ETHNOGRAPHERS, CRITICS AND VOYEURS: CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH OF PERFORMANCE AND TELEVISION

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ABSTRACT

This paper comments on how older assumptions about the representation of cross-cultural realities and processes of mediatization of performance are inedequate for understanding cultural processes and identity in the current century. The argument is made out in terms of the author's research on Indonesian television.

INTRODUCTION

> We live in a video, cinematic age, where the cinematic apparatus intervenes between the material world and everyday, lived experience (Denzin 1995, 200).

> Part of what constitutes modern societies as 'modern' is the fact that the exchange of symbolic forms is no longer restricted primarily to the contexts of face-to-face interaction, but is extensively and increasingly mediated by the institutions and mechanisms of mass communication (Thompson 1990, 15).

> If you are writing a book or an article, you can go home and write it all up afterwards. With film, you have to shoot events and activities at the time they occur. If you don't catch them then, they're lost forever. That's what is so special about film: it's linked absolutely, existentially to its object, a photochemical permeation of the world (Barbash and Taylor 1997, 2).

In this discussion I comment on how older assumptions about the representation of cross-cultural realities and processes of mediatization of performances such as traditional dance or cremation events are inadequate for researching and understanding cultural processes and identity in the twenty first century. For the sake of specificity, the argument is made out in terms of the author's fieldwork on Indonesian television, but the general thrust of the argument may be extended to other regional television cultures, including Malaysia (Kitley 2000).

Figure I describes three paradigmatic space/time relations of the cross-cultural researcher, and is based on the premise that the *experience* of television must be a part of our critical perspective. The Long Term Fieldworker is the ethnographer of traditional anthropology. The researcher's co-presence and long-term participation in the social and cultural life of his or her selected subjects gives the researcher the opportunity to take an intense interest in the intervention of media processes into the lives of their research community, to witness the production process, and see it through to its appearance and reception on television.

The Fieldworker as TV Critic describes the situation of a researcher whose prime focus is on local television. The duration of his or her work in country will usually be shorter than the ethnographer's. I assume that the researcher will usually not have opportunities to observe the production of performance genres, but is well-placed to observe and analyse the reception of television and interview people involved in the production of particular programs.

The Long Distance Viewer has a complicated distanciated relationship to Indonesia and Indonesian television. At home in Australia, s/he might watch Indonesian television via a satellite dish, either live as it goes to air, or from video recordings. S/he might, on the other hand, watch Indonesian television on a domestic set, catching daily Indonesian news broadcasts on SBS (Special Broadcasting Service). Or, s/he may watch news clips or an Indonesian feature on a public broadcast, commercial, or a cable service channel.

These researcher-performance-media relations are inextricably linked to a set of historical, economic, technological, institutional and cultural circumstances which need to be articulated in cross-cultural research as they both constrain and open up possibilities for our research and the understanding of cross-cultural symbolic forms.

Distanciation	**Long Term Fieldworker**	**Fieldworker as TV Critic**	**Long Distance Viewer**
Space/Time	Researcher as *Participant Observer*	Researcher as *Spectator in the Audience*	Researcher as *Virtual Tourist*
In country	Yes	Yes	No
Witness to live performance	Yes	No	No
Witness 'live' mediatised performance	Yes	Not usually	No
Witness recorded mediatised performance: Broadcast, Video	Yes	Yes	Yes

Figure 1: Audience/Researcher Space/Time Relations to Live and Mediatized Events

These three situations describe constraints on opportunities for direct observation and experiential knowledge which historically have been the basis for the authority anthropological knowledge claims in the representation of other cultures. The opportunity

to be intensely and directly involved in both the production and reception of the live and mediatized event is contrasted with degrees of distance from one or the other, even both, of the events. The Figure implies that the Long Distance Viewer is the most disabled by their location. S/he is distanced in both space and time, as a mediatized performance is likely to be screened long after it was performed live, and long after it was first screened in country. Far away, the Long Distance Viewer becomes a voyeur, someone looking on, a virtual tourist. The negative connotations which attach to knowledge of this kind might seem to discredit the Long Distance Viewer's cultural analysis.

But the space-time coordinates of this map are overly simplified and preserve outmoded scientistic notions of the value of direct observation and what George Marcus has called the 'spatial fixity' of ethnography (1991, 324). Under conditions of modernity and globalisation, 'being there' is a complex experience, as cultural processes occur in transcultural space. Understanding this requires what George Marcus call 'a shrewd anti-localism,' for it involves the recognition that subjects and researcher alike, are here, there and everywhere. A local cultural performance tradition, even one as potent as the once every one-hundred years Balinese *Eka Dasa Rudra* rite, today shows traces of national political considerations (Schulte Nordholt 1991). The eminent Balinese composer Lotring complained that after 1946, Balinese music had speeded up to become a dazzling spectacle, largely driven by economic considerations, because international tourists 'like what glitters, what goes fast' (Brunet 1989). We should also recognise the 'disseminating character' of cultural forms and styles in developments such as 'World Music' (Marcus 1994, 43). What appears characteristically, even intensely linked to place and specific cultures, is in a sense always already dispersed, in the way even local cultural forms shape themselves to participate in a global exchange of cultural forms.

The Figure also charts degrees of potential self-critical reflexivity. Intersecting with the three situations described will be a greater or lesser awareness about the adequacy of the conceptual apparatus and epistemological assumptions employed in research and interpretation. In the 'tent in the village', the cultural otherness of the subjects impresses itself upon the researcher, urging upon him or her an intense awareness or reflexivity about their methodology and conceptual apparatus. In the 1970s, in an archetypical 'arrival moment', the shock of the new so surprised and bewildered Raymond Williams when he first saw American television, that it prompted him to conceptualise the differences he observed in his now famous and, ironically, universally applied concept of 'televisual flow' (1974). John Ellis described television as 'an essentially national activity for the vast majority of its audience' (1982, 5) and Ann Kaplan developed this idea, noting its implications for cross-cultural research:

[T]he structure, form, content and context for British television are so radically different from those of its American counterpart that everything has to be re-thought by critics in this country. Television scholarship is simply not exportable in the easy manner of film criticism (1983, xi).

Thus in research on new and different media traditions, we should expect to find these national differences inscribed as 'arrival scenes' or ethnographic moments in the poetics of the study, and these differences will colour the researcher's interpretation of the performance. The arrival scene in ethnographic poetics usually positions the reader as an outsider, and the implicit promise of such passages is that the writer, as 'insider who sees', will reveal more than the reader could ever know. The reader is folded into the

text as a mirror image of the observing eye of the researcher, and in time, is brought to share the eyewitness account (Atkinson 1990, 62ff).[1]

Couched down at home, a thirty minute television program 'from Indonesia' tends to be less self-consciously consumed, and our criticism of this televisual experience is likely to be far less influenced by our knowledge and experience of Indonesia, and far less influenced by nineteenth century ideas of realism. We are in the position at best of long distance scrutiny rather than confronting close-up. In our commentary, the arrival scene will be missing and the use of concepts drawn from the Western academy and scholarly tradition will seem 'natural'.

Thus the map of the space-time possibilities in research, rather than representing a continuum of advantage or disadvantage, represents the discontinuities and continuities which unite us as viewers and cultural subjects. I intend to return to Figure 1 and erase or blur the boundaries between each cell. Rather than the linear trajectory of proximity and distance implicit in the model, I will argue that the figure would be better drawn as a loop or mobius strip. For when we have eyes to see, the insights that the Long Distance Viewer gains from being distanciated are equally compelling in the field, where the live performance is always already a thoroughly dispersed event

Mediatization

Mediatization can be understood as an historical process by which the transmission of symbolic forms becomes increasingly mediated by the technical and institutional apparatus of the media industries (Thompson 1990, 3). Thompson understands mediatization as part of what makes modern societies modern, and as 'one of the key transformations associated with the rise of modern societies' (1990, 11). Mediatization is increasingly a transnational, even global process.

The focus on the mediatization of performance is linked inextricably with historicist assumptions implicit in mediatization as a sign of the modern. 'Traditional' (unmediatized) performance may be understood as a sign of the pre-modern, as exemplary of the historical circumstances of a folk culture, 'untouched' by modernisation, a process which is associated with Westernisation and industrial capitalism. If our interest in the mediatization of performance is associated with a concern that mediatization distorts or destroys the authenticity of traditional performance, then that concern might mask a desire to construct Indonesia as a pre-modern, unique culture. Mediatization should be understood as a mode of representation, not as distinctly different in its motivations from live performance, even if it uses different technologies and languages.

Performance and Performance Genres

For this discussion, the concept of performance needs to be broadly defined and not thought of in terms of western ideas of theatrical performance which assumes a particular relationship between performers and audiences/viewers. Further, if we restrict our attention to aesthetic and ritual performance genres we may fix the target culture (in this case Indonesia), as a pre-modern, unique folk culture: Other, mysterious and exotic. Such a limited perspective ignores innumerable other genres of cultural performance, the way video is increasingly used in performance, and the very extensive use of performance in New Order Indonesia as a mode of nation building.

Erving Goffman defines performance as 'all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants' (1971, 26). From the perspective of the given performer, the other participants include the audience, observers or co-participants. This makes performance or performativity a *process* of exchange of symbolic forms rather than a bounded event which can be easily defined in space-time coordinates.

In mediatized performance, Goffman's idea of interaction, of performers *influencing* others is problematic. What sense can be given to the idea of feedback from transnational viewers, who share very little of the symbolic repertoire of the performers, and may never meet nor see them? Perhaps in television shows which seek out audience opinion via tie-ins with the Internet, as *Big Brother* did in Australia in 2002 there is an opportunity for the audience to influence performance in a complicated and indirect way (through the producers), but this is not generally the case. What kind of interaction can there be between performers and viewers under the 'normal' circumstances of TV viewing? Again, these distanciated, implied relationships between performers and viewers cannot be assumed analytically, but must be investigated empirically.

That's a Wrap: The Long Term Fieldworker

The idealised fieldworker I have in mind is the observer 'in the tent in the village' who has both time and opportunity to witness, for example, a performance such as the cremation of a prominent local figure, and to observe the preparation and making of a film or video of the cremation.[2] I assume that the researcher speaks with the director and crew about the film they plan to make. Some time later, in company with his or her informants, the researcher watches the program made of the cremation on local television, listens to the talk during the program, and later still, follows up by talking over the program with a selection of people involved in the cremation. The researcher sees everything, and wraps it all up in an elegant article for a scholarly journal. This is not a completely fanciful scenario: Howard Morphy's 1993 Malinowski Memorial lecture is a fascinating discussion of the filming of an Aboriginal funeral (Morphy 1994). Generically, mediatized performance will circulate as ethnographic film, television documentaries, news items, and features.

This tradition of fieldwork is based on an understanding of cultural interpretation as the prime purpose of cross-cultural research. It is also based on an epistemology which assumes that there is a stable, external reality which can be objectively recorded and transcribed using media such as photography and film (Denzin 1995, 196). One consequence of this second assumption is that a photograph or video of a performance is understood as a *version* of the original.

These assumptions about a stable external reality, and the idea of photography as a mechanically produced, secondary record, have contributed to the tendency

- to value the live, original event, performed at a particular place and time over the mediatized version,
- to value still photography over film or video as a scientific record,
- to see film as a supplement to records produced by the dispassionate eye of the observer,

- to use film in 'salvage anthropology' rather than as a primary source of data for analytic purposes,
- to rely on the authoritative exegetical voice as a way of controlling the excess of the image, and
- to see the media as disruptive, a change agent which erodes cultural authenticity.

The idea that the camera is a scientific apparatus capable of producing unmediated images of reality privileges the pro-filmic original as the site of meaning and the photographic image as derivative. Walter Benjamin has argued that it is the presence of the object or event in time and space which is crucial to the concept of authenticity of the work of art (1969, 220). Mechanical reproduction 'detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition', erasing a 'unique existence' (1969, 221). This view of the auratic quality of an original performance or creative work is still influential in discussion of the adaptation of novels into film and performance into video. The original is ceded an authenticity that the version is not. These assumptions are the foundation for a discourse centred on relations of equivalence, of faithfulness, or distortion between the original and its copies.

For these reasons anthropologists have generally regarded film as a supplement, never as an alternative mode of ethnographic inquiry (MacDougall 1975). Anthropologist Chris Gregory points out that ethnographic films have little evidentiary status or value as primary data: 'I cannot think of a single article that develops a general theoretical argument based on the analysis of a film-text', and further, 'I am unaware of any article in an anthropology journal that submits an ethnographic film to close analysis (1994, 75; 87).[3]

The aura of the original, and a certain nostalgia for supposedly pristine folk culture in representation of the Other has contributed to a discourse of media and cultural imperialism. Electronic technologies such as television are assumed to be disruptive and to erode cultural authenticity. Eric Michaels, for example, writes that in the summer of 1985, 'the glow of the cathode ray tube had replaced the glow of the campfire in many, many remote Aboriginal settlements', and that '[p]eople were predicting culturecide and claimed that Aborigines appeared helpless to resist this new invasion' (1988, 118). In a study of the transfer of electronic media from Europe and North America to 91 Third World countries, Katz and Weddell argue that the broadcast media, particularly television, was 'destructive of indigenous political and cultural self-expression (1978, vii).

Performance and the Myth of Authenticity

Laurie-Jo Sears argues that the puppet theatre (*wayang*) of central Java, perceived by scholars and travellers as emblematic of 'exotic, impenetrable, and mystically rich 'Java" (1996, 11) is, if not an invented tradition, certainly a selected one, highly dependent for its form and content on colonial interest in Javanese mysticism and on nationalist politics. Mahabharata and Ramayana stories, which Dutch scholars associated with an ancient Sanskritic high culture, became the normative form of court *wayang* in the 1930s as a result of the selective promotion of these stories in high culture academic practices in the art colleges. The normative form masks the colonial rulers' interests in positioning the Javanese as an other-worldly, mystical group. Far from representing an ancient,

authentic, primordial performance tradition, the *wayang* developed its form in response to colonial intervention. Colonial style *wayang* displays a rich hybridity rather than a deep cultural continuity.

Even if our concentration is on a single performance, we should recognise that the meaning or significance of the performance signifies differently for different performers and participants. Anthropologist Howard Morphy has described how the acclaimed ethnographic filmmaker Ian Dunlop developed the text of his film on an Aboriginal burial ceremony in northeast Arnhem Land (1993). Once the rushes were developed, Dunlop screened them for those who had been most involved in organising the ritual sequences. It became evident that the funeral was understood differently by different age groups. 'Even among participants, personal status, age and interests influenced interpretations not only of the same event, but of the same visual record of that event' (Mermin 1997, 46). Clearly there was no unitary, original text or meaning to be salvaged from the funeral.

Photography and the Myth of Transparency

The idea of an authentic moment of performance is illusory, and overlooks the essentially historical character of performance. Equally illusory is the idea that photography and/or film deliver an objective, transparent record of performance. Michael Renov has written about the constructed or textual character of documentary films. 'What I am arguing is that documentary shares the status of all discursive forms with regard to its tropic or figurative character and that it employs many of the methods and devices of its fictional counterpart' (1993, 3). Renov (1993, 9) and Nichols (1993, 188) have also argued that the evidentiary value of documentary film is not given but depends on its reception. Their telling example is the Holliday video of the beating of Rodney King. The defence team unpicked what most people saw as 'damming evidence' and worked on the jury until they had made the forty-three second video into a record, not of a beating, but a sign of the lack of order which called for determined measures by law officers.

Field Research on Live and Mediatized Performance

The preceding discussion has cautioned against a preoccupation with relations of faithfulness or distortion between the live performance and its mediated appearance on television. Our focus should not be on a critical appraisal of the mediatized performance in relation to an idealised original, but rather on the integration of the performance group in media processes, and on what that experience means for them and us. Our research should focus on the economic, cultural and political contexts and processes in which virtually all cultures in the contemporary world are implicated. Our research will be concerned to investigate relations of shared experience rather than ideas of difference. It will be concerned with processes of identity construction, and the take-up of expressive resources which are contemporary and increasingly accessible (Moore 1994; Ginsburg 1991).

Research on the production and transmission of the mediatized text should involve investigation of the integration of the program into national and international 'television ecologies' (Cunningham and Jacka 1996, 16). In research on programs from peripheral television exporting nations such as Australia and Indonesia, the role of gatekeepers,

and the professional practices of the industry in marketing and distribution are crucial in understanding the appearance and prominence assigned to programs of Indonesian performance in other networks.

What Did You Think Of It: Fieldworker as TV Critic

The Fieldworker/Critic's research interests in performance are likely to be driven far more by what appears on screen, than by live performance events as they were for the Long Term Fieldworker. For the majority of viewers, and for the researcher, the live pro-filmic event is hardly brought to consciousness. It is the genres, discourses, schedules and reception of television itself that tends to engage the attention of researchers trained in Media and Cultural Studies. Research methods which will be useful for these inquiries will be eclectic, and will draw on textual analysis, studies of the political economy of production, the institutions involved in production and distribution, and wider social and cultural processes. Television overlaps with a range of other social and cultural phenomena happening around it. It cannot be understood as a closed semiotic system. Television is integrated in complex processes of cultural socialisation which affect the meanings that people make in, around and beyond the immediate *content* of television.

The Fieldworker/Critic is well-placed to investigate in detail the micro-practices of media consumption and reception, and the meaning audiences give to selected programs. The researcher's co-presence with selected viewers allows him or her to observe at close hand how families, and, in the case of Indonesia, even village groups interact with and use television (Caldarola 1990, 141). The researcher hears the groans of disappointment when a favourite team misses a goal, and the derisive shouts which greet the other side's success. It becomes obvious that what the researcher accepts as a 'foreign' program may not be understood locally in that way at all, as viewers focus on the convergent values represented in the imported program and their own culture world (Caldarola 1990, 367). Whether in the village or in the suburbs, the television researcher is unable to avoid morning-after discussions of popular programs, and quickly becomes aware what programs are taped, and what videos families or groups of workers rent. This focus on the audience is well-established and varied in its objectives and preferred methodologies. Audience studies include so-called 'effects' research (Alfian and Chu), 'uses and gratifications' studies (McQuail 1994), ethnographic studies of television consumption (Caldarola 1990; Lull 1988, 1990, 1991; Morley (1980, 1992), and reception analysis (Ang 1985; Liebes and Katz 1990, Gripsrud 1995; Michaels 1988).

The diversity and complexity of the consumption of television in all but the most remote communities makes operational specification of the audience a pragmatic and ontological problem in audience research. Television audiences are unlike film audiences. They are dispersed in their viewing practices, moving in and out of the room where the television is on, alternating close viewing with periods of inattention as they attend to their housework or craft activities, and zapping from channel to channel to avoid commercials, or simply to keep up with what is on other channels. These highly varied and idiosyncratic practices make it difficult to characterise the television audience and its practices, and make it difficult to characterise the epistemological outcomes of audience studies. There is the familiar problem of representativeness when reception practices are seen to be so particular, but more than that, given the theoretical foundation of reception studies in

ideas of the active reader and the contextualisation or situatedness of meaning, audience research is bedevilled by the problem of indeterminacy. If reception and meaning depends on the context of viewing and the historical situatedness of viewers, then the researcher will find it logically impossible to contain the contextualisation of reception (Ang 1996).

There is also an assumption, especially in cross-cultural audience research, that 'watching television' in say, Indonesia or Malaysia, is the same cultural practice as watching television in Australia, and that the way Malaysian or Indonesian audiences and Australian audiences incorporate television in their daily lives can be simply compared. For many Indonesians, however, television is still a communal, public experience, not the private family experience it is in affluent Australia (Caldarola 1990, 140f). For Indonesian domestic workers, on the other hand, television is an 'edgy' experience. It is something watched from the margins of the sitting room late at night when their work is done. They watch whatever is on, put up with any switch from channel to channel, and watch always on sufferance, always ready to leave the set to make tea, answer the phone, or to have their viewing cut off when the employer family decides it has seen enough.

This awareness of the intense particularity of viewing practices is the foundation of the insight that the television audience can only ever be properly understood as a fiction, a discursive construction (Hartley 1987). Two implications of the thoroughgoing indeterminacy of the audience for cross-cultural studies of performance are first, the impossibility of assuming that the audience is an innocent, attentive audience for a specific program. Audiences are inextricably bound up in variable uses of television technologies and distracted consumption practices which reflect television technology and ecology. Second, given that audiences are discursive constructions, the researcher's role and motives in selectively constructing audiences for observation need addressing. We must understand that the audience for a performance program, whether that is a 17th of August commemoration or a *dangdut* concert, is always already an audience of a whole range of other televised performances, and can not be taken as naive viewers, nor necessarily as attentive viewers. It is the inescapable and irreversible context of changes which affect us all, researchers and subjects alike. Our research on the reception of mediatized performance, while focused on the specific performance in which we are interested, must venture beyond that program to catch up the connections viewers make between the target program and others drawn from their viewing history. It is the intersections between indigenous programs and other genres and forms of televised performance which are likely to throw up the most interesting questions on issues such as the poetics of performance, genre and the construction of cultural identity in cultural performances.

Ien Ang (1996) has argued that audience studies research which is aware of the epistemological problems with micro-level ethnographic studies of reception and the position of the researcher will be productive if it opens out to make connections with domains in which the audience is the subject of analysis. As she says 'what we need more than ever is a renewed agenda for audience studies, one that is drawn up by considerations of the *worldly* purposes of our scholarship' (1996, 79). Ang suggests that one intersection between different domains of the audience might be the intersection of the audience as media consumer, and the audience as the object of regimes of public policy. In Indonesian television studies, detailed ethnographic studies which help us understand the reception of indigenous mediatized performance amongst non-Javanese

minorities, for example, might lead on to an inquiry into policy concerning the representation of indigenous cultural identity on television. For almost thirty years, it was New Order policy to stare through the diversity of culture to emphasise the unity of the nation (Caldarola 1990, 130; Acciaioli 1985, Widodo 1995).

The Screen Tourist's Gaze: Research and the Long Distance Viewer

T.V.

dont bother telling me about the programs describe what your set is like the casing the curved screen its strip of white stillness likebeach sand at pools where animals comedown to drink and a native hunter hides hismuscles, poised with a fire sharpened spear until the sudden whirr of an anthropologist's hidden camera sends gazelles leaping off in their delicate slow motion caught on film despite the impulsive killing of unlucky Doctor Mathews whose body was found three months later the film and camera intact save for a faint, green mould on its hand-made leather casing

John Forbes

The Long Distance Viewer watching Indonesian performance on television confronts a flow of images which are characterised simultaneously by an excess and lack. The images are overdetermined by the conditions of reception, and underdetermined by the dispersal of an originary moment and of the context of production and local reception. The Long Distance Viewer, unlike Dr Mathews in John Forbes' poem, is not in a convenient position to follow-up, to check what she or he saw. The viewer searching for the 'insider point of view' has no direct access to the interpretative community upon which reception analysis depends. The field site, like the image, is dispersed. No longer the tent in the village, nor the TV room in the Jakarta suburbs, any follow-up will have to be a distanciated experience: on-line newspaper reviews from Jakarta, program notes in the television weekly, or comments from a dispersed community of Indonesians and Indonesianists on the internet. In the television age, few of us are like Dr Mathews. But as the speaker in the poem implies, we all share TV. We all share the postmodern experience of the Other: the serendipitous appearance of a documentary about primitive hunters sandwiched between something like *Funniest Home Videos* and *Getaway*, a popular travel program. Somehow, and just how is a question which is rarely asked, Dr Mathews' images are packaged for us, folding his world into our sets. We pass by, look on, zap in and out of the scene, more tourists than participant observers.

But the idea of lack and radical de-contextualisation is not the full story. The characterisation of 'lack' or distance is predicated on assumptions about the spatial fixity of culture and identity which are no longer tenable in the postmodern world. The nation state is no longer a site for coherence or for unitary identification and representation. Rather than thinking 'back' to Indonesia, Indonesia must be recognised in its multiple and dispersed representations. Indonesia is simultaneously global and local, a postmodern discursive construct, an imagined community no longer contained by territory. Indonesian performance will be consumed by the Long Distance Viewer in terms of the cultural practices which shape reception in the Viewer's community. There is nothing remarkable

about this, it is just the home game of reception as cultural practice played the same way as we have described the away game.

The unfixity of national/cultural identity is of course a mutual experience. Just as a thirty minute Japanese feature on a Toraja funeral unfixes Toraja cultural practices from Sulawesi (Yamashita 1994), so too the Long Distance Viewer's familiarity with his or her own culture is displaced. People everywhere today, though not in the same way, participate in and share the experience of cultural deterritorialisation and commodification intensified by globalisation. The colonial trope of going abroad in order to find oneself is no longer possible, for travel no longer sharply delineates the strangeness of the Other. There is no original cultural purity to be found. We go abroad (virtually) every day, and find the Other 'as modern, or as embedded in conditions of modernity, as we are' (Marcus 1994, 42). The older sureties of superiority, of technology make us strangers to ourselves. 'Our' television seems as strange as anywhere else. The sociologist Bryan Turner writes

> [w]ith globalization and the emergence of multicultural politics as a prominent dimension of all political systems, the sense of the strangeness of the outside world is difficult to sustain since the other has been, as it were, imported into all societies as a consequence of human mobility, migration and tourism (1994, 183).

Surprisingly, Turner has overlooked the media, which every night is responsible for importing images of the Other into our lives. Through globalised processes of media production, circulation and consumption, we find ourselves and others in new relationships of modernity. Is it possible that any sense of community or common predicament might develop from recognition of the Other in our televisual culture space? John Frow (1997) and Judith Adler (1989) have argued that 'seeing' the Other in travel is a historically determined cultural practice, and Caldarola has shown that audience interpretations derive from membership in various interpretive communities (Caldarola 1990).

How does this transform the nature of intellectual work, the conduct and orientation of research? Postmodernism upsets the certainties which shaped the cross-cultural epistemology of traditional ethnography. The dualisms which positioned the researcher and conditioned the desire to know the Other, today blur together. High culture and popular culture, the local and the global are interpenetrated. Original/dubbed, insider/outsider, coloniser/colonised, First World/Third World, centre/periphery are no longer theoretically adequate, as we are all caught up in cultural processes which occur in transcultural space. Our research must shift from these objectifying practices towards the exploration of the mutual experience of the maintenance, negotiation and construction of cultural identity in a globalised exchange system which simultaneously celebrates difference and promotes homogenization.

It is this experience of an unevenly shared condition of postmodernity which must be the foundation of intellectual work. Globalisation requires a new cultural reflexivity which focuses on a sense of shared predicament. Two perspectives which acknowledge the constructed character of televisual imagery and are suggestive in exploring the postmodern situation of performance are the experience of the body and postmodern tourism.

The American critic Bill Nichols (1994, Ch.4) has drawn attention to a genre of documentary films which departs from the traditional documentary desire to rationalise and explain the Other through scientistic, objectifying categorical knowledge, but relies instead on witness and the discovery of meaning in the historically situated body. A focus on embodied experience might be a productive interpretive frame for performance genres such as dance, trance and sport, and spectacles such as bullfighting (Morse 1983; Pink 1998), but is unlikely to be productive for civic ritual. While Nichols is persuasive in recommending that more attention needs to be given to the affective, visceral response to filmic representations of other cultures, the risks and gendered assumptions of his approach are troubling. One risk in advancing an interpretive paradigm based on the body is that it might return us to the objectification and eroticisation of the body of the Other characteristic of late nineteenth century ethnographic film (Rony 1996, 82). Second, although Nichols' aesthetic is suggestive in the way it connects with late twentieth century practices of fashioning identity in and through the body such as dieting, body piercing, cosmetic and transsexual surgery, it dehistoricises the body, and assumes that the body 'speaks' cross-culturally in an essentialist way, ignoring, for example, regional practices of masking the female body for a complex set of reasons (Turner, 1994, 190; Nagata, 1995; Marzuki, 2000).

Cultural tourism is a field of research and concepts which is highly reflexive and closely focused on issues such as visual pleasure, the pleasure of signs. Postmodern tourism recognises tourism as play, as spectacle, and not as a search for the authentic. Unlike conventional tourism which frames its objects through bus and hotel windows, guides, phrase books and named sites, postmodern tourism is an experience which frames the gaze for us through television and internet screens.

The value of understanding mediatized performance from a perspective of postmodern tourism is that it directs attention to the production and consumption of imagery as a mode of cultural participation and alternation between the local and the global. From this perspective of tourism as a new kind of patron, mediatised performance may be understood as commodity, regulated by the economics and ecology of transnational television. The implied audience is understood as a market, and Goffman's notion of interaction between performers and spectators is best analysed as a political and/or economic relationship rather than an auratic, symbolic relationship. The relationship between performers and their implied audience is not a given and must be investigated empirically. The commodification of performance: the production, circulation and consumption of performance may be investigated within a model of global economic relations articulated across domains such as tourism, publishing, World Music, fashion, and occasionally, education and the arts.

CONCLUSION

In a mediatized world, there are no innocent performers. Gary Larson's cartoon of natives hiding away their VCR, television set and telephone as a couple of anthropologists arrive is a wonderful comment on our mutual complicity in the ways and means of the culture market. Here then is the loop which takes us back to the Long Term Fieldworker and the politics of performance. In exploring *mediatised* performance, the Fieldworker observes live performances which are consciously produced for an imagined, distanciated

audience. These are performances in which performers and producers work to represent themselves and their situation to their (economic, political, cultural and/or academic) advantage. And if performers are rarely 'innocent' of the wider social, cultural and economic significance of processes of mediatization, those behind the camera are certainly not. The producer's understanding of the performance is not contained by the field experience. The production crew sees and produces their video through the filter of their own scholarly interests, and prior knowledge of performances gained through literature, ethnographic film, television and tourism. Both commercial and scholarly videos are made with one eye on the live action, and the other on how the video might be inserted into the exchange practices of national and transnational television. Our research needs to explore the way mediatized performance is taken into these economies and ecologies of exchange. To examine not only the site of production, but also how and why that site comes to figure in our discursive practices. What commercials, for example, frame the performance, and what commentary frames and constructs the flow of images for the international audience. No-one is outside the loop. Researchers, viewers, and performers are all participants in the production of culture in a way which refracts transnational and local cultural forms. But rather than assume processes of homogenization, sometimes called 'MacDonaldisation', as an outcome of integration in global media processes, our research should look instead at specific practices which articulate variously the integration, assimilation, and rejection of global and local cultural forms in a transnational context of interaction.

(Endnotes)

1 Good examples of the arrival scene as warrant for the authority and authenticity of analysis may be found in Victor Caldarola's dissertation on the reception of television in Kalimantan (1990, Ch 3), Karl Heider's discussion of Indonesian cinema (1991, 7-9), Andrew Painter's ethnography of Japanese television (1991, 11; 29), and in James Lull's interpretation of Chinese television (1991, Ch. 3).

2 Film and video are understood as technologies for projecting, broadcasting or screening images, and in that way are distinguished from (still) photography. Film and video will be used interchangeably for convenience sake. Television very often broadcasts programs shot on film.

3 George Marcus (1994, 38) and Howard Morphy (1994) echo Gregory's point.

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