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Cosmopolitan Literacies, Social Networks, and "Proper Distance": Striving to Understand in a Global World

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Articles

Cosmopolitan Literacies, Social Networks, and "Proper Distance": Striving to Understand in a Global World

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ABSTRACT

How are identities as cosmopolitan citizens realized in practice, and how can dialogue be fostered across differences in culture, language, ideology, and geography? More particularly, how might young people be positioned to develop effective and ethical responses, in our digital age, to local and global concerns? Such are the questions we addressed in a design-based research project that linked young people around the world via a private social network. In effect, we studied cosmopolitanism "on the ground," as youth on the cusp of adulthood came to think and act reflexively about the opportunities, responsibilities, and challenges of intercultural, cross-geographic communication in a global, digital world. To analyze the conversations and creative artifacts exchanged by groups of youth in New York City and in India, we invoked the cosmopolitan construct of "proper distance," asking how participants gauged their relationship to their readers. We identified three stances that composers adopted in their efforts to communicate with and understand their audiences—proximal, reflexive, and reciprocal—and we demonstrated how such stances were manifested semiotically and relationally. This study contributes to a growing literature on the relationship of globalization to education and on cosmopolitanism as one response to this confluence. It demonstrates in empirical, interactional detail the complexity and challenge of learning to communicate, create, and understand across difference, as well as the potential of youth to engage those complexities ethically and to work at comprehending their subtleties. It further illuminates the centrality, for our youthful participants and their cosmopolitan project, of being able to compose in multiple and conjoined modes, and it reanimates the rhetorical construct of "audience" for digital and global times.

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In our research we explore a fundamental human capacity for living in a global world, and that is understanding and communicating across difference. More particularly, we are interested in how young people, coming of age at the frontlines of vast economic and social change, acquire and practice habits of mind and aesthetic and ethical imaginations as they envision and converse with others across geographic, cultural, and linguistic distance. There is much interest today in "global education," and there are many efforts afoot that begin to position young people to juxtapose local and global responsibilities and relationships (e.g., Balistreri et al., 2011; Mansilla & Jackson, 2011). But there have been to date few analyses of what constitutes these efforts on the ground, nor is it common to take as an empirical centerpiece the exploration of the ethical exigencies of communicating and participating in a digitally mediated world. In such a world, cultural flows of ideas, artifacts, texts, and images become our resources for meaning making and self-imagining across national, cultural, textual, and linguistic borders (Appadurai, 1996). This is our project—to examine how contemporary young people, who inhabit disparate life worlds, strive for and achieve a measure of mutual understanding.

We situate our work within recent scholarship on cosmopolitanism, as it has been reinvented to theorize our postcolonial, interconnected, and mediatized world. Explored variously as a "political philosophy, a moral theory, and a cultural disposition" (Rizvi, 2009, p. 253), cosmopolitanism provided our project a vantage point for conceptualizing and addressing the challenges and possibilities of communicating with diverse others across globalized transnational spaces, multimodal texts, and distant, heterogeneous, and interactive audiences. Our research linked young people from around the world, many of whom faced serious challenges in their everyday lives—poverty, domestic and gang violence, and racial, religious, caste, and gender-based discrimination. These young people were supported in grappling with the exigencies of their local situations while simultaneously imagining and engaging the geographically and culturally distant social worlds of others—and doing so via the exploration of the affordances and constraints of social media. Our design-based research project (Collins, Joseph, & Bielaczyc, 2004) thereby explored particular educational contexts and the mediational means through which cosmopolitanism might develop and flourish, and where young people might practice toleration and empathy by "reaching out across cultural differences through dialogue, aesthetic enjoyment, and respect" (Werbner, 2008, p. 2). We hope our work resonates with calls for "comparative, ethnographic, and multi-sited" research that begins to answer a crucial question at the heart of cosmopolitanism: "In what contexts do we more fully acknowledge and engage with the Other in her sameness and difference?" (Corpus Ong, 2009, p. 463).

A cosmopolitan orientation grounded in historical, social, and cultural contexts aligns well with the work of scholars in the New Literacy Studies

(e.g., Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Gee, 1996; Street, 2003), who theorize literacy as diverse, socially constructed meaning-making practices rooted in local contexts. Rather than autonomous skills that are universal and neutral, a sociocultural perspective on literacy posits that these practices are always multiple, situated, and ideological ways of using language and other symbol systems to communicate, construct meaning, and enact identities in varied social and cultural worlds. Relatedly, cosmopolitan practices are, in effect, socially situated linguistic and semiotic practices; dialogue, in fact, is the central metaphor that cosmopolitan theorists evoke to conjure the practice of achieving understanding across difference (e.g., Appiah, 2006). Yet, most theorizing about cosmopolitanism has occurred apart from an examination of people's situated language and literacy practices (cf. Delanty, 2012; Werbner, 2008), while most theorizing about literacy has not focused primarily on the ethical dimensions of symbolization. In our work we have attempted to join these bodies of scholarship, exploring the textual dimensions of cosmopolitanism and the ethical dimensions of literacy, by offering the term *cosmopolitan literacies*. This term foregrounds the rhetorical stances and ethical commitments involved in communicating across difference—the cognitive, emotional, ethical, and aesthetic meaning-making capacities and practices of authors and audiences as they take differently situated others into account. Such communicative exigencies are not new, but they have surely been significantly heightened in our digital and global age.

In this article, toward the end of joining theorizing about cosmopolitanism with theorizing about literacy, we put in conversation the rhetorical construct of "audience" and, as we explain in the next section, the cosmopolitan construct of "proper distance" (e.g., Silverstone, 2007). What it means to "consider one's audience" has long been theorized in classical and contemporary rhetoric, analyzed in empirical studies on cognitive development and the composing process, and translated for teachers and students in textbooks (Britton et al., 1975; Ede & Lunsford, 1984; Flower, 1979; Young, Becker, & Pike, 1970). Yet, most of this scholarship has been rooted in a typographic age and understandably did not anticipate the radical reconfiguration of writers' and readers' relations in the digital multimodal era. We are in the midst of profound transformations that require reconceptualizing the role of audience (e.g., Ede & Lunsford, 2009; Hull, Stornaiuolo, & Sterponi, 2013; Magnifico, 2010). The compositions of young people, and all of us, have a much wider reach than ever before in human history, conceivably addressing hundreds, even thousands of people, expanding not just numbers but diversities. These potentially larger, more heterogeneous, more distant audiences can write back and immediately so, magnifying and intensifying the already, always dialogical nature of the writer–reader relationship. Recent scholarship in contemporary rhetoric has begun to reimagine the construct of audience for a digital, global age (e.g., Fransman & Andrews, 2012; Porter, 2009; Prior et al.,

2007), exploring, for example, how the boundaries between text creators and interpreters have become increasingly blurred as audiences take up roles as critical participants in mediated interactions.

The particular dimension of shifting author/audience relations that we wish to explore is the intensified need for composers to envisage their viewers/readers—not merely for the purpose of persuading them, which became and remains the signature intent of classical and contemporary rhetoricians—but for the purpose of understanding and engaging them, which is the principal motivation for cosmopolitan-minded interlocutors. Readers' and writers' obligations and responsibilities to one another—to understand, to listen, to care, to create spaces for understanding to flourish—are intimately intertwined with their capacities to take one another into account, to imagine others in their difference and on their own terms. Such envisagement, as we will illustrate, is both gravely challenging as well as full of new potential when audiences are global, heterogeneous, and interactive. To explore what we consider to be ethical components of composing for an audience in a digital, global age, we introduce the cosmopolitan construct of "proper distance," a metaphor from the literature on cosmopolitanism for the practice of attempting to understand across difference and to relate to others compassionately and respectfully. We then offer a case study of young people in New York City and India who strived to compose for and communicate with each other via social media, asking what we can learn from their efforts about the process of imagining an audience and of achieving a measure of understanding across difference, of trying, to wit, to achieve "proper distance."

THEORIZING "PROPER DISTANCE"

A continuous thread that runs through variegated conceptions of cosmopolitanism is an orientation toward strangers termed "hospitality."[1] Here is Silverstone (2007), offering the requirements of cosmopolitanism for our new media age, including the social obligation of hospitality:

> The cosmopolitan individual embodies, in his or her person, a doubling of identity and identification; the cosmopolitan, as an ethic, embodies a commitment, indeed an obligation, to recognize not just the stranger as other, but the other in oneself. Cosmopolitanism implies and requires, therefore, both reflexivity and toleration. In political terms it demands justice and liberty. In social terms, hospitality. And in media terms it requires . . . an obligation to listen, an obligation which I will suggest is a version of hospitality. (p. 14)

Silverstone goes on to call for a conceptualization of media as a moral public sphere, arguing that images of strangers, mediated by television, computers, cell phones, and the like, largely constitute our understanding of others in the world, and absent shared physical spaces, they do so within

the realm of the imagination and the symbolic. Via symbolic engagements, he reminds us, we must cultivate "hospitable" readings of images of difference.[2] How such habits of mind might develop among youth—in particular, the forms they take in the course of online exchanges and interactions and their intersection with tools for and conceptions of composing for varied audiences—have been our major research interest in our international social networking project.

To explore literate practices of hospitality we draw on Silverstone's framing of "proper distance" (cf. Arendt, 1994; Bauman, 1993, 2000; Levinas, 1969), which he uses to complicate commonplace notions of the geography of the Internet that elide and confuse two kinds of distance, spatial and social. We tend to assume, because technology mediates the physical and material, that it simultaneously provides a social or psychical connection. Yet, Silverstone (2003) writes, "distance is not just a material, a geographical, or even a social category, but . . . a moral category" (p. 474). Thus, he proposes "proper distance" as "the capacity to enlarge one's perspective, and the willingness to recognize the other in her sameness and difference" (Silverstone, 2007, p. 119). Negotiating "proper distance" can thereby help to avoid being so far removed from other people that they seem beyond reach of care and compassion or so closely aligned that we refuse to accept difference and resist recognizing and valuing the stranger. In examining how people negotiate these "improper distances" through their representational practices, Chouliaraki (2011) highlights the asymmetries of power inherent in people's textual engagements that can serve to privilege particular voices over others if we are not attentive to the exigencies of the spatial relationships of mediation.

Developing a compatible concept, and also using a spatial metaphor, Hansen (2011) writes about "transforming our proximity" through learning to move both "closer and closer apart" and "further and further together" (p. 5). In his project to view teaching and learning through a cosmopolitan lens, Hansen observes that "today, as the world becomes smaller, and as human beings find it increasingly difficult to wall out external influences, teachers can advance an education that equips people not just to deal with these circumstances but to reconstruct their approach toward them" (p. 4). That is, we can come to perceive and understand differences, and at the same time, we can move further together as we engage in interaction: "Closer and closer apart, further and further together: the image frames teaching and education when viewed through a cosmopolitan prism" (p. 5).

The subtleties of Silverstone's and Hansen's formulations begin to suggest the challenges involved in achieving "proper distance" in our relationships and interactions with mediated others. It turns out that it is not so simple, this pursuit of a "grounded ethics" (Silverstone, 2003), in technologically mediated communication. Silverstone (2003), in fact, emphasizes that proper distance is not so much achieved once and for

all as it is continually enacted and dependent on the repeated exercise of judgment:

> We have to determine, perhaps case by case, what that proper distance is or might be when we are confronted with both familiar and novel appearances or representations of the other. And we have to understand, of course, that in such cases there is no prix fixe, no singular, and no permanent. Neither can proper distance, like everything else that is meaningful in social life, be taken for granted nor is it pregiven. It has to be worked for. It has to be produced. (pp. 475–476)

Chouliaraki (2006), whose analyses of the spectatorship of suffering invoke considerations of proper distance, likewise emphasizes the ambiguities and complexities involved in recognizing oneself in the other and the other in oneself. As Chouliaraki and Orgad (2011) note, "the moral imagination of otherness cannot but navigate a precarious territory" (p. 343), tacking between the discourse of "common humanity" and the discourse of "strangeness." They call attention to the importance of self-reflexivity in this enterprise, believing it in fact to be "a necessary condition for a cosmopolitan imagination" (p. 343).

Both Silverstone (2007) and Chouliaraki (2011) write about proper distance from the point of view of mass media; their theorizations have at their center an understanding of the productions and circulations of representations by journalists, editors, and the corporate world, and the reception of these by publics. While Silverstone (2007) ended *Media and Morality* with a treatise on media literacy as a civic activity, his formulations remain within a mass media, consumptive framework, and do not fully take into account the dramatic shift that is afoot, with the proliferation of digital tools, genres, and Internet connectivity, toward media production and authorship (cf. Brandt, 2009). Nor does such work anticipate how these shifts fundamentally alter author/audience and self/other relationships. Instead of imagining ourselves as "hosting" or "hearing" others who can never be in a position to offer hospitality or to speak, we can theorize more participatory, less infantalizing relationships among diverse peoples, east and west, north and south. We hope in our work to reimagine the constructs of Silverstone and like-minded theorists of cosmopolitanism in a new media age as we frame the creative, multimodal, transnational literacies of young people, for whom ethical issues related to representation—powerfully articulated by media theorists in regard to the interpretation of the images and messages of mass media—are now equally relevant.

There is much generative research being done now on how young people produce media and circulate it on the Internet (see, for example, Ito et al., 2008; Knobel & Lankshear, 2008; Lam & Rosario-Ramos, 2009; Lundby, 2008). However, this work has infrequently engaged the ethical realm, remaining a helpful and needed description of social practices related to everyday communication, learning, and youthful creativity,

especially in nonschool contexts. We have wanted to take into account both the potential ethical import of communication in a global age that is signaled via a cosmopolitan perspective, as well as its necessary comingling with literate processes and practices and authorial strategies, like considering one's audience. Such "cosmopolitan literacies" include dispositions and skills; ways of valuing and strategies for thinking; and moral positionings and sociocognitive, sociocultural practices for reading, writing, and communicating. As we shall see, it was the conceptualization, creation, circulation, and use of particular artifacts in service of the challenging goal of understanding across difference that enabled the young people in our project to strive intellectually, emotionally, aesthetically, and ethically and ultimately to learn and to grow in all of these dimensions. The most influential of the artifacts were digital movies by means of which youth represented themselves and others, to themselves and others, and which served as tools of reflexivity, mediating the process of developing a cosmopolitan imagination, as well as constituting its literate practice.

METHODS

This mixed-methods design-based research study (Collins et al., 2004) included the creation of a private social network called Space2Cre8 (S2C8);[3] the implementation of that network as a platform for communication and media sharing among youth in several countries; and research and theorization centering on adolescents' creative and literate practices as they communicated with one another. Over a period of 3 years (2008–2011) young people ages 12–18 from the United States, India, South Africa, and Norway shared multimodal compositions and engaged in conversations about their creative artifacts as they represented themselves and their worlds online to others whom they had not met face-to-face. Given that the project aimed to open up spaces for cross-cultural interaction, multimodal expression, and socially networked communication for young people who had previously not had access to powerful digital tools and practices, it was also an effort to promote what Couldry (2012) and Silverstone (2007) have termed *media justice*.

In this article we ask the following: (1) What cosmopolitan orientations did young people display and develop as they worked toward intercultural understanding? (2) How were these orientations manifested textually and semiotically? (3) What challenges did young people face in understanding themselves in relation to others as they attempted to achieve "proper distance"?

Context of the Study

Drawing from our larger data set, this article focuses on two groups of young people, a cohort of 13 young women (ages 15–18) from Lucknow,

India, and a group of 12 young men and women (ages 16–18) in New York City, United States. In India, the young women were students at the Prayas school, located in the capital city of Uttar Pradesh, which provided impoverished youth who lived in adjacent neighborhoods and worked to support their families in the morning the opportunity to attend school in the afternoon. Structured as an extracurricular class that met during afternoon school, the S2C8 program was informed by the school's focus on women's empowerment and critical pedagogy (see Hull, Stornaiuolo, & Sahni, 2010, for more details about the Prayas site). In New York (NY), the young people were participants in an after-school program called the Arts Collective; housed at an alternative high school in the Upper West Side of Manhattan, it focused on artistic practice with new media. All of the students who participated in this program commuted to Manhattan from outer boroughs or neighborhoods, and most had not been successful in previous schooling (see Stornaiuolo, 2012, for more details about the Arts Collective site).

In this article we focus on a period of intense exchange between the India and U.S. sites. As the project entered its final phase in 2011, the two teachers at these sites, Jake and Amit, attempted to prompt more sustained and serious dialogue among students on the network than had occurred previously (see Stornaiuolo, 2012, for details of the teachers' efforts). This renewed attempt to connect the young people in the two sites was catalyzed by a visit from the Prayas school director to NY, during which she showed the Arts Collective students a video documentary by the Prayas students. The director described how the young women in India had formed an activist group called Jaagriti and had made a documentary about their efforts to halt domestic violence against women in their community. When she showed this film to the Arts Collective students, she asked whether they had experienced anything similar, and upon hearing about the way that violence affected their NY communities, she challenged the young people to take action, as the Prayas students had. We examine the response of the NY students to this call to action and the subsequent sequence of events that unfolded in response to the Jaagriti film and the Prayas director's visit. As we shall see, the Prayas and Arts Collective students attempted to facilitate mutual understanding about their communities, their films, and their everyday lives in multiple ways during this period of exchange—efforts, in essence, to negotiate proper distance in relation to their audience.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected via mixed methods. Online, student participation on S2C8 was captured via a custom analytics program built into the network, which allowed the collection of all content that participants posted online (e.g., videos, blogs, messages) as well as tracked the frequency and scope of students' online participation (e.g., number of artifact views,

log-in patterns, friend networks). Additionally, we collected ethnographic data on youth's practices offline in their once or twice weekly meetings at each program site, where students worked individually and collaboratively on digital projects and engaged in a curriculum centered on mediatized representations in a global world and the rights and responsibilities of digital authors and viewers. Ethnographic data included field notes and audio and video recordings of the classes at both school sites (with translations of Hindi provided by Prayas staff); formal and informal individual interviews; and the collection of all materials used for projects (e.g., storyboards, drafts, drawings, etc.).

Our analytic approach involved triangulating multiple data sources and engaging in several types of analysis. For all online interactions, we created various data matrices (Miles & Huberman, 1994) to illuminate participation patterns across youth and across time. To analyze youth's digital projects, we experimented with different data representations (Baldry & Thibault, 2006; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Miles & Huberman, 1994), but found particularly helpful Halverson's (2010) method of representing filmic texts via the analytic unit of the *phase*, which groups together a semiotically cohesive sequence of shots, as we engaged in multimodal analysis (Hull & Nelson, 2005). We analyzed these participation and multimodal records as well as the ethnographic data by means of the qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti, engaging in multiple rounds of open-ended and thematic coding (Saldaña, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) as we endeavored to understand how our participants traversed multiple semiotic systems and engaged with interlocutors distant from themselves. As we detail below, we identified several significant patterns in how composers took their audiences into account, building on our efforts to identify audience-sensitive textual strategies in creating hospitable texts (Hull et al., 2013). Specifically, we found that authors took up three primary rhetorical stances (cf. Booth, 1963) in negotiating proper distance relative to their unfamiliar interlocutors, balancing the needs of their imagined audiences with their own communicative purposes and desires. As we extend and indeed "re-mediate" the notion of *rhetorical stance* for a digital age (cf. Prior et al., 2007), we seek to highlight the ethical dimensions of author and audience roles, exploring how young people in the study located themselves in relation to both imagined and interactive others through their digitally mediated semiotic practices.

NEGOTIATING PROPER DISTANCE: CREATING SPACES FOR UNDERSTANDING

We have focused this article on interactions between S2C8 members in the Lucknow and NY sites because their ongoing exchanges on the social network constituted an extended example of how young people negotiated

proper distance within the study and the profound challenges this enterprise presented. Beginning with the Prayas director's visit to NY in April 2011 and continuing for 4 months, students at both sites made intensive efforts to communicate with each other about their everyday realities via discussions, journals, poems, videotaped commentary and questions, blogs, private messages, and videos. We see these efforts to communicate as cosmopolitan in nature, growing from a desire to listen carefully to fellow S2C8 members, to display care, and to engage in dialogue. These cosmopolitan efforts were at heart literate practices, ones that took advantage of multiple semiotic modes for communicating about the everyday, the local, while also drawing connections between those local realities, and situating them in the world more broadly. Part of an ongoing process, produced and negotiated anew in each engagement, these cosmopolitan literacies were efforts to understand one another *in relation to* each other—to locate, reflect, represent, and engage self/world/other. In short, these were efforts to create proper distance.

One of the first moves in this intercultural exchange was the creation of a response film to the Jaagriti documentary about domestic violence. As the Arts Collective students spoke with the Prayas director during her visit, they began collectively imagining how to answer her questions about how they dealt with violence and struggle in their own lives and communities in NY, brainstorming and storyboarding a response video called "Deep in the Shallows," a 6-minute video that addressed the issue of violence through an examination of gang life. One of the students, 18-year-old Emilio, described this process of creating their video in response to the Indian film:

> [The Prayas director] showed the video of [the Prayas students] that they had created about domestic violence that they go through with their fathers and all that. And she asked us what kind of problems do we have here. So, we decided to tell her everything, like all the problems that we face growing up in New York. We told her about poverty, gang relations, we just told her about a bunch of stuff and that we also have domestic problems. We then, that same day we brainstormed and we made this awesome video and it goes by "Deep in the Shallows." Which, I mean, somebody happened to be forced into gang life. So we made that video, trying to like show them like that it's not like—we have problems too. So, we was just trying to express ourselves. (July 28, 2011 Interview)

Featuring silent action set to music, the film told the story of one young man being 'jumped' into a gang and his conflicted emotions about it. As Emilio described, the video both represented students' collective effort to express themselves and a response to the Indian students' film, a joint imagining of their own problems in relation to those described by their Indian counterparts. Fellow student Luisa highlighted how the intended audience shaped their composing process when she noted that through the "Deep in the Shallows" video, "we get to show them that we struggle. . . . And there's a lot of struggle. Like everybody struggles but different ways, in

different places" (July 28, 2011 Interview). Both Luisa and Emilio described their efforts to communicate with the Prayas students as an attempt to locate themselves in particular circumstances ("in different places") and to imagine where they stood in relation to the girls in Lucknow ("in different ways"; "we also have domestic problems"). By making a film that situated them in the NY context, the Arts Collective students used digital technologies to locate themselves in relation to others in mediated space, an act of "proximity work" (Stornaiuolo et al., 2013) designed to forge a common bond and create shared context—to bring them closer and closer apart.

An important dimension of these efforts to negotiate proper distance, to bring the two groups of young people helpfully closer, was the use of digital media for representing their worlds via multiple semiotic modes, all in an effort to increase understanding. Most notable were the uses of music to drive the narrative and video to depict the local context. The NY students spent considerable time debating how to communicate their story by weaving meaningful symbols throughout that would be both personally relevant and rhetorically rich for their Indian audience. To that end, students suggested that particular representational elements be included to illustrate those dual goals:

> [Santiago] explains that because we are showing [the film] to the Indian kids, maybe at the end we can show students etc. who have died from gangs, that we can put at the end with the credits, so that we can show it really happens. Everyone really likes that idea, and [Emilio and Nina] say they want it to be personal, so that we can show an RIP [rest in peace] of all the people they know who have been hurt because of gang violence. (April 11, 2011 Field note)

Collaboratively students made design decisions, simultaneously taking into account how to represent a locally situated and a globally relevant story, and using multiple modes to convey various personal and transcultural meanings. For example, in the final RIP scene described above, blue and red letters spelling out RIP appeared in the screen of an old-fashioned television set (itself a meaningful symbol throughout the film), followed by handwritten names in many colors superimposed over the whole previous image (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. Screenshots of the RIP Scene From the "Deep in the Shallows" Video.

To make these design choices as clear as possible to their audience, the NY students wrote a viewing guide to accompany the film. This viewing guide explained how the RIP memorial section of the video had been designed: "The RIP (rest in peace) that appears on the screen is a shout-out for all of our friends that have been killed as a result of gang violence. We wrote some of their names down as tribute to them, and these names can't be contained on the TV screen because their deaths are too real for TV." The NY students hoped that this explanation would help the Prayas viewers understand the personal meanings of the handwritten names as well as the symbolism of the names being superimposed over the image of the television rather than contained within it. Thus, the viewing guide was intended to contextualize those rhetorical decisions for their audience and help the Prayas students understand the different textual and symbolic elements (e.g., RIP, the names of loved ones killed, the positioning of the names, the handwritten image of the names). These efforts of young people to represent themselves to others, to employ a multiplicity of semiotic tools sensitive to the meaning-making context, was part of negotiating proper distance; that is, by representing their experiences with gang violence so that those experiences could be read by their Prayas interlocutors as meaningful, the Arts Collective students worked to create an "open text" that was welcoming to others (Hull et al., 2013). In this way, the Arts Collective students engaged in aesthetic, creative, productive activity—what we might call audience-alert literate arts—to represent their world in relation to the Prayas context and to bring the two worlds closer together.

While these literate, creative endeavors by the NY students were important to the ongoing process of negotiating proper distance, the students were hampered by their assumptions about their counterparts in India and their difficulty in imagining beyond their mediated understandings of the Indian context. They wanted the Prayas students to view and understand their film, but they assumed that they themselves had understood the Jaagriti documentary transparently and with little effort. As a result, although they tried to take the Prayas students' experiences into account when making their response film, the Arts Collective students remained rooted in self- and place-oriented textualities that made it hard to see beyond their own experiences and imagine the Indian students on their own terms. For example, Vince thought that he understood the violence facing young women in India because he had experienced living in a "third world" context himself: "Since we come from the third world, like I come from the Dominican Republic, . . . I experienced that, so therefore I'm able to understand how, I'm able to understand the similarities" (July 28, 2011 Interview). He, like his classmates, reasoned from his own past experiences to constitute his understanding of the young women's lives, not taking into account the profound poverty and systemic, gendered oppression that the young women described as particular to their everyday realities in Lucknow. These challenges in achieving proper distance highlight

asymmetries around what Silverstone (2007) would call "polarities of interpretation," as students negotiated positionality in ideologically fraught contexts. That is, students in the West made assumptions about the transparency of the problems and everyday realities of students living in the "third world."

Evincing a parallel struggle, the young women at the Prayas site found it difficult to understand why young people in NY would choose to participate in what they viewed as self-destructive lifestyles. The Lucknow students wrote journals and sent video messages responding to the NY film, saying, for example, "We were so surprised to learn how easy it is to be killed and how common abuse is." They asked questions like, "We created [an activist group] to fight our social problems; why don't you form [such a group] to fight your own problems?" One young woman, Saravati, pondered why students did not take action, writing in her journal:

> What I think about these people is that they have more problems than us. They have this gang problem and due to which girls and boys are ill-treating each other. Some join the gang due to their own desires as they do not know what is right and what is wrong. They have got a lot of independence. If they want they can finish this. [Translated from Hindi]

Similar to Vince, Saravati used her own local, historically situated interpretive framework to try to make sense of a video from a very different world. For her, participating in gangs and being surrounded by violence were choices ("If they want they can finish this"). She thus ascribed students' actions to a lack of knowledge or, more damningly, a moral failing. She could not imagine another explanation for why students would be affiliated with gangs, even though the video offered a detailed counternarrative to the one she constructed. Not surprisingly, the students in NY, reading the Prayas girls' journal entries and viewing other artifacts created in response, felt unheard: "After reviewing the material sent by the India girls, the NY students felt that the girls had not fully understood what they were trying to convey" (Jake, July 21, 2011 Teacher Memo). Thus, both the students in NY and those in Lucknow were struggling to find the "imaginative mobility" (Chouliaraki, 2011, p. 375) to conceive of "these people," as Saravati put it, in their own terms and with their own humanity.

We might say, then, that both groups of young people suffered the conceptual and relational effects of improper distance, which Chouliaraki (2011, p. 364) describes as a "failure of communication" tied to textualities not sufficiently rooted in an understanding of others on their own terms, as historical agents who, despite structures of injustice, actively strive to manage their own lives. Certainly, from this perspective, the young people in the Prayas and Arts Collective sites, despite efforts to bring one another closer through their literate practices of journaling and movie-making, remained rooted within self- and place-oriented frameworks that drew on

their own lives as templates for their interpretive efforts, not imagining others in their own terms—a "failure of communication." However, we maintain that these attempts to negotiate positionality relative to one another were crucial for the development of cosmopolitan dispositions and, rather than being failures, comprised an integral part of the process of negotiating proper distance.

If proper distance is not necessarily achieved as much as produced and negotiated, attempts to locate oneself in relation to others, understandably using personally and culturally rooted frames of reference for making meaning, are a necessary part of the process of determining what distance will afford understanding. The efforts by the NY and Lucknow students opened the conversational door and required them to examine not just each other's beliefs and actions, but their own principles and practices in new ways. In other words, we found that the struggle for proper distance proved crucial in the development of cosmopolitan literacies. Indeed, through the struggle—figuring out how to imagine oneself in relation to others and the world—some students shifted their dispositions, understandings, and rhetorical skills as they realized, sometimes just for a brief moment, a productive distance from which to understand themselves and one another.

In our analysis we identified three stances that composers took up as they negotiated proper distance with and for their global audiences, positions that emerged, blended, and shifted as youth gauged what their audiences needed in order to understand. These stances—which we call proximal, reflexive, and reciprocal—were part of the literate toolkit students developed over time, a strategic repertoire of cosmopolitan literate practices for reading, writing, and communicating with and for diverse others. The youth's efforts to position themselves relative to others afforded us a useful reimagining of the concept of the "rhetorical stance," which Booth (1963) originally described as the "proper balance among the three elements at work in any communicative effort—the available arguments about the subject itself, the interests and peculiarities of the audience, and the voice, the implied character, of the speaker" (p. 141). In negotiating their positions relative to their participatory audiences, the young people in our study engaged in balancing their own voices and the needs of different audiences in light of the rhetorical purpose of seeking understanding—an ethically turned composing context required of digitally mediated communication. While these rhetorical stances rarely occurred alone, more often appearing in interwoven ways throughout the composing process, we found it analytically useful to separate them to probe how these three stances represented different ways of balancing the needs of oneself and others while remaining sensitive to the communicative context and one's rhetorical purposes. In the next section, we discuss each stance in turn by examining one youth-created video artifact in detail. We focus on NY student Emilio's video response to the interpretive

challenges faced by the Prayas and Arts Collective students, demonstrating how he enacted cosmopolitan habits of mind across the three stances, as he explored where he stood in relation to others reflectively and multimodally, imagining himself in others and others in himself (Silverstone, 2007).

The artifact we analyzed is a 3.5-minute film that Emilio transmediated from a poem he wrote in response to the young women in India.[5] In his "Space-Time" video, Emilio literally flew through space, through NY and India, and through the Arts Collective and Prayas student films, while pondering via a voice-over narration how he could "see" the two groups in relation to one another. As we suggest through our analysis, this artifact represented Emilio's symbolic movement into others' worlds, his effort to consider them in relation to himself by highlighting the "simultaneous coexistence of online voices, wherein the voices of distant others unfold, develop and intersect with our own" (Chouliaraki, 2011, p. 376). In doing so, he employed the textual art of the remix, a quintessential postmodern literacy practice that is well suited, we would argue, for negotiating proper distance. This aesthetic and structural choice was powerfully coupled with Emilio's reflexive stance about the challenge of communicating in a global world. Indeed, we would argue that it was the intertwining of the aesthetic, the reflective, and the ethical that engendered cosmopolitan sensibilities and textual practices.

A Proximal Stance: Locating Self in Relation to Others

The first rhetorical stance we identified, a proximal one, featured prominently in our data set as young people sought to locate themselves in space and time relative to others. This spatial act involved the use of mediated technologies to negotiate both physical and psychosocial connections (Leander, Phillips, & Taylor, 2010). As contexts become increasingly unstable and unmoored in digitally mediated communication (boyd, 2011), interlocutors who don't share physical proximity and can't generally depend on embodied cues must co-create contexts through their semiotic work, building referentiality and positionality into their interactions (Haas & Takayoshi, 2011). We have referred to such efforts to name and manage relationships to others in digitally mediated space as "proximity work" (Stornaiuolo et al., 2013), which can serve to build connections or create boundaries between interlocutors as they jointly position themselves and others through their semiotic efforts. In the previous section, we described how young people in the Arts Collective site enacted proximal stances in choosing particular locations in NY for their "Deep in the Shallows" film (e.g., the Brooklyn Bridge) that they hoped would serve a contextualizing function for their audience. In this section we focus on Emilio's proximity work in the first three phases of his video (Halverson, 2010), wherein he

FIGURE 2. First Phase of SpaceTime Video.

literally and figuratively inserted himself—via image, word, movement, and intertextual sampling—within S2C8's shared community of texts to perform hospitable readings of those texts, their authors, and their worlds.

In the opening phase of the video (0:00–0:17), viewers see a space station from a 1950s-style sci-fi television show as the camera zooms from the outside of the space station to the inside, accompanied by sound effects of beeping and whooshing as purple-haired, silver-suited women check monitors and move about the space station (see Figure 2). Emilio sampled this footage from a video made by Jackson, the California S2C8 teacher, who had previously sampled it from a British television series to create a comedic video that came to be quite popular among the NY students. Emilio himself is not "located" physically in this scene, though he is referred to in subtitles as the space crew checks the monitors for a message from "El Emilio."

In the second phase of the video (0:18–1:08), Emilio can be seen in the monitors as the camera pushes in to reveal him flying through space, through New York City, across the ocean, through India, and back up into space (see Figure 3). Using green screen technology, Emilio grafted his body into each of these scenes, rotating his positioning so that he appears to peer down as he travels, making his way through different movie excerpts from the "Deep in the Shallows" and "Jaagriti" films.[4] A general audience might view this sequence as Emilio's literal journey from space as he visits NY and India (indicated to viewers by iconic images of each location: the Brooklyn Bridge and a street in upper Manhattan for NY and the Taj Mahal and India Gate for India). But for a particular local audience, his journey is situated within a set of ongoing conversations, its meaning evident to the inside members of the S2C8 community who would all recognize a number of the most important scenes from community movies they had viewed or created, and who would know immediately that Emilio is on a historical journey through time (e.g., through past movies from the group) and space (e.g., different localities of the S2C8 community). In this way, the space and time themes functioned on both metaphoric and literal levels, and they were suited to multiple audiences. Throughout this phase, the only sound that we hear is instrumental music that reinforces the visual movement of

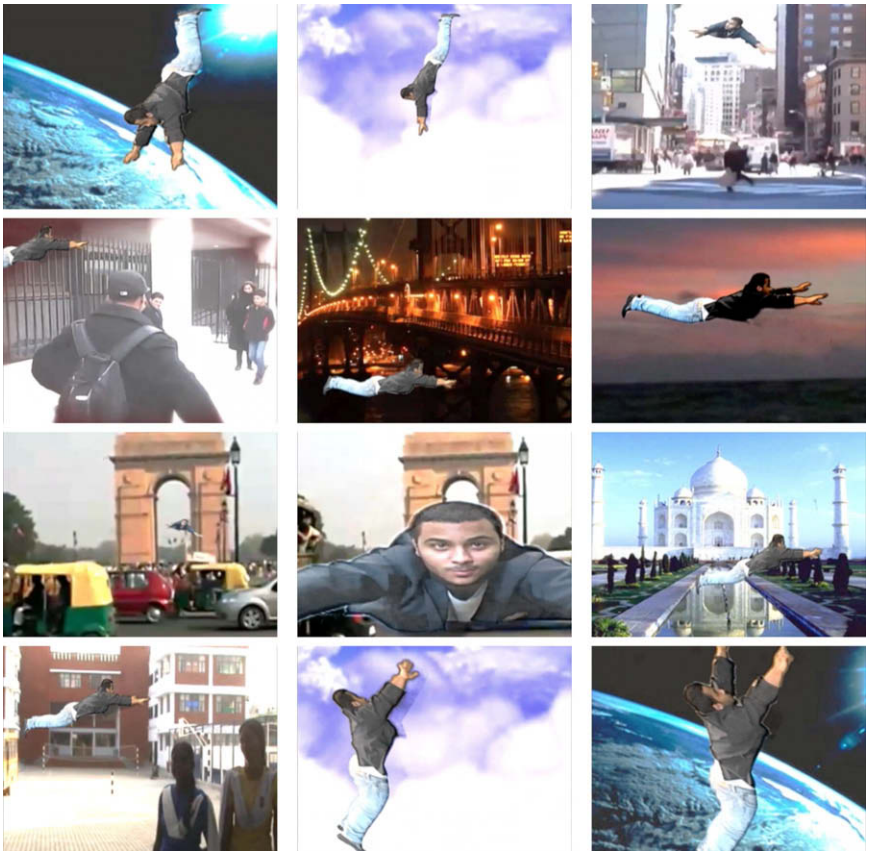

FIGURE 3. Second Phase of SpaceTime Video.

Emilio through space by virtue of its repeating long notes, connecting the scenes of space, the earth's atmosphere, the clouds, and the movie scenes as part of one journey.

The movie's third phase (1:09–1:36) locates viewers again inside the space station awaiting an important message from El Emilio reporting back from his journey (see Figure 4). As with the opening scene, Emilio is not physically present in the space station, but an incoming message on the monitor reveals a black-and-white image of Emilio seated at a table, his arms stretched before him. The same music as before plays, connecting this phase and the last but building in intensity as the camera zooms in on the monitor that will reveal Emilio's message.

These three phases work in conjunction, the two space station phases essentially "framing" Emilio's sojourn through NY and Lucknow and their respective films. This positioning of the expedition phase between the others foregrounds the importance of his journey as he was dispatched

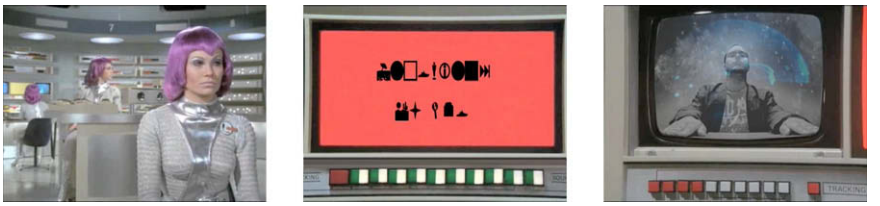

FIGURE 4. Third Phase of SpaceTime Video.

from space and reported back on his investigation into two cultures. His inquiry into the different cultures centered around learning more about both the Prayas and Arts Collective participants, as he literally tried to "see" both groups for himself: "I used the green screen to fly in our world and also India's world . . . because, I just want people to understand each other" (July 28, 2011 Interview). This rhetorical purpose—fostering understanding—fundamentally shaped how he positioned himself in the mediated space of his video. He located his body in the air of the videos, peering down on himself and his colleagues to generate new understandings for himself and others through his new vantage point. His body functioned as the connective device, linking the different worlds together. In taking up a proximal stance, Emilio balanced his own perspective with those of his classmates in India and NY (his immediate audience), while addressing his communicative purpose of fostering understanding.

He took up this proximal stance to strike the "proper distance" between himself and his audience, both physically through his mediated body and metaphorically by virtue of his sensitive representational practices. He imagined his Indian counterparts as active agents by sampling their own images and narratives and thereby letting them represent their worlds. In other words, he let their own words and images populate his movie, endeavoring to imagine others' realities in their own terms. The question of how we represent our own and others' stories is primarily an ethical issue, one at the heart of "how we can behave responsibly in our dealings with mediated others" (Silverstone, 2003, p. 488). Chouliaraki (2011) suggests that respectful textual acts "[bring] the voices of distant others in the same space-time as ours and [allow] them to be heard side by side with our stories" (p. 375). Emilio, in remixing the stories of his S2C8 peers, brought those stories into the same contextual moment, side by side, for the purposes of creating an encompassing narrative that honored those stories and voices. He engaged in this sensitive representational practice by situating himself in relation to his audience both literally and figuratively. Literally, he superimposed himself into the video, his body circulating through various community artifacts. Metaphorically, he engaged in imaginative mobility, which Chouliaraki (2011) describes as a stance in which one envisages others within their own humanity. We would add that imaginative

mobility necessarily involves this kind of proximity work, in which others are always imagined *in relation to* oneself.

This powerful example of how one student located himself, physically and metaphorically, in the ongoing Prayas–Arts Collective dialogue also serves as an example of how the proximal stance is a fundamentally spatial one. Through his semiotic efforts, Emilio helped to create shared contexts for both the NY and Lucknow participants to see themselves in relationship to one another. The proximity work involved not just the technical dimensions of inserting his mediated body into and across different filmic worlds via green screen technology, but the imaginative mobility of locating himself in relation to others. Thus, we see Emilio's symbolic embodiment of an imaginative mobility as a powerful instance of a cosmopolitan literacy practice, as he deployed semiotic tools to position himself at the interface of both the global and the local (Pahl & Rowsell, 2006) and in so doing enacted an open disposition of inquiry characteristic of cosmopolitanism.

A Reflexive Stance: Considering Self in Relation to Others

The second rhetorical stance that we consider in more detail is a reflexive one, in which authors adopt a critical and reflective perspective as they theorize their actions. While locating oneself in relation to others (a proximal stance) is an important way of mediating the distance between interlocutors, a reflexive stance allows practitioners to theorize their practices, taking one's own and others' shifting and transforming positionality into account. Part of this rhetorical move is assuming the best possible motives for one's interlocutors, giving them the benefit of the doubt and remaining open to further dialogue. One powerful element of Emilio's video is the reflexive stance that he adopts throughout, offering his meta-commentary about the India–U.S. exchange process and why it seemed so fraught with difficulty. During the opening three phases of the video just discussed, Emilio embodied a reflective position, flying through his S2C8 classmates' mediated worlds to consider their particular contexts. This kind of deliberative, reflective orientation is a fundamental dimension of negotiating proper distance. Yet Hansen (2011, p. 104) points out that we cultivate an awareness of our worlds not only by observing but also by moving beyond consumerist, spectator-like, or acquisition-focused actions to participatory inquiry. While we can perhaps interpret the first part of Emilio's journey as a kind of participatory inquiry that moves beyond observation, the next part of the video, in which Emilio turns the lens both inward toward himself and outward toward his classmates and the world, deepens and extends its reflexive dimension.

The fourth phase of the video (1:37–2:28), which consists of the message that "El Emilio" sends to the space station, is complex, layering the same instrumental music with voiceover narration across 12 primary kinds of

FIGURE 5. Opening Sequence of Fourth Phase of SpaceTime Video.

camera shots (see Figure 5 for the first three frames). The first image to appear on screen includes four side-by-side representations of Emilio, all identical except that he is dressed in four differently colored shirts and shadowed by four correspondingly colored auras. This scene evokes a trope of many space-themed cartoons, the space council, who presides over the space court from atop an old-fashioned television (an image recontextualized from the "Deep in the Shallows" video). In the next screen El Emilio appears facing the camera as he careens through a yellow space-time wormhole, presumably seeking enlightenment on his continuing journey. The video next cuts back to a close-up of the yellow-colored space council member, who recites part of a pronouncement, which in fact is part of Emilio's poem. There are four such cycles, all beginning with the full space council and then cutting back and forth between Emilio hurtling through a yellow, blue, gray, or red tunnel and a corresponding yellow-, blue-, gray-, or red-colored council member reciting part of the poem.

As the council members each intone consecutive lines from Emilio's poem, they invoke the omniscient viewpoint characteristic of a space council. This compositional move gives the poem a gravitas that helps situate it slightly apart from the rest of the film as a meta-narrative about the very process we just watched El Emilio undertake. The poem reads:

Words can travel across oceans, but emotions cannot,
Emotions are meant to be felt and seen with the human heart and eyes,
Words are just words, they mean nothing without the companionship of expressive action.
There are two worlds, yearning to know one another,
Compelled to close the great distance between them.
But how can we visualize, the seeds that rooted our struggle,
Without knowing the soil where they have been planted.
Through time our leaves will change and fall,
As the springtime comes, our leaves will sprout a new dawning era,
That will fill others with the fruit of compassion and understanding.

The poem represents Emilio's hope for the Prayas and Arts Collective sites to come to understand one another but contemplates the difficulty of that process because, as he asserts, words alone, absent emotions and actions,

lack communicative power. His meditation about how the two worlds can visualize one another and see "the seeds that rooted our struggle" is made more poignant by virtue of his own attempts earlier in the video to do exactly that: to use mediated communication to help "close the distance" between two worlds and "see" in new ways. His symbolic journey at the beginning of the video seems to represent the hope of a "new dawning era" in which people will be able to see one another through the lens of "compassion and understanding."

Emilio's poem is at core a cosmopolitan gesture, at once a reaching-out to others and a reflection on the difficulties and hope that inform this act. But what makes this part of the video a particularly powerful example of a young author taking a reflexive stance is its theorizing about the nature of mediated understanding, juxtaposed simultaneously to an illustration of engaged multimodal communication. That is, Emilio coupled a vivid example of multimodal, cosmopolitan-oriented communication with theorizing about this very act, an intertwining of the reflexivity and toleration Hansen (2011) argues is at the core of a cosmopolitan-oriented art of living. Emilio here thinks about his own responsibilities in moving toward compassion and understanding, a critical self-examination that also involves considering others' motives and efforts in a generous way. He attributes the best motive possible to his Indian interlocutors, acknowledging that each S2C8 participant had made an effort to know the seeds of the other's struggles but faced the difficulties of communicating across vast divides. However, he holds out hope that mediated communication can help bridge those distances, and indeed, it is Emilio's efforts to represent his own and others' narratives in respectful dialogue that is a key part of negotiating the distance.

A Reciprocal Stance: Engaging in Dialogue With Others

The final rhetorical stance that we explore is a reciprocal one, in which students positioned themselves as welcoming or open conversational partners. Young people who embodied a reciprocal stance not only presented themselves as willing interlocutors but accounted for others' potential responses and oriented themselves in terms of what had already transpired. While we recognize, as Chouliaraki (2011) and Silverstone (2007) point out, that the notion of proper distance acquires its moral force by virtue of the asymmetry of social relations, we seek to extend that formulation to take into account socially networked realities that are grounded in the reciprocal and that make mutual demands on interlocutors. Silverstone (2003) is quite explicit that one should not expect reciprocity when communicating with others, that indeed a moral stance "cannot be based on the expectation that my action will in some way require you to do the same for me" (p. 480). However, we want to suggest that while one should not act

merely out of an expectation of reciprocity, one must be prepared—and indeed position oneself—as a willing interlocutor and as part of the larger interactional order. We have found, in fact, that in negotiating proper distance, young people have been willing to engage in reciprocal exchanges and have positioned themselves as open to communicate with others. This interactional move, we suggest, is a fundamentally hospitable one, and we note that it also reflects the fundamentally social nature of speech and communication. As Bakhtin (1986) has powerfully explained via the construct of dialogicality, we craft our messages, shape them at the point of utterance, with the expectation of a response, and these exchanges are themselves links in a much larger chain of communication (cf. Freedman & Ball, 2004).

In the case of Emilio's video, we can see a stance of reciprocity throughout the artifact and in surrounding talk and text. Emilio created the video in response to poems from Prayas students, which in turn evolved from their journal responses to the "Deep in the Shallows" video, which itself was a response to the Jaagriti film—a genesis that he represents in his opening journey as he traces this dialogic path through remixed artifacts. Emilio further described this set of dialogic conditions in a blog entry posted to the entire S2C8 community (see Figure 6). He began the blog by repeating

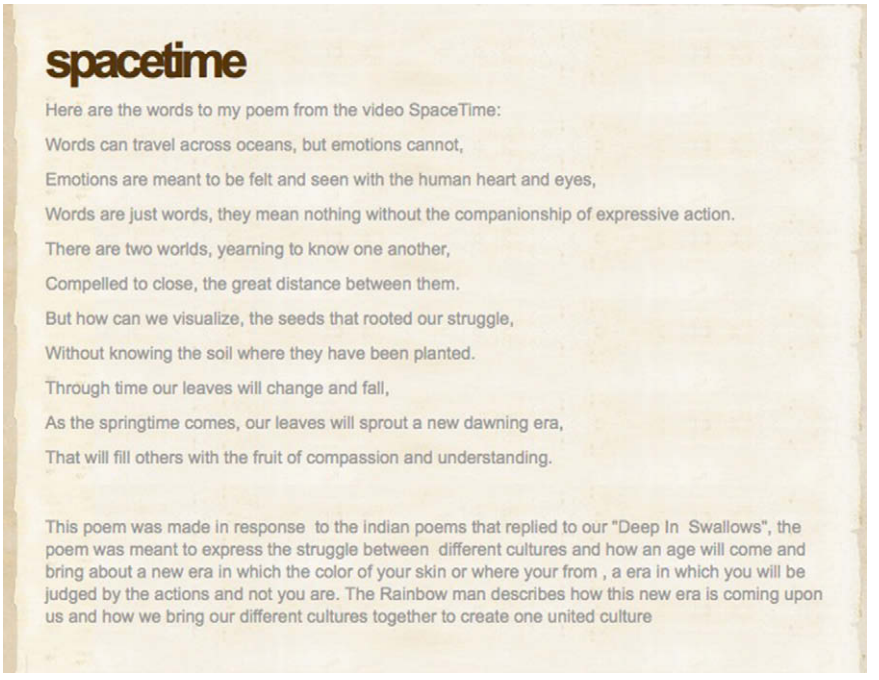

FIGURE 6. Emilio's Blog on Space2Cre8.

his poem and identifying it as a response to the Indian poems and their poems as a response to the NY movie. In addition to contextualizing the film and explaining his purpose and message, Emilio used the blog posting to situate the film in a textual universe characterized by its dialogic properties. In this larger ecology, the video is positioned as one more response in a series of responses, part of an ongoing conversation that is potentially infinite.

This reciprocal stance, in its willingness to be part of an ongoing conversation, does not carry the expectation that others should reciprocate or respond. But it does require that interlocutors adopt a position of openness, a listening stance that indicates to potential audiences that one is willing to engage further. In Emilio's video and in his subsequent blog, he paints himself as an open and inviting interlocutor who would be willing to hear responses to his work should anyone choose to provide them. We have argued elsewhere that this stance of openness is a fundamentally hospitable disposition, one crucial for authoring in networked contexts in the 21st century (Hull et al., 2013). We also suggest that it is a fundamental element in negotiating proper distance, part of locating oneself as an ethical participant in relation to others. It is tightly intertwined with proximal and reflexive stances, offering complementary means for authors to produce textual traces that realize and express cosmopolitan capacities and dispositions.

COSMOPOLITAN LITERACIES AS ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF AUTHORSHIP

While most scholarship on cosmopolitanism is philosophical in method, we have wanted to study cosmopolitanism "on the ground," as youth on the cusp of adulthood took up opportunities to think and act reflexively about the opportunities, responsibilities, and challenges of intercultural, cross-geographic communication in a global, digital world. Sharing creative artifacts and communicating with diverse and distant peers, these young people strived to enact ethically alert responses to local and global concerns. They thereby provided a lens on how identities as cosmopolitan citizens may be realized in practice, and how dialogue can be fostered and sustained across differences in culture, language, ideology, and geography. Our research was informed by scholarship on cosmopolitanism, in particular the construct of "proper distance," as well as recent perspectives from contemporary rhetoric and New Literacy Studies, which alert us to shifts in the nature and role of audiences and author/reader relationships in a digitally mediated world. We joined these literatures to call attention to the textual nature of cosmopolitan practice and the ethical dimension of symbolization, captured in the term *cosmopolitan literacies*.

What cosmopolitan orientations did young people develop and display as they worked toward intercultural understanding? We identified three

stances that participants took up as they negotiated proper distance with and for their global audiences, and these we labeled "proximal," "reflexive," and "reciprocal." They are fundamentally audience oriented, especially when one's readership is distant and diverse, now the quintessential audience in our global and mediatized world. They suggest how participants gauged what their audiences needed in order to understand and how they envisaged their viewers/readers, not merely for the purpose of informing or persuading, which is a reductive, if customary, application of rhetorical principles, but for the purpose of engaging one's reader/viewer and fostering self- and other-oriented understanding. These stances help us understand how people engage with audiences that are at once expanded and intimate, interactive and abstract, global and local, complexities not yet sufficiently explored in our theories of composing. We consider our account of the stances a modest start in characterizing a repertoire of cosmopolitan literate practices for reading, writing, and communicating with and for diverse others. We hope they will inspire additional research around the profound reconceptualization of audience that we believe is required to energize school-based writing instruction as well as to promote an ethics of communication online.

We were interested as well in how such practices were manifested textually and semiotically, exploring via the case of Emilio and his SpaceTime video how these stances, and their embodiment via multiple, conjoined modes, resulted in a digital artifact that both pushed the boundaries of the kinds of meaning that can be made and shared, but also theorized the limitations of symbolization and communication. We saw all three rhetorical stances instantiated throughout the video as Emilio negotiated the distance between himself and his Indian interlocutors, and illustrated powerfully via efficacious multimodal representations, a centrally important 21st-century literacy practice (Coiro et al., 2009; Jewitt, 2008; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). Emilio's masterful remix and recontextualization of video, images, music, and sounds were made possible by virtue of the multimodal composing tools at his disposal. He employed green screen technology, music, voice-over narration, layering of images, and other special effects in order to compose a designful, aesthetically alert artifact. Such tools and related semiotic practices helped Emilio play with notions of time and space and created opportunities for him to experiment with new ways to represent his own and others' stories. The ethic of the remix as a composing strategy afforded him the means to write himself into being in relation to others. He did this in a respectful, thoughtful, and ultimately "proper" way, in the sense that Silverstone (2003) used this word to refer to "something that is adapted to fit some purpose or requirement, that is fit, apt, suitable, or befitting, or when it is especially appropriate to the circumstances or conditions at hand" (p. 473; cf. Jewitt, 2008).

We are inspired by Emilio's process and artifact to think anew about the affordances of digital multimodality and their place in the composition

pantheon. Such modes are sometimes appreciated for but relegated to storytelling and out-of-school time. Narrative is itself of course a powerful genre and way of becoming and knowing, but we saw Emilio create meanings for himself and others that exceeded what is usually possible narratively in print or even customary in film (cf. Hull & Nelson, 2005). We believe, even and especially in an age of the Common Core, that the time has come for a serious reconfiguration of the range of semiotic means that we make possible in schools and for youth and us all.

Last, we hoped to understand the challenges that young people faced in understanding themselves in relation to others as they attempted to achieve "proper distance." The process of negotiating proper distance was complex, intertwining aesthetic, ethical, and literate dimensions of meaning making as young people metaphorically gauged their proximity to their interlocutors through their semiotic work. Emergent conceptions of audience were at the forefront of these efforts, as participants continually experienced the need to situate themselves and their creative endeavors relative to others who would view, respond, remix, and shape those communicative undertakings through a variety of participatory practices. Indeed, our data illustrated that negotiating proper distance was a conflictual and ideological process comprised of many false starts, "failed" efforts, and frustrated interchanges. Yet, those seeming missteps turned out to be critical elements in affording openness to difference and reflexivity, as young people developed an increasing awareness of the validity of different cultural practices and values and in turn reconsidered their own values, practices, and beliefs. Surprised and almost affronted by rejections or misunderstandings of artifacts and intended meanings, participants gradually became reflexive, achieving enough distance from themselves to move closer to distant others. Hansen (2011) describes this process as negotiating the tension between "reflective openness to the new with reflective loyalty to the known" (p. 1), and we saw it illustrated in relation to youth's creative, productive practices as they struggled to locate themselves and their everyday worlds in relation to those of distant others. There are, of course, many ways to imagine curricula that engage youth in considering and experiencing the complex issues that thread through globalization along with their lived experience as youth in such a world. It is also the case, however, that the discourses of accountability that currently propel school reform appear to run counter to curricula expansive enough to encourage struggle, risk, and complexity, providing additional challenges for teachers and students who would engage the ethical dimensions of new textual and semiotic practices.

In coming years we expect to see an intensification of interest in the educational implications of globalization (cf. Spring, 2008). Already considerable attention is being paid to international comparisons of competencies and knowledge (e.g., British Council, 2011; OECD, 2011); the articulation of 21st-century skill sets (e.g., Partnership 21st Century Skills,

www.p21.org/); the infusion of global competencies into curricula (e.g., Asia Society, http://asiasociety.org/education/resources-schools/term; Cabezudo et al., 2010); and new conceptions of citizenship that blend cultural, state, and global affiliations (Banks, 2004). Yet, we are still a distance away from knowing how to foster a cosmopolitan citizenry, being yet at the beginning of imagining conceptions of education, schools, and curricula that produce the globally alert, linguistically versatile, ethically turned, and geographically nimble, or individuals able to converse, understand, identify, and act, not only locally but beyond. Our research has attempted to illuminate a small piece of the path toward these goals, showing that certain tenets of cosmopolitanism can be explored empirically, imagined pedagogically, and instantiated as semiotic practice. We have demonstrated in interactional detail the complexity and challenge of learning to communicate, create, and understand across difference, but also the potential of diverse youth to engage such complexities ethically and to work at comprehending their subtleties. The global youth in our project took up the demanding work of gauging, judging, representing, and bridging conceptual, ethical, emotional, aesthetic, and physical distance. They illustrated productive engagement with the ethical dimensions of authorship in a digital age, appropriating new forms of digital media as generative tools and spaces for representation and communication, and leaving us hopeful about the possibility of realizing cosmopolitan citizenship in practice.

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NOTES

1. The theme of hospitality began early, with Kant's 1795 essay on Perpetual Peace, in which he claimed that all people have the "right to the communal possession of the earth's surface" and that "hospitality means the right of a stranger not to be treated as an enemy when he arrives in the land of another" (Reis, 1991, pp. 105–106). Derrida (2002), drawing on Kant (1795/1983), made ethics

synonymous with hospitality and argued for a conception of hospitality that, like his companion construct of forgiveness, is unconditional. Silverstone (2003, 2007), on whose work we draw, engaged the ideas of Kant and Derrida but also Levinas (1969) and Arendt (1998).

2. Cf. Couldry (2012), who offers a related compelling framework for an ethics of media, but who takes issue with Silverstone's use of hospitality and the Kantian tradition that this term indexes. Couldry is concerned, for example, that hospitality as a construct has limiting territorial and temporal associations incompatible with a digital age and "media's inherent mobility and the unpredictable human encounters media make possible" (p. 196).

3. Please see www.space2cre8.com for more information about the network (including many of the videos and projects described here and a public beta version of the network).

4. To be precise, the Jaagriti movie did not have sufficient air space for Emilio to "fly" through, consisting as it did of close-up interviews with women, so Emilio used another film as a proxy.

5. Emilio's SpaceTime movie can be viewed via this link: https://berkeley.box.com/s/od3dyr4blno43cf1i1v4

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