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Worldliness in Out of the Way Places

Eric Gable

Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Mary Washington College

egable@umw.edu

Abstract

This paper looks at such youthful cosmopolitan aspirations among Manjaco of Guinea-Bissau and Lauje in Sulawesi. It is often argued that these attempts at worldliness reflect claims for equal rights of membership in an unequal global society. Yet, an aspiration to worldliness also entails their assertion that we are, or at least should be, like them. This paper suggests that Manjaco and Lauje might seem to want to look like us but they talk very differently about what they expect of us in a world we mutually make.

Keywords: youth, wordliness, cosmopolitanism, Manjaco (Guinea-Bissau), Lauje (Sulawesi).

Resumo

Este artigo analisa as aspirações cosmopolitas dos jovens entre os Manjaco da Guiné-Bissau e os Lauje de Sulawesi. É repetidamente argumentado que estas tentativas de mundanismo reflectem a reivindicação pela igualdade de direitos de participação numa sociedade desigual global. Contudo, uma aspiração de mundanidade implica a asserção de também a afirmação de que nós somos, ou pelo menos deveríamos ser, como eles. Este artigo sugere que os Manjaco e os Lauje podem querer ser como nós mas falam de forma diferente sobre o que esperam de nós no mundo que fazemos em conjunto.

Palavras-chave: juventude, mundanismo, cosmopolitanismo, Manjaco (Guiné-Bissau), Lauje (Sulawesi).

A question of cosmopolitanism

For a while now cosmopolitanism has been a hot topic in the humanities and social sciences because it is the cultural corollary to globalization. If globalization entails the unprecedented movement of people from the country to the city, from the Southern hemisphere to the Northern, and if globalization entails an equally profound migration of discourses and images, then we assume that the movement of people and of ideas entail new kinds of worldliness (Appadurai, 1996; Hannerz, 1996; Clifford, 1997; Breckenridge *et al.*, 2002; Appiah, 2005, 2006). We ask whether this new worldliness has a single moment and place of origin (the West, and in that peculiarly timeless present that began sometime in the late 19th century) or multiple origins and moments. We ask too, is this worldliness a good thing or not? Does it enable a disenfranchising cultural homogeneity – the kinds of frivolous conspicuous consumption one associates with the flaneur and also often especially with society's youth? Or does it engender new discourses of moral mutuality with the clarity to effectively expose the planet's big problems: war, poverty, disease, environmental degradation? In short, scholars want to interrogate whether the kinds of "planetary conviviality" (to borrow from Walter Mignolo, 2002) we associate with cosmopolitanism in the West have their analogues elsewhere. Above all they want to know whether we can learn something from these potentially alternative visions and voices as we attempt to fashion (to borrow from Appiah, 2006) an "ethics in the world of strangers".

In this essay I would like to sketch what anthropology contributes to this emerging transdisciplinary concern with the cosmopolitan subject. One contribution is to make central the kinds of subjects who used to lurk just outside the edges of our ethnographies. They are, for example, the ex-patriot Chinese entrepreneur, the Egyptian filmmaker, the Indian jetsetter, or the African flaneur. They are people in other places (Hong Kong, Cairo, Bombay, Dakar) but nevertheless situated similarly to us in sophistication, sharing, as it were, our subject position. As anthropology becomes more like cultural studies with an accent, these, at one time invisible, cosmopolitans become the protagonists in the stories we tell. When we study them, we study up or at least across.

Anthropology also contributes by transposing cosmopolitanism downwards. We grant a certain weary worldliness to those who were once *our* peasants, our tribes-people, or our villagers — those people we felt a moral responsibility to speak for because they were not yet of our world but were about to be. People we assumed could not speak for themselves we now re-inscribe in terms of their appraisal of what we used to imagine as our world, not theirs. Because they are on

the bottom or at the margins of the world, we look to them for local critiques of global inequities. They are made to act as our cultural Cassandras. Yet this tactic, I have argued elsewhere (Gable, 2006), tends to lead to an inadvertent evocation of the sociological binary that divides modern from not, West from Rest. It is a tactic that recognizes cosmopolitanism as a globalizing fact, but only to deploy that fact in what amounts to an enduring countermodern critique of the excesses of the West, of capitalism, of colonialism, of neoliberalism. The opposition *they* seem to speak about as we ventriloquize them is endlessly the same, and so easy for us to repeat.

Note too that such binaries come prepackaged as it were in a generational politics. We assume that the modern is young and the traditional old. So, just as it used to be that when we wanted to learn about *traditions*, or *customs*, we used to seek out an elder, now when we wish to understand the present, or the global we look to the youth to guide us. In this scheme, if there are cosmopolitans over there in what used to be the exotic lands of the Rest, then those cosmopolitans in the exotic elsewheres will be young and strangely familiar.

But can we think about these young cosmopolitans without replicating shop-worn binaries? Can we recover, out of their seeming similarity deeper and more theoretically productive differences? In what follows I would like to suggest that we can. I will do so by considering youthful cosmopolitan yearnings in two (and here I borrow from Clifford Geertz) "out of the way places" I came to know during back-to-back stints of fieldwork in the mid- through late 1980s fieldwork among Lauje swidden horticulturalists in highland Sulawesi, and fieldwork among Manjaco wet-rice farmers in Guinea-Bissau.

The problem of comparison

I am considering Manjaco and Lauje in tandem because anthropology often performs its magic by way of comparisons and also because my experiences with Manjaco were affected by my experiences with Lauje. What I think that I understand about Manjaco youth, for example, was influenced by what I cam to understand about Lauje young people. My *Africa* is therefore colored by my *Asia*.

When we pretend to be scientific those comparisons have to be apt or appropriate. West African to West African, say, or better yet, one coastal community in Guinea-Bissau to another. Our comparisons are best if the variables are limited. So, I must confess at the outset that it is hard to justify a comparison in that sense between Lauje and Manjaco. They inhabit, after all, parts of two very disparate continents. Their histories, ancient and recent, are widely different. Take but

two obvious differences that make them incomparable. One, war: the Manjaco I came to know had only recently experienced the cataclysm of the war of independence. Young Manjaco had come of age with revolution all around them. Its ideas could not have but affected their imaginations. By contrast Lauje had no recent experiences of abrupt and dramatic transformation as global collided with local. If the forces of the global visited them, affected them, these forces were felt as impersonal, or as we shall see, ecological perturbations. Two, education: Manjaco youth in the village I worked had all been to school, while few Lauje had. Many Manjaco had gone well beyond elementary education. They had travelled to do so, to the capital at least, but also to other countries; and in travelling they were replicating through the medium of the pedagogical what other older Manjaco had also experienced by way of labour migration. Manjaco were mobile — worldly in that simple and direct sense — and they had been for a very long time. Only one man in the village where I worked had never left the village; all the young people wanted to and most of those in the late teens or twenties already had. By contrast, not only had few Lauje been to even elementary schools, it was rare to meet a Lauje who had travelled more than a few dozen kilometres from the place they born.

Nevertheless, if the two societies differed in their histories in potentially crucial ways, they also shared a general immersion in the forces of globalization broadly conceived. Indeed, Manjaco I came to know stressed that they were inhabitants of a village in the middle of *the bush*, as they would constantly put it to me, in Guinea-Bissau, a country they asserted was far away from anywhere important and always on the verge of disintegrating. Manjaco were in a country, typical of other African countries, busily exporting its people: to work for others, to clean up the messes other people made. Lauje by contrast talked as if they were right at what they claimed was the world's centre, yet also, they stressed, in communities precariously peripheral to the nation that taxed them and infringed upon their habitat. Lauje harvested or gathered from the mountains at the earth's centre to plunge downstream for yet another brief foray into what, in this part of Sulawesi, Indonesia, the Lauje counted as a foreign enclave. So even Lauje, especially young Lauje saw that world via images in magazines, the sounds of radio, and most significantly through the world's traces in the nearby coastal entrepot to which young people especially often travelled to buy and sell at the marketplace.

When I first encountered Manjaco after two years living with Lauje, I felt a pervasive sense of disappointment about which I am a bit ashamed. If Lauje had been excitingly exotic, a people who served up the kinds of cultural differences

anthropology as a romantic's discipline craves, Manjaco were, at least to me, depressingly familiar. Moreover, when I was with Lauje I hardly noticed the youth. There, I knew young people; several became friends and confidantes. But what we shared confidences about were the doings of their parents. I treated them as a kind of conduit. They themselves were transparent. Manjaco youth, by contrast, clamoured for my attention. In a village depopulated by out-migration, they, or their remnant, (for in Manjaco all seemed to be about remnants) were always and obviously at the centre of things. And things, that is, the daily politics and practices of the community, not to mention the encounters I had with members of that community, were often as not antagonistic, confrontational.

The upshot was that when I have thought of Manjaco and Lauje I have tended over the years to focus on differences rather than similarities. For Lauje I assumed a sort of generational continuity; for Manjaco I expected generational difference. Among Lauje most of my closest friends and best (to use that somewhat tainted term) *informants* were young people. They were children or grandchildren of other Lauje. Some were recently married and had children of their own. It was with them — people my own age roughly — that I had my most productive conversations, even as I treated what they had to say as evidence of what *Lauje* generically thought. Among Manjaco too, I was mostly in the company of young people, though I was very attuned to conversations in which they disparaged or criticized their elders. Youth, with all its connotations of generational conflict, creativity, and change, I assumed existed as a useful analytical category for understanding Manjaco, not for studying Lauje.

Yet, when I now look at the photographs I took of Lauje and Manjaco young people I can not help but noticing how generically similar they are. The images of them convey day-to-day enactments of a desire for elsewhere. In both places youth routinely put on the styles of urbanity, playing at sophistication, worldliness. Note that at a glance that both Manjaco and Lauje aspirations to worldliness appear as instantiations of the all too familiar binary I sketched above. Youth, it would seem, everywhere and always, long to leave the country for the city (Berman, 1970; Ferguson, 1997, 1999). If they cannot actually go, they can always imagine, fantasize, fetishize (Hoggart, 1958; Hebdige, 1979). The fetish is the routine and ubiquitous reiteration of English words scratched or scrawled on every surface. It is the tie the Manjaco boy wears to go with the straw hat he made himself to fill up tedious days between dances where he and companions play the not quite latest tunes from Dakar or elsewhere in urban Africa. The fetish is the Adidas basketball shoes the Lauje boy wears for his wedding. It's the wristwatch the Lauje girl puts on for her portrait; the same watch her friend just

wore and her other friend will wear in a minute or two when it is her turn to get her picture taken. It is the eyeglasses that adorn the chalked figures of schoolboys the Manjaco draw.

We have routinely treated these acts as mimicry as embodiments of a desire to be like us. James Ferguson, for example, recently uses such everyday instances of stylistic appropriation to highlight the claims such locals make "for equal rights of membership in a spectacularly unequal global society" (2002: 565). A claim to *equal rights* as they have been defined in the West is one kind of moral mutuality. Yet, mimicry entails its obverse — their assertion that we are, or at least should be, like them. And it is in the obverse that the cultural particularity of the local reveals itself (Gable, 2002). In what follows I would like to consider that obverse, by arguing that while Manjaco and Lauje might look like us and at times alike in this shared aspiration, they talk very differently about what they expect of us in a world we mutually make. This, I will assert is what those two back-to-back fieldwork encounters taught me. But I learned this lesson only by starting to think of Manjaco youth as more of a piece with their elders, that is more like Lauje youth than I had initially assumed. And this, as I suggested above, may be because I visited Lauje first Manjaco second. Had the reverse been the case, perhaps I would have found or sought out much more in the way of ruptures and difference between Lauje youth and their elders. I will argue, however, that we can recover, out of their seeming similarity, deeper and more theoretically productive differences. Clearly that endeavour is a current concern among anthropologists who are looking at cosmopolitan youth in Africa's villages and cities today. By stressing generational continuity rather than rupture, we can escape older binaries where cosmopolitanism endlessly is contrasted to tradition as new is to old, youth is to elder. We can also use an anthropology of out-of-the-way places to contribute to the literature on the varieties of cosmopolitan moral mutuality. For, even though Manjaco and Lauje youth resemble each other in their desire for elsewheres, they participate in very different understandings of how to manage a world we mutually make.

Lauje

Fieldwork is often a guilt-provoking encounter because it entails cosmopolitan comparisons. This is the essence of the intersubjectivity of the ethnographic encounter. In the age of globalization such conversations can often feel so dreadfully predictable: endless guilt-provoking comparisons of what we have and what they have or do not have by contrast. Both Lauje and Manjaco were quick

to remark on my wealth and their poverty and to link these conditions as mutually constituting facts of life.

Lauje lived, so our young interlocutors believed, at the centre of the world. The rock outcrop that was the earth's navel stood in a narrow river valley not five hundred meters from the hut they built for us to inhabit. Because they lived at the earth's centre, Lauje were not surprised that my (then) spouse and I might want to visit. Our sojourn was a return of sorts. We were avatars of a long-lost ancestor, the *To Modoko*, or voracious child, who not only had a never satisfied appetite for food and other material goods, but the strength of will to produce prodigiously. This *younger sibling* had left the Lauje mountains long ago, but his progenitors had returned first as Dutch, and later as Indonesians to rule over them and to inhabit the *stone houses* of Tinombo — the entrepot on the coast.

In telling us such stories, Lauje did not begrudge us our wealth nor blame us for their poverty, although they did portray poverty as a superior kind of virtue. If the inhabitants of the stone houses down below had more, they also bought and sold even food, and therefore violated cosmological injunctions that what *land and water* gave to humans should be given in turn. Lauje in the mountains asserted to us that, they, by contrast, always gave food to anyone who asked or who visited. Indeed, they warned us that it was an obligation to receive such largesse lest we offend the *spirit of hearth and fire,* the domestic refraction of *Togu Ogo, Togu Petu* (Lord of Water, Lord of Land), and suffer the sin of *ampunan* — a sudden

slip along a treacherous trail, or a drowning in a flash flood while fording a steep banked stream. As long as we fulfilled that minimal obligation we were safe from sanctions that the land and water, not Lauje, enforced.

For Lauje this intimate injunction to share not sell was the basis for what we might call a kind of global consciousness. Lauje young people and elders alike looked at the landscape they inhabited and saw clear signs of decay and damage. Once thickly forested hills were now choked with spiky grass. Once fertile fields were now stripped of their crops by vermin, pigs rooting among the tubers, tearing down corn, trampling rice. It rained too much in one year, causing mud slides, stripping away the soil. In another year it rained too little, stunting and wilting anything they planted. In the 1980s they also recognize that such disasters were becoming more frequent, more violent, and more destructive. To hill Lauje this was evidence of a cosmology out of whack, they kept telling us, because their lowland cousins had failed to maintain ritual obligations to the spirits. Their telling of this story encompassed the history of colonialism and the postcolonial rise of state protected fundamentalist Islam. Lowlanders, especially the aristocratic ritual specialists, and increasingly those who no longer honoured local spirits but only Allah had begun selling rice and corn, and by extension had sold the essence of the land itself. As a result the lands began to harden and the forest to recede.

In blaming lowlanders kinsmen for failing to maintain cosmological balance, I should add, Lauje did not overlook what seemed so obvious to me: the years of interventions from elements of global political economy that led directly to this state of affairs. Global warming and *El Nino* for example. But also more directly, Indonesian laws decreeing that shifting cultivators stay put, remaining on one ridge rather than another. Or similarly, laws and practices, making Lauje into good Muslims, so that pigs which had once been a prized food were now polluting and untouchable pests. Indeed, when Lauje made such connections between global forces and local, they assimilated them into a cosmological idiom: the governments of the world, and the world religions were *Togu Ogo, Togu Petu's* agents.

Yet, because the villains in the Lauje story of destruction and decline were safely distant, it was easy to live with them. It was pleasant and exciting to be encouraged to participate in an enchanted mutuality in which the world's degradations could be blamed on a failure to keep up a relationship of recognition human beings had with nature in nature's various spiritual refractions. It was also easy to project into their enchanted sensibility an implicit critique of capitalism's corrosions, and to liken their allegiance to the Lord of Water, Lord of Land as local resistance to state sponsored Islam. Modern Muslims at the time accused

Lauje of polytheism, or worse of worshipping the devil, when they made offerings to *Lord of land and Water*. The more forward thinking, if less religiously fundamentalist members, of the government found such practices wasteful and backward. But the Indonesian governm'ent also recognized the potential importance of local customary practice and Islam too had a place in its worldview for *custom*. Lauje therefore had room to manoeuvre. It was also a pleasure to become their occasional allies against the state and against Islamic fundamentalism as when we were enlisted as experts in culture to argue for the centrality of the curing ceremonies centred around the Olongian and local folkways and customs. It made us giddy to be on their side. It thrilled us to be invited, if touristically, into a place they claimed was at the world's centre.

Perched on their mountain Lauje seemed to see the whole world from a vantage point we also shared. I loved the long uneventful hours spent sitting in their small huts on stilts, smoking, endlessly smoking cigarettes we'd roll from tobacco we each kept in a bag on the floor in front of our crossed legs so that anyone could reach for it. Someone would arrive unannounced. Still slick with sweat from a steep hike, he'd sit in silence close to the ladder, and look out the open doorway at distant ridgelines as if the last place he wanted to be was squatting in the corner of someone else's small house. He'd slowly roll his cigarette, or stub the ashes against his calloused toe, or spit through the gaps in the floorboards while invariably pretending nonchalance when the food was brought out — that meagre meal of taro with salt, or rice with a sliver or two of dried fish. I recall the host's quiet high-pitched pleading, "Eat, eat; don't be shy!" And then the slow

uncoiling as the guest finally sidled over to the food to accept the first hesitant mouthful.

Manjaco

Manjaco asserted a far more antagonistic mutuality. Rather than welcoming me as a returned avatar of a lost ancestor, Manjaco young people routinely confronted me as a contemporary agent of postcolonial inequities. Every day was an argument as I tried to collect the raw materials of ethnography. Could I tape-record this ceremony or take notes at that meeting? Why should they let me? What would they get out of the book I'd write and get rich on?

Manjaco, like Lauje, recognized and worried that they inhabited recently damaged or degraded lands. They pointed out once productive wet-rice fields now overgrown by scrub forest or given over to salt marsh. They told me that the *land* — which referred at once to nature and to the community occupying it — had *broken*. Drought, they emphasized, caused this, but they blamed ecological collapse on human agency. They noted that because of corruption among the kings and chiefs many fields which had once been the property of the kingdom had been usurped by selfish men who later left the country for the city — to pursue jobs as petty bureaucrats or to flee a vendetta — leaving those prized rice-fields, letting their dikes fall into disrepair. Or they blamed themselves, stressing that Manjaco youth selfishly seeking better paying work elsewhere meant that the stay-at-homes could no longer manage to maintain the labor-intensive system of dikes that kept the wet-rice fields intact and functioning. But they also blamed people like me for *breaking the land*. A group of young men once told me that the drought was the result of the work of European and American *scientists* who had used technologies to suck the rains from Africa and deposit it on fields in their countries. Or as an older man once remarked, the drought began when an *uasinyor*, or engineer from an American oil company, had dug a deep well in the forest just outside the village. In the world of moral mutuality that Manjaco imagined, they assimilated even drought into an interpersonal idiom: European and American scientists stealing rain from African fields.

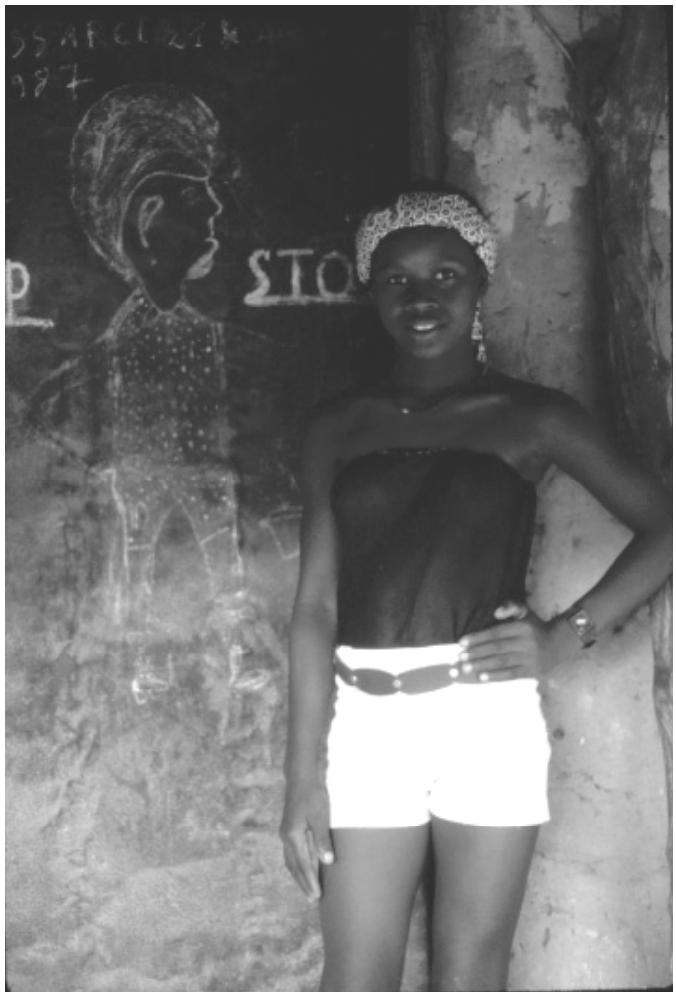
Such a view of moral mutuality made fieldwork among Manjaco far less pleasant than it had been in the Lauje mountains. But it also meant that Manjaco were as quick to criticize themselves as shadowy outsiders. Unlike Lauje, Manjaco did not merely lament the broken land they saw all around them. Land meant that nature out of whack: it no longer rained as much as it once had, the soil dried up and was less fertile. But more significantly they thought of a broken land as

a social problem: dikes fell into disuse because people stopped cooperating. For Manjaco, any social problem had potentially a social solution. Manjaco routinely assumed that they could manage, or at least should try to manage any catastrophe.

Thus, the year before I arrived, the Manjaco of Bassarel held their once in quarter century initiation ceremony (called a *kambatch*). When the men retired to the sacred forest — a period they asserted was their version of the national *Party Congress* — they discussed how to solve the problems they as a people were facing in the modern world. In the end it was decided that several *customs* which had outlived their usefulness or which were becoming socially destructive should be abolished. In effect, during the initiation ceremony, the men of Bassarel, prompted and guided by the more cosmopolitan younger members of their community, had almost totally rewritten customary law. In the ceremony of 1986 the men renegotiated *custom* with the spirit, and they likened this reformulation of custom to Bassarel's *Party Congress*. Just as Guinea-Bissau, the one-party state held periodic Congresses to rewrite laws in the people's interests, so did the Manjaco hold periodic initiation ceremonies.

Among the customs the men of Bassarel did away with, be-

cause they were thought to be causing more community strife than helping the community work together, was the requirement of groomservice before marriage. Before the *kambatch* of 1986, young men were required to work for several seasons plowing and harvesting the rice-fields of the parents of a wife-to-be picked for the man while she was still a child. During the period of groomservice the village youths also lived in a dormitory called the *baniu*. Because of emigration, for many years groomservice had been little more than a nostalgic ideal. Moreover, increasingly youths were simply eloping, daring spiritual retribution, and occasionally paying a heavy *washing* fine (called the *fine of the comb*) at the central shrine. After the *kambatch* of 1986, simple mutual consent became the new law and fines and ritual sanctions were done away with.



The men of Bassarel also abolished a women's divination cult in which officiants were ostensibly possessed by spirits who spoke through them to identify those people who were causing a woman to remain barren or who had killed her unborn or infant child. The cult was abolished because it was decided that it was impossible to know whether it was indeed the spirit speaking, or whether the women were simply using the spirit's *voice* to justify punishing and fining whoever they chose for their own selfish ends.

To have acted in such a dramatic way reveals the extent of Manjaco pragma-

tism, but also the extent of their political organization. When I asked them what they did in the sacred grove, they said simply, "we argued, we discussed, and then we agreed". Once, they had agreed the men all swore an oath at the shrine, promising to uphold the new rules on pain of death or injury by the spirit they called *The King of the Below*.

When I was in Bassarel I participated in the weekly meetings at the shrine of *The King of the Below* and saw how this arguments occurred and how they led to agreement. Life in a Manjaco village is a series of such meetings. People learn from a young age the art of quick tongued rhetoric and the practice of standing up in front of others and speaking one's mind against opponents. Of all the Manjaco I met it was the youth who impressed me most. Cosmopolitan in their aspirations — they wanted schooling, they craved their chance to try things out in distant big cities — they were also committed to making life in the village better. To do this the village youth had formed their *Development of Culture Club*, whose explicit purpose was to repair as best they could the broken land they inhabited. They organized village work parties, hiring themselves out at a purposely lower than going rate to harvest and plow the fields of the elders. They also planted a bean field on their own account, and then sold the harvest — again at a price considerably below the market rate — to the mothers of the village so that the women might have a cheap source of seedlings to plant in their own gardens and earn cash. The money the Club earned was spent for two things: parties (initially the club saved its earnings to buy a car battery to power a gramophone and recordings of the best pan-African dance tunes). They also bought schoolbooks, paper, and pens for the youths who were attending the village school or the Liceu in Canchungo.

Conclusions

By introducing you to Manjaco and Lauje cosmopolitans through the fieldwork encounter, I hoped to illuminate a few fairly obvious points about what an anthropology of out of the way places can offer to a current concern with worldliness. One point is that seemingly universal manifestations of a desire to be like us obscure the obverse. People also expect us to be like them. Manjaco and Lauje youth appear in photographic images to be equivalent in their aspirations, but they talk in very different ways about how they hope to transform the world and influence us to join us in this transformation. Their visions were not at all the same. The global, or how it is imagined, is inevitably the local writ large.

But I also wanted to intimate something closer to home, something closer to the practice of anthropology itself as a cosmopolitan encounter, but a far messier

encounter than the vernacular has it. In the western vernacular, cosmopolitanism, in contrast say, to localism, is not only the recognition of difference but also the celebration of difference. This is the planetary conviviality about which Mignolo speaks. In this vernacular no one was more cosmopolitan than the anthropologist, who visited the savage slot and who believed that, by preaching a kind of cultural relativism back home, he or she enacted and exemplified this cosmopolitan ideal.

Now that we are ashamed of the implicit and explicit paternalism such travel entailed we run the risk of running away from the savage slot in favour of more comforting cosmopolitan spaces, places where we obviously belong. Or we continue to mouth what are now mere platitudes. Our goal continues to be to "provincialize Europe" (Breckenridge *et al*., 2002: 6) for example, or to amplify the voices of "refugees, peoples of the diaspora, and migrants and exiles" (Breckenridge *et al*., 2002) not to mention gays, lesbians, and "people of colour." Yet if all we do with such voices is to assert that "cosmopolitanism is infinite ways of being" or that "cosmopolitanism is not a circle created by a culture diffused from a centre, but instead that centres are everywhere and circumferences nowhere" (Breckenridge *et al*., 2002: 12), we are on academic autopilot. We reproduce platitudes; we re-inscribe the same kind of Big Tent slogans that makes routine professions of the usefulness of diversity or multiculturalism so enervating to so many.

The fieldwork encounter is a cosmopolitan encounter, but not just because it confirms venerable truths (or truisms?) about cultural relativism and the need for tolerance, even acceptance. Rather it is because their assertions of moral mutuality force us to constantly scrutinize our subject positions. Some kinds of scrutiny are more painful than others. For example, Lauje have a lot critical to say about the world's problems and what to do with them. But Lauje's criticisms were comforting to me because they left open a space for me and people like me to occupy as their allies against a system for which we are only tangentially responsible. I could share the space of their verandas and shake my head along with them in faux solidarity at the world's problems. Manjaco, by contrast, forced me to ask what right we have to do what we do. For them, cosmopolitan belonging is not about mutual celebrations of multiple centres, but of the recognition of peripheries and why they persist. They live in the bush. We do not. They are cosmopolitan because they recognize the repercussions of that fact. By the same token, we are provincial if we fail to own up to our responsibility for their condition.

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