 'methodological nationalism' in many social sciences, but that never really existed in anthropology to the same extent. Of course, the classic anthropology would be rather local, but once we got out of that straitjacket, there was a sort of flexibility in anthropological conceptualizations. It is one example of this that a serious use of network concepts really began in social anthropology. The anthropology department at the University of Manchester, which I had a fair amount to do with in an early period, pretty much picked up the term network and ran with it, beginning in the 1950s, with a strong concentration on further elaboration in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Then to a certain extent it faded out again, but I would say that if you look at the history of the network concept, you will find British social anthropology there very early. I was quite impressed with it, and I used it in one of my first published articles (Hannerz, 1967). I also have a chapter on that in my book on urban anthropology, published in 1980 (Hannerz, 1980), and came back to it in the global context in a plenary talk at the inaugural meeting of the European Association of Social

Anthropologists, in 1990 (Hannerz, 1992). So network ideas have always been part of my interest in globalization, and they are useful when you deal with matters of borders, space and scale.

TR: As somebody who knows very little about anthropology, I had thought that the methodological nationalism was not as influential there, but I had also imagined the Indiana Jones kind of idea of an anthropologist who travels to distant locations and finds something untouched by Western culture. It is probably difficult nowadays to find such places, so I was thinking perhaps that was one reason anthropologists were so active in the globalization discussion, that increasingly anthropologists saw in their work that places and cultures were connected . . .

UH: Yes. My own empirical field research stimulus to globalization was in Nigeria. I had been very intensely involved in urban anthropology, both theoretically and empirically, and my very first major field study was very local, in an African-American neighbourhood of Washington DC, in the late 1960s. So I went to Nigeria planning to do a study of one urban community, and when I was there for that project to begin with I felt it was just distracting and a little embarrassing when my new friends and acquaintances wanted to use me for transnational purposes – sending their nephews off to study with me in Sweden, for example – but then gradually I came to sense that the most interesting thing going on in this place was really the growth of this new urban culture, in what I began to think of as a process of cultural creolization.

In the past anthropologists might have talked of this in terms of social change or culture contact, but it seemed to me that the old frameworks of understanding were not very useful any longer. In my first field study in Washington I had been cooperating with linguists, and some of them had been creolists, studying African elements in African-American English. So when I noted that a few anthropologists had been discussing the growth of new mixed cultures in terms of creolization I picked that up, and to begin with, I made it my central term for this growth of culture through globalization. At that time I think there was hardly anybody writing about this kind of thing in academia. I remember that in our department in Stockholm we had some very tentative seminar activity on this in the early 1980s. People were coming back from the field with these kinds of experiences. What do we do with migrants? What do we do with the media, and with popular culture? So we studied what we thought of as the interrelations

of 'the global and the local', and I think a great deal of useful research came out of that.

TR: I'm still wondering, is the concept of culture homogeneous or heterogeneous? Which do anthropologists go for? Do they see culture as something very distinctive and therefore go for very distinctive cultures?

UH: Well, I think anthropologists have always been concerned with diversity. That has been the focus of the discipline. I should also say that, because of that, the notion that greater global interconnectedness will inevitably lead to homogenization has never been a popular idea with anthropologists. The whole 'McDonaldization' (Ritzer, 1993) thing – I think anthropologists always resisted this. This is what occupied me in Nigeria. I came from Europe, from Scandinavia, where at that time, the fairly radical 1970s, there was much talk of cultural imperialism. And so I came to Nigeria and saw that there was all this wonderful new stuff being born out of global interconnectedness, very appealing new popular music, new folklore in a sense, new stories, new literature, new art forms. So I thought, this is the interesting story to tell out of this town – new culture is coming into being. Hardly anybody was paying much attention to that then. Later, of course, we have heard a great deal about creolization, hybridity, crossovers and so on, but that has been mostly in the 1980s and 1990s, with contributions by Salman Rushdie (1991) and other people outside academic life as well.

TR: So it doesn't threaten the identity of the field? In a way the 'reason' for the field is that you go and find cultures we don't know about. If you go and find cultures that are all more and more connected, doesn't that threaten the *raison d'être* of the field?

UH: I don't think that has happened so far. I think globalization and related things have really become a focus of a great deal of new interest and new theoretical thinking in anthropology. In a way, we may be shifting the emphasis from old and even vanishing culture to emergent culture. Then the interest in global interconnections has certainly played a part in a critique of the concept of culture, with some people suggesting we should abandon the concept altogether. People point out that it can become a dangerous rhetorical tool in politics, if what some would call 'cultural fundamentalists' are allowed to substitute culture for race as a tool for invidious distinctions. Personally, I think it would be a bad idea to let that kind of political voice take over the culture concept. I'd

rather we act as whistle-blowers with regard to that sort of thing, and emphasize instead that what is peculiar to human beings is that they can learn so many things – some would use a computer metaphor and say that human beings are not fully programmed until they have culture. But because human beings are so dependent on learning from their social existence, that also provides the condition for diversity – they can proceed to learn different things from one another.

That is, in large part, a matter of adaptation. It also means, however, that human beings are capable of both unlearning, rejecting old things, and relearning other things instead. You are not necessarily stuck with the culture you learned first. I was really exposed to some of these problems of the culture concept quite early, because when I was doing my fieldwork in 'Black' Washington (Hannerz, 1969), in the 1960s, there was a, not only academic but very public, debate about the culture of poverty concept. At that time, it was an anthropologist named Oscar Lewis (1961) who had been working mostly in Mexico and Puerto Rico, who came up with this culture of poverty concept which I think he basically used to suggest that life under poverty was a multifaceted, complex whole, and he had not perhaps quite realized the problems and the dangers of such a concept. So, during my first field study and writing up, I had to think about what the culture concept should stand for and how it could be used in an illuminating but careful way. So, when this debate over the culture concept came up again, in the early 1990s, there was a certain déjà vu effect for me because I had seen some of these difficulties in this particular context.

TR: Does it then mean that anthropologists don't have to travel any more? Does globalization challenge the idea of the anthropologist who travels far away?

UH: Well, we have had since the 1960s the notion of 'anthropology at home', and I think in the period when I was in the United States doing my study of 'Black' America (Hannerz, 1969) there were a number of American anthropologists who felt that they could as well stay in their own country and be more socially relevant and have some impact on politics. That sense is still there, that, yes, it is perfectly possible to do anthropology at home. It may involve certain other intellectual consequences, but it is now legitimate in the discipline to do your research wherever is interesting and perhaps useful. You don't have to travel any longer, but if you like to move about you can.

Cosmopolitans

TR: In your famous article about cosmopolitans and locals (Hannerz, 1990a), you don't mention, I think, anthropologists as such. I wonder whether your idea of a cosmopolitan is based on your own profession? Would you say that anthropologists were early cosmopolitans?

UH: I think there is probably something of the anthropologist in that ideal type of the cosmopolitan as in touch with diversity, as in that article. At the same time, I do remember I was a bit hesitant about identifying the anthropologist as a typical cosmopolitan because, after all, in that article I think the tendency is that the more cultural diversity, the more diverse experiences of diversity, the better. And most anthropologists don't really maximize diversity. You find some who go away from home to some distant place, but then keep returning to that place again and again. So they have two places that they know intimately, but the idea of an ideal cosmopolitan is more of one who shifts around and goes to many different places and maximizes diversity. So, because of that, I think certain kinds of news media foreign correspondents seem to be more like the ideal type of cosmopolitan than anthropologists.

TR: Staying with your pioneering article on cosmopolitans, how did you come up with the idea of writing this article? Do you remember when you started working on this and how you came up with the term?

UH: Actually I know that almost exactly. When I started to work on globalization more generally, I gave a talk at the University of California, Berkeley – this would have been in Spring 1985 – and that would have been more about creolization and so on. And someone in the audience came up with the question, have you thought about cosmopolitanism? At the time I had not, so I could not say much, but it stuck in my mind. (The person in question was a Berkeley anthropologist, Paul Rabinow, who has also been writing about cosmopolitanism, see for example Rabinow, 1986.) It was something I should think about. Then, in the summer of 1987, I had an invitation to a conference in Seoul, called something like 'The First International Conference on North–South and East–West Cultural Exchange and the Olympics'. It may have been not just the first, but the only such conference! It was one of the events leading up to the Olympic games in Seoul in 1988. So I thought this would be my opportunity to pull ideas together about cosmopolitanism. It was one of those papers where you have a lot of things in your mind

and you bring together a very odd assortment of insights and references. To a certain extent, I suppose, I was just introspecting about what I thought a cosmopolitan would be. And, I should point out, it was a conference on cultural exchange and it was in 1987, so I stuck to the cultural dimension of cosmopolitanization.

From 1990 onwards, of course, there has been a lot more emphasis on its political dimension. But in 1987 the Cold War was still on, and this was in South Korea. At the conference there were guests from Eastern Europe and one sports sociologist from the Soviet Union. The conference was sponsored by a major South Korean media conglomerate which invited us on a tour of South Korea after the conference and – in large part I think it was for this one Soviet participant, who was very unique in South Korea – we had this police car in front of our bus with a flashing blue light on, and when our Soviet colleague took a walk there were detectives with walkie-talkies discreetly following him. If you look at that context, well, the political aspect of cosmopolitanism really wasn't on yet.

TR: And had you any idea when you were writing your Seoul conference paper that it would become so influential?

UH: No, absolutely not! But it was a fun piece to do!

TR: And what kind of response did you get when it was delivered and published?

UH: At the conference there were so many presentations – you couldn't even read the papers, you had to summarize them – I'm not sure there was any strong immediate response right there. And then what happened was that I went home and the paper was lying in my desk drawer, although not for very long, and then Mike Featherstone, as editor of *Theory, Culture and Society*, was doing an issue on global culture (1990). I think that was very much a pioneering effort. So he was collecting contributions, and he asked if I would write something for him. I didn't really have time to write anything new, but offered my conference paper on cosmopolitanism. That journal issue, and its book form which came out at almost the same time, got a lot of attention. Looking back at it, it seems to me that a fair number of the contributions were really by people who were writing rather more on nationalism and things like that, and had not really thought very much about global matters. So I think in a way it was not entirely convincing as a book . . .

but it became very important, and consequently, I think, a fair number of people have perhaps read that and little else of mine and therefore think that my view on globalization is summed up in that article – which is certainly not true.

TR: When you mentioned media and communications in your article, was this, again, something that was very different from other anthropologists?

UH: Well, you know, anthropology had the occasional pioneer. There was one American anthropologist, Hortense Powdermaker, who did a study of Hollywood in the 1940s (Powdermaker, 1950) and who paid attention to mass media use in what was then Northern Rhodesia (Powdermaker, 1962). But she was quite unusual. Actually my own involvement with media as an anthropologist again had to do with my first field experience in the mid-1960s in Washington, because, at that time, most anthropologists certainly were not paying attention to the media and I remember getting a bit nervous about my fieldwork when I found myself spending hours in front of a black and white television screen, just watching television with my new acquaintances. I thought: mmm, is this fieldwork? Am I wasting my time? Perhaps I have to do this in order to be on the scene when something really interesting happens. Then it gradually dawned on me that they had interesting reactions to what they were watching! So in a way there was the beginning of a kind of media ethnography at times in my fieldwork.

And the other thing, which was accidental, was that when I came to stay for two years in Washington I also happened to pick up Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media* (1967), which I thought was a weird book, but a very interesting one! It disposed me, I guess, to take the media seriously and to think of media use and so forth. And of course it was not just watching television, but also the fact that African-American radio stations in Washington were really quite major institutions in social cohesion and community culture. So I felt that I would also be doing very strange ethnography if I did not pay attention to these.

TR: Did it challenge the way you theorized?

UH: I think from then on it was pretty constantly in the back of my mind. When I was doing my fieldwork in Nigeria, again, the media were quite important for my work. I also edited a book, which was published in 1990 in Swedish (Hannerz, 1990b), with a number of anthropologists

and a few other people like Peter Dahlgren, who is a professor of media studies, and some others. That was just about one of the first books in media anthropology, and, of course, being in Swedish, it made no great splash anywhere else. But it had a fair impact in Sweden, and it is still used quite widely in media courses. So I think in a way it showed the possibilities of media ethnography and also inspired a comparative view. I enjoyed doing it. I was on a committee of a Swedish research council, which was supporting slightly out-of-the-way projects, and this was one of those.

TR: Let me go back to the globalization-transnational-networks debate. If one studies a particular culture – if we use the term – or a particular location, actually the fact that these people are connected to other people and it's not a face-to-face connection means you can't study the whole theme in that place because these connections go elsewhere. So what does this do to anthropology if it's based on ethnography and you can observe people using mobile phones, but you don't know what is at the 'other end'?

UH: For one thing I think it means that local, face-to-face units are not so self-evident as the choice of unit as they have been. I think there is still certainly enough face-to-face contact that they are not rendered entirely implausible as choices either. But I think one difference between the British and the American tradition is that the British tradition has been a social anthropological one, which means rather a sociological one, where I think the emphasis has been very much on the structures of social relationships. And if that is primary, then, whether they are also localized is a somewhat secondary and derivative type of issue. You follow the social relationships where they go and precisely what then becomes the analytical boundary may not be self-evident, although it is hardly entirely arbitrary.

In our department in Stockholm we were quite early, I think, in looking at alternative possibilities. My former student, who is now my 'boss', my department head, Christina Garsten (1994) did her PhD dissertation on Apple Computer, an early example of multi-sited research on the IT industry. She worked in Silicon Valley, in the national HQ in Stockholm and the European office in Paris. Apple Computer had a very strong organizational culture, which had a lot to do with California in the 1970s, post-modern, hippy, whatever. Then we had one multi-local study after another, including Helena Wulff's study of classical ballet as a transnational occupation (Wulff, 1998), and while I

have been sort of involved in a generally supportive way around these things, my own study was rather later than some of those in the department. We did a book on multi-site ethnography (Hannerz, 2001) in Swedish, too, which may be the first of its kind in any language.

Foreign correspondents

TR: How did you become interested in foreign correspondents?

UH: I think it had a great deal to do with the fact that I have been a news consumer since I was quite young. I had probably just started paying attention to newspapers when I was seven years old and the Korean War broke out, in 1950. So I remember that somehow seized my imagination for a while. I think ever since then I've been reading news-papers and listening to news on the radio. So foreign news is something that's been very much part of my personal life. And then, in the early 1990s I was pretty much at the end of a period when I had been using my Nigerian field material and also writing fairly programmatic and conceptual pieces on the anthropology of globalization. I felt it was time to do something empirical again. So, there I was, listening to the morning news on the radio, and waking up a little bit more as I realized that here was somebody reporting on the battles of the Taliban in Afghanistan – and then signing off from Hong Kong. A bit odd, but then you understand of course that Radio Sweden has only one Asia correspondent who has to be based somewhere, and Hong Kong is a good place for that. I thought about the circumstances of this kind of work – and there I had the new project I was looking for. When I started considering it seriously I also discovered that a lot of autobiographies were already on my shelves – things I'd picked up just because they looked like a good read. And actually, getting back to cosmopolitanism, I particularly remember a book called *Point of Departure* by British journalist James Cameron (1967), a classic foreign correspondent's account. There were some snippets of that book which I think I have used as the prototype of the life of the cosmopolitan: he's been every-where and is nostalgic about everywhere . . .

TR: I was thinking when I was listening to you that in a way what you did was to take yourself as a subject – you were here and listening to somebody who was over there, and you followed the trajectory and went to see how that message was transmitted to you as listener.

UH: Yes, you may put it that way and I think in a way perhaps that, as I said before about our relationship to the media, these can be understood as not entirely different, after all, from face-to-face relationships. I have always had the sense that there are also real individuals not only in but also behind the news, actual individuals out there reporting. Maybe it does make a difference that, Sweden being a fairly small country, perhaps one personalizes these relationships with media personnel a bit more than one might, let's say, in the US. Now, of course, television makes a great deal of difference because when you become familiar with not only voices but faces, and foreign stories are almost defined by the particular individual, like the CNN International correspondent Christiane Amanpour and people like that – then of course it becomes very personalized anyway.

I think, reminiscing again from my earliest media and foreign correspondent experiences whilst growing up, Swedish radio would then have had a few foreign correspondents in New York, London and Paris etc. I remember that Soviet news during this period of Kremlinology was really in the charge of one school teacher in a provincial Swedish town who knew Russian and listened to Radio Moscow and reported on Radio Sweden on that basis. Radio foreign correspondents were very limited. And, with regard to the major Stockholm newspapers, there were these venerable gentlemen who seemed to be spending their lives in London, Paris and wherever and really carried a lot of intellectual authority in their reporting. That was very personalized – you really knew who these people were.

TR: Did you think there was some glamour to their profession?

UH: When I was growing up? Yes, very probably. Nowadays, of course, you have that conspicuous handful of television stars, American news anchors and people who almost define what's news and where through their presence . . . But after all, what my foreign correspondent study involved was rather more the print correspondents who are not stars in quite the same way. But glamour in terms of leading interesting lives, yes. And again, I think there is a matter of the parallels between anthropologists and foreign correspondents, that these are two pretty different ways of reporting from one part of the world to another part of the world.

TR: What do you think are the differences?

UH: The differences, for one thing, would be that the foreign correspondents must reach out to a wider audience. After all, anthropologists have a captive audience among their fellow academics and can write on quite subtle and arcane matters in their own academic language. Foreign correspondents are not regarded as particularly successful unless they somehow manage to reach out to their audiences. That's not easy. And, of course, radio and television people have an even tougher time with their two- or three-minute time slots. But on the whole, foreign correspondents, even in the print media, must be able to get the story together in quite a limited space. Then, the anthropologist will get away with – has even been honoured for – sticking to constrained local areas and getting everything from there. Foreign correspondents, in most cases, especially the ones I have been interested in, are Africa correspondents, Middle East correspondents, even Asia correspondents, so they really have to somehow find a way of dealing with responsibility for very large areas. You have to use other sources much of the time and I think the best foreign correspondents have quite diversified skills in terms of getting to the sources, the practical logistics of that, but also being bright enough and curious enough and experienced enough to find the good sources. I came away, I think, liking just about every one I interviewed and having a fair amount of respect for many of them, because of their commitment to trying to do a professional job, and actually being more knowledgeable about things than they can possibly show in a small piece.

TR: And what do you think are the similarities between anthropologists and foreign correspondents?

UH: One similarity between many of them, I suppose, is a liking for travel, which probably draws similar types into both fields. And in terms of the occupational tasks, although in different ways, somehow reporting on a place that is not immediately familiar to the audience, so there has to be a kind of explanation, representation and interpretation. Which in some way shows up in both situations. My book (Hannerz, 2004a) is more about feature stories and feature work than hard news. I think these are quite like ethnography. Similar issues: sometimes it's not so important to find something unique, but more important are things that keep happening over a long time and involving ordinary people. So I think in feature stories you find some parallels with ethnography and sometimes I find that they are really remarkably well done and interesting. Then, of course, you find journalists facing some of the same

problems as anthropologists – exaggerating otherness and underplaying similarities, and so on. But I think journalists can sometimes be quite good at communicating both differences and similarities, actually.

TR: Apart from this book, have you now left media and communications behind? Are you now working on something new, or still pursuing related work?

UH: First of all, in a way I'm back to cosmopolitanism, which I stayed away from as a topic for more than 10 years after that paper for Seoul. I have heard the criticism that there was so little about politics in that, but given its context and the time I haven't felt particularly guilty. But by now the question, for me, is rather whether there is any connection between these two dimensions of cosmopolitanism – the more cultural and the more political one – or are these just two entirely different phenomena, sharing just the label?

I think many of the political philosophers writing about cosmopolitanism have tended to agree that it is a stance which is morally strong but symbolically, experientially weak. I would argue that you can have a political cosmopolitanism, which is energized by the cosmopolitan cultural experience. This is one of the things that I am working on in a project in our department in Stockholm. Also, there is the issue whether cosmopolitanism – cultural or political – is entirely an elite phenomenon. It is part of the historical baggage of the notion of cosmopolitanism that this is a privilege that goes with other privileges, but now more studies suggest that this is not necessarily so. Of course, new patterns of mobility and media use have something to do with that. I see a convergence now among commentators toward the view that there is a kind of spontaneous, everyday, banal cosmopolitanism (Hannerz, 2004b).

Notes

1 URL (consulted June 2006): http://www.uio.no/english/about_uio/honorary-doctors/2005/hannerz.html
2 URL (consulted June 2006): http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulf_Hannerz
3 URL (consulted June 2006): http://www.socant.su.se/

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