

ABSTRACTS

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Full Abstracts

Beyond Fragmented Worldviews and Narrow Domestic Walls: Tagore's Universalism

Fakrul Alam, University of Dhaka

This paper derives its inspiration from Poem #33 of the English Gitanjali, surely the most well-known of Rabindranath Tagore's "song offerings". In it, he prays for a worldview derived from a vantage point where the mind is free of fear and one's head is "held high". The poem advocates knowledge that is free-flowing and a world that is not fragmented. It urges us to transcend narrow domestic walls and to achieve wholeness by questing for a "heaven of freedom". For Tagore the mind must move away from whatever reifies and toward an ever-widening sphere of action. The paper will argue that the vision articulated in the poem led Tagore to scorn the walls of nationalism and reject the confinement of the spirit in the cages of capitalism—walls and cages that he saw in a few European nations and their overseas enterprises in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and in the United States and Japan. But it will also stress that Tagore was apprehensive about Indians being hemmed in by nationalistic barriers or becoming blind to the best of their patrimony derived from the Upanishads, Islamic civilization and even enlightenment ideals. He expressed similar fears about Japan and China. As he pointed out in one of his autobiographical pieces, he had felt fortunate in being born in a family that was at the confluence of cultures. Tagore was thus against obscurantism at home and in the rest of Asia as well as the jingoism and aggression he saw in the west. He even refused to be part of the nationalist movement in his country beyond a point. He also embarked on seemingly endless travels to not only deliver the "message of the forest" to the west and Japan and China but also to incorporate as much of world culture in his own works as he could and to bring the best of the world to India. Tagore of course tried to embody his notion of the universalism of the mind most concretely in Visva-Bharati but this paper will make a special effort to locate it in the speeches, lectures, and addresses he delivered in his world tours as well as at home.

Immigrant Youth, Cosmopolitan Identities and Australian Multiculturalism

Jock Collins, UTS

This paper presents the results of a number of recent research projects involving immigrant youth in Australia. Using qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, the research projects explored issues of aspiration, identity and belonging with first and second generation immigrant youth in Sydney, as well as investigating their social and friendship networks and experiences of racism. The paper argues that a more cosmopolitan approach to Australian multiculturalism will permit a more relaxed approach to the globalised hybrid and fluid identities of Australian immigrant youth and provide a way for multiculturalism to overcome its key contradictions and endure as a policy framework for immigrant settlement in Australia in coming decades.

Miyazawa Kenji and Tagore in terms of a cosmopolitan common ground of the earth

Masahiro HAMASHITA, Kobe College

'The earth' meant 'the mother' in the time of primitive people. Now, the earth is polluted by agricultural chemicals or radioactive contamination and other causes. Once, even in a modern political movement, 'the earth' was worshipped along with 'the blood' as a symbol of encouraging nationalism suggested by such thinkers as Heidegger and Carl Schmitt. The earth already seems to have lost its power to produce life and wealth. To Tagore, as his country of

Bengal has experienced historical disasters of tragic famines several times, 'the earth' may have seldom led to any ideal. Also to Kenji, as his hometown Hanamaki was menaced by a famine almost every year, the image of 'the earth' may have not been so productive. However, Kenji made greatest efforts to support peasants' labor and life, and Tagore praised the earth that creates beauty in the world. Really, the earth of today may not be worth to be considerable, but again I will try to evaluate the earth as a common ground of cosmopolitanism by comparing Kenji and Tagore with reference to their ideas of the earth in order to find clues to recover 'the mother earth'.

Polytropic moments and ishtadevta implications in contemporary middle-class Hinduism Kathinka Frøystad, University of Bergen

Cosmopolitanism is an exceptionally wide analytical term, and while there are many good reasons to retain its openness, it can also be argued that its analytical sharpness and comparative potential would benefit from breaking it down. One way to do so is to distinguish more clearly between different contexts and forms of cosmopolitanism. This paper offers an attempt to think along these lines by identifying some forms of cosmopolitanism that seem characteristic for contemporary middle-class Hinduism in urban India. Drawing on ethnographic material from Kanpur, Haridwar and Delhi collected over the last nineteen years, I examine two central forms of religious cosmopolitanism. The first is what Michael Carrithers terms 'polytropy', according to which people (in his case Digambar Jains) do puja to everything that 'seems holy', even if this contradicts Jain religious principles. My material confirms Carrithers' suggestion that polytropy by no means is confined to Jains. It is also found among Hindus—including Brahmins and Hindu priests—where it also may serve as bridges to Muslim and Christian religiosity, rare as the latter cases may be. The second form of religious cosmopolitanism I want to examine, concerns the implications of the ishtadevta principle, whereby each person tends to worship the deity of his or her liking. In popular Hinduism today, ishtadevta practices are often extended to religious movements as well, which implies that one may find one religious practice or belief for each family member within a household. In my paper I will exemplify such a religiously cosmopolitan household and ask whether domestic religious heterogeneity promotes openness to members of yet other religious communities, as suggested by Robert Putnam in *American Grace* (2010).

Tracing southern cosmopolitanisms Heather Goodall, UTS

This paper will sketch the history of some Australian and Indonesian attempts to sustain and expand relationships between individuals and national organisations during the period 1945 to 1965. Their attempts could be considered to be 'cosmopolitan', during a period which saw the emergence of the non-aligned movement and the widening of the Cold War divisions across South East Asia, both of which appeared inevitably to isolate Australia from its WW2 ally, Indonesia.

Today's resurgence in the use of the term 'cosmopolitanism' in Australia has arisen to meet two urgent pressures in contemporary political debate. One has been the conservative challenges to and reassessments of multiculturalism, considered not only as a policy but as the micro-level of interpersonal relations inside Australia. The other has been the need to reconsider how Australians might relate to the rest of the world in a globalising environment, that is, at the macro level of relating across borders beyond the 'nation state' structure. The old models of colonialism and race which had underpinned the Cold War 'nation state' polarisations are being revised with recognition of the greater multidirectional flow of ideas and people between colonies.

Revisionist historians Sugata Bose, Kris Manjapra and Mark Ravinder Frost and sociologist Chris Rumford have contributed to this reassessment of colonialism and its aftermath. They have each argued that non-western analysts have effectively challenged the models of cosmopolitanism arising in the theoretical literature of western Europe, which they point out emerged at various times in response to European conditions, from the pre-WWI period to the current emergence of the EU. This paper will consequently try to draw more widely on 'southern' analysts to understand the attempts from 1945 to 1965 by Australian and Indonesian activists to sustain and expand the relationships between both individuals and national bodies, as well as following the pressures which increasingly undermined those attempts.

The 'Responsibility to Protect': Restoring Cosmopolitan Order?

James Goodman

In 2005 the United Nations (UN) reinterpreted provisions for collective security under the UN Charter to define state intervention in the defense of humanitarian norms as a legitimate means of maintaining international peace and security. In circumstances of 'genocide, ethnic cleansing and other such crimes against humanity', states had a 'responsibility to protect' using military means if necessary. The new state responsibility responds to new asymmetries in the exercise of sovereign power worldwide. In practice it provides those with the capacity to intervene - the dominant powers - with a new responsibility to intervene in the affairs of weaker 'failing' states. As such it responds to various 'preemptive' interventions by these same dominant powers conducted without UN authorisation, that have thus contravened the UN Charter. The UN's re-interpretation of its Charter provisions, from 2005, legitimises some of these new forms of intervention. The article explores the contexts and implications of the new humanitarian collective security, exploring their disordering effects and ordering intent.

How can cosmopolitanism cope with conflict?

Christina Ho, UTS

One of the mantras of Australian multiculturalism over the last decade has been 'living in harmony'. Tens of thousands of government dollars have been spent funding programs to encourage inter-cultural and inter-religious exchange and friendship, to 'find what we have in common'. This sets a noble but impossibly high standard for measuring the success of multiculturalism. We are not all going to become friends, and we are not all going to agree with each other, regardless of how many community programs are funded to attempt to achieve this. This paper argues that mutual recognition need not always be based on 'harmony', but can indeed incorporate tension, disagreement and hostility. The crucial component is not agreement, but respect for the other's legitimate presence in a shared social space. One can disagree with the other while still respecting their right to be here. I argue that this ideal of 'presence recognition' draws on a cosmopolitan approach to difference that usefully transcends the traditional multicultural model.

Cosmopolitanism and cultural diversity in Australia: the Northern South in the Southern North

Andrew Jakubowicz, UTS

Cosmopolitanism as a conceptual framework can be seen as ideologically neutral: it offers a set of parameters to interrogate inter-cultural relations. This paper examines the value of 'cosmopolitanism' and associated concepts such as cultural and social capital, in exploring the

experiences of young Muslims in Australia, and the involvement of Chinese communities in Australian politics. To what extent and in what ways do these possible examples of ‘southern’ cosmopolitanisms enable or constrain participation in the development of an inclusive Australian democracy?

Reconceptualizing ‘Culture’ in Political and Social Thought: Anthropology, Humanism and the Possibilities for a Cosmopolitanism Pluralism

Stephanie Lawson, Macquarie University

The ‘cultural turn’ has had a profound influence across the humanities and social sciences in recent years. In calling into question the universalist basis on which so many conventional methodological and normative assumptions have been based, the cultural turn has focused on the extent to which specificity and particularity underpin what we can know, how we can know it and how this affects our being-in-the-world. This has opened the way to a range of insights, from issues of pluralism and difference, both within political communities and between them, to the instability of foundations for knowledge. Too few studies embracing this ‘cultural turn’, however, pay more than cursory attention to the culture concept itself. This paper suggests that conceptions of culture derived mainly from the discipline of anthropology have come to dominate in political and social thought while humanist conceptions have been either ignored or rejected. The paper further argues that it is time to reconsider what humanist ideas have to contribute to how ‘culture’ is conceptualized, especially to the extent that these ideas might contribute to countering the overparticularization of social and political phenomena that marks so many contemporary culturalist approaches. A rethinking of the value of humanist ideas is also essential to any cosmopolitan project worth the name. This paper argues for the possibility of a cosmopolitan pluralism which draws on both the universal and the particular to establish a viable framework for political and social thought in an age of global engagement.

Cosmopolitan Sophistry: Grounding Politics in Chaos and Uncertainty

Jonathan Paul Marshall, UTS

Conceptions of the State, Nation and politics, which are actually in play in ‘the West’, usually descend from totalitarian models which are primarily Platonic and monotheistic in origin. They aim for unity, harmony, wholeness, legitimate authority and the rejection of conflict, however much they claim to represent multiplicity. By expressing a vision of order, such models drive an idea of planning by prophecy as opposed to divination, as if the future was certain within limits and the trajectory was smooth. Chaos theory and evolutionary ecology shows us that this conception of both society and the future is inaccurate. I will argue that we need to look at the pre-socratic philosophers, in particular the so-called sophists Gorgias and Protagoras with their sense of ongoing flux, the truth of the moment, and the necessary power of rhetoric in the leading forth of temporary functional consensus within the flux. Their orientation is more ‘not just here’ than ‘we are all together’, and they recognised that there can be no more than a passing harmony of difference, but this ongoing oscillation of conflict provides social movement and life rather than social death. This is elucidated within the parameters of computerised and networked politics which do not add to the commonality, smoothness and democratic process of government and representation, and need handling in a new way.

Scaling Up Connections: Everyday Cosmopolitanism, Complexity Theory & Social Capital

Jenny Onyx, Nina Burridge, Christina Ho, Hilary Yerbury

One of the key questions of contemporary society is how to foster and develop social interactions which will lead to a strong and inclusive society, one which accounts for the diversity inherent in local communities, whether that diversity be based on differences in interest or diversity in language and culture. The purpose of this paper is to examine three concepts which are used in the exploration of social interactions to suggest ways in which the interplay of these concepts might provide a richer understanding of social interactions. The three concepts are everyday cosmopolitanism, complexity theory and social capital. Each provides a partial approach to explanations of social interactions. Through focussing on social networking as a significant example of social interactions, we will demonstrate how the concepts can be linked and this linking brings potential for a clearer understanding of the processes through which this inclusive society may develop.

Ethnicity, Culture and Coups in Fiji (Book Launch)

Sanjay Ramesh

The book argues that during the colonial period, there were challenges to the colonial government from Indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians. However, racial barriers did not enable Indo-Fijians and Indo-Fijians to combine their anti-government efforts and as a result, the resistance during the colonial period was ethnically fragmented. However, during the post-colonial period, there was greater cross-ethnic collaboration, mostly along class lines, with the rise of the Labour-National Federation Party Coalition in April 1987. Not long after the 1987 election, there was a military coup and the re-establishment of the chiefly rule. We again witness inter ethnic collaboration in 1999 with the rise of the Peoples' Coalition Government followed by the Speight coup. These cycles of control, domination and resistance are repeated throughout the book as distinct historical moments or as periods of significant historical change and social transformation. Of particular importance is the coup of 2006 which is described in the book as a unique type of military intervention in Fiji politics. It is unique because the military used to be an institution that throughout colonial and post-colonial period espoused pro-Indigenous nationalist views but following the 2000 coup transformed into an institution that promoted multiculturalism, good governance and social change. Publisher: Fiji Institute of Applied Studies, Lautoka, Fiji Islands

The Creole Port City: Rio, Saint-Louis, and Surabaya

Fernando Rosa B. (University of Malaya)

This presentation will look at three port cities in the twentieth century as sites of creolisation and cosmopolitanism. The historical bibliography on port cities is still overwhelmingly economic and social. Therefore, there has been a comparative neglect of cultural aspects. I will try and look at three different port cities - two in the Atlantic and one in the Indian Ocean - through cultural lenses. All three have been sites of cosmopolitanism. However, rather than merely sites for the shaping of other cosmopolitanisms - other in terms of a European referent - I will argue that in fact their cosmopolitanism may have made European cosmopolitanism possible in the first place. My site of inquiry will be literary and political: republican ideals through gendered representations in novels. I will also argue that Michael Pearson's notion of 'littoral societies' needs a cultural referent if we are to weld it to notions of cosmopolitanism.

I-Witnessing; Reflections on Cosmopolitanism in Kigali

Hilary Yerbury, UTS

Starting from the classic view of cosmopolitanism, this paper uses personal experiences gained during a six-week stay in Rwanda with a family affected by the genocide to explore the disjuncts

which emerge in trying to understand the concept. In this process of exploration, it considers conceptions of the guest, the stranger and what Geertz terms the 'cosmopolite' and examines the move from 'cosmopolite' to 'cosmopolitan'. Taking a reflexive position, it explores what it means to be a witness to events in someone else's life, with a focus on post-genocide reconciliation that took place in the family in January 2011. In this context, it introduces the notions of cosmopolitan curiosity (Appiah) and cosmopolitan tolerance (Beck) and finds each of them affected by structural imbalances which render them potentially inadequate in practice. The paper concludes that, from a reflexive point of view, an understanding of cosmopolitanism is a work in progress, and that it is much more difficult to sustain as a lived reality than it is as an abstraction.