LIVING IN AN OVERHEATED WORLD: OTHERNESS AS A UNIVERSAL CONDITION

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ABSTRACT
Established as a staple in studies of globalisation, the concept of the network implies that stable hierarchies and structures are giving way to nodal, multi-centred and fluid systems, and that this change takes place in numerous fields of interaction. Although the term itself is relatively uncommon, *glocalisation* is a standard theme in nearly all anthropological writing about globalisation as well as most of the sociological and geographical literature. Moreover, concepts describing impurity or mixing – hybridity, creolisation and so on – are specific instances of this general approach stressing the primacy of the local. The local–global dichotomy is, in other words, misleading. Bauman's term 'liquid modernity' sums up this theoretical focus, which emphasises the uncertainty, risk and negotiability associated with phenomena as distinct as personal identification, economies and world climate in the 'global era'. Ambivalence and fundamentalism in the politics of identity are seen to stem simultaneously from this fundamental uncertainty.
KEY WORDS: otherness, globalization, glocalization, reflexivity, fluidity, liquid modernity, rights issues.

ANOTACIJA
Straipsnyje autorius įvairiais aspektais aptaria šiuolaikinės globalizacijos proceso paradoksus regioninių kultūrų raidos kontekste. Atkreipiamas dėmesys į tai, kad tiek globalizacijos šalininkai, tiek ir jos kritikai visų pirma turi pripažinti esminius šio proceso priežastinių ryšių, konkrečių apraiškų bei struktūrinių dalių įvairovės faktus, kur stabilius atskaitos taškus dažnai keičia iš esmės ar atskirais epizodais nestabilūs bei subjektyviai suvokiami ir aiškinami pasaulio raidos veiksniai. Esmine atsvara *globalizacijos* procesui autorius laiko sociologinių ir geografinių tyrimų literatūroje santykinai rečiau vartojamą *glokalizacijos* sampratą. Čia detaliau aptariama šios sampratos esmė, konkretūs jos vartosenos aspektai. Greta minėtų sampratų šiame straipsnyje analizuojamos teorinės ir praktinės „refleksyvumo" ir „nestabilumo" sąvokų interpretacijos. Straipsnio baigiamojoje dalyje atkreipiamas dėmesys ir į individo ar lokalios bendruomenės „teisių problemas" globalizacijos ar glokalizacijos procesų bei tendencijų atžvilgiu.
PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: skirtingumas, globalizacija, glokalizacija, refleksyvumas, nestabilumas, nepastovus modernumas, teisinės problemos.

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On his 100th birthday in December 2008, Claude Lévi-Strauss was paid a visit by President Nicolas Sarkozy, France being a country where politicians can still build prestige by associating with intellectuals. In the press reports from the meeting, the centenarian, whose seminal book on kinship was published more than sixty years ago, said that he did not really count himself among the living any more. By saying this he referred, I believe, not just to his very advanced age and diminishing faculties, but also to the fact that the world he cherished was gone. Lévi-Strauss has devoted his life to the study of humanity under the most varying cultural circumstances imaginable, in order to develop his theory of human universals. Throughout his life – he was a cultural pessimist already

in the 1930s – he has witnessed the accelerating disappearance of that world, which is the world of radical cultural difference.

Elaborating briefly on his own comment to Sarkozy, Lévi-Strauss added that the world was now too full. *Le monde est trop plein*. Presumably he meant that it was overfilled by humans and the products of their activities. At the time of his birth in 1908, the planet was inhabited by a grand total of 1.7 billion persons; global population now stands at 6.5 billion, and the proportion with their own Internet accounts and mobile telephones increases every year. No matter how one goes about measuring degrees of connectedness in the contemporary world, the only possible conclusion is that many more people today are much more connected than ever before in history. There are more of us, and each of us has, on average, more links to the outside world than our predecessors, through business travel, information, communication, migration, vacations, political engagement, trade, development assistance, exchange programmes and so on. The number of transatlantic telephone lines has grown phenomenally in the last few decades; so has the number of Websites and international NGOs. And one could easily go on and on.

It can indeed be argued that this is a new world, one which in significant ways differs from all epochs that preceded it. Most of us now live under the bright light of the powerful headlights of modernity, as genuine contemporaries, aware, however dimly, of one another, divided by the same destiny.

Among social theorists, a flurry of books, journals, articles and conferences since around 1990 have sought to re-define the human world – the post-cold war world, the postcolonial world, the world of global modernity or of a deterritorialised information society – sometimes inventing new theoretical concepts, sometimes giving new tasks to old vocabulary. A number of themes recur throughout this vivid and sometimes cacophonic discourse; let me just mention a few initially.

The concept of the network. Established as a staple in studies of globalisation by at least two of the most prominent theorists in the field,[1] the concept of the network implies that stable hierarchies and structures are giving way to nodal, multicentred and fluid systems, and that this change takes place in numerous fields of interaction.[2] In Hardt and Negri's *Empire*,[3] a book which famously argues the disappearance of territorial powers to the benefit of an jellyfish-like, omnipresent force that they call 'empire', the influence from Deleuze and Guattari's contrasting of rhizomes and treelike structures (*rhizomes et racines*) in *Mille plateaux* (1980) is crucial, and Hardt and Negri's description of the world of global capitalism is also reminiscent of Castells' account of global networks based on the 'space of flows' rather than the 'space of places'.

The glocal. Although the term itself is relatively uncommon, glocalisation[4] is a standard theme in nearly all anthropological writing about globalisation as well as most of the sociological and geographical literature. The argument goes like this. In real life, there exists no abstract, huge, global level of affairs on the one hand and local, lived realities on the other. The local level is in fact infused with influences from outside, be it culinary novelties or structural adjustment programmes; but these 'influences', on their part, have no autonomous existence outside their tangible manifestations. 'Microsoft' thus exists as a company based in Seattle, and also as the computer software used to run most personal computers in the world, but it does not exist as a global entity except as

1 See: CASTELLS, Manuel. *The Rise of the Network Society*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996; HANNERZ, Ulf. *Cultural Complexity*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992; HANNERZ, Ulf. *Transnational Connections*. London: Routledge, 1996.

2 This concept should not be confused with the ANT idea of the network developed by Bruno Latour, to which it is related: ANT networks include both human and non-human agents.

3 See: HARDT, Michael & NEGRI, Antonio. *Empire*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000.

4 See: ROBERTSON, Roland. *Globalization*. London: Sage, 1994.

an abstraction of debatable value. It has numerous concrete manifestations, all of them local, and it offers a shared language which makes transnational communication (and file exchange) possible, but as a global entity it exists only at the level of thought. Moreover, concepts describing impurity or mixing – hybridity, creolisation and so on – are specific instances of this general approach stressing the primacy of the local. The local–global dichotomy is, in other words, misleading.

Reflexivity and fluidity. Bauman's term 'liquid modernity'[5] sums up this theoretical focus, which emphasises the uncertainty, risk and negotiability associated with phenomena as distinct as personal identification, economies and world climate in the 'global era'. That identities are not fixed and given once and for all is not exactly news any more, but it is widely held that the current 'post-traditional'[6] era is characterised by an unprecedented breadth of individual repertoires, forcing people to choose between alternatives and to define themselves in ways which were not necessary in earlier, less unstable and more clearly delineated social formations. Ambivalence and fundamentalism in the politics of identity are seen to stem simultaneously from this fundamental uncertainty.

Rights issues. While it has become unfashionable to defend cultural relativism as an ethical stance, opinion remains divided as to the legitimacy of group rights and, more generally, the relationship between group and individual in the contemporary world. Since the very existence of groups cannot be taken for granted, the individual is often foregrounded. The debates may concern intellectual property rights, cultural and linguistic rights, as well as multicultural dilemmas such as the conflict between individualist agency and arranged marriages among non-European immigrants in North Atlantic societies.

The globalisation discourse tends to privilege flows over structures, rhizomes over roots, reflexivity over doxa, individual over group, flexibility over fixity, rights over duties, and freedom over security in its bid to highlight globalisation as something qualitatively new.[7] While this kind of exercise is often necessary, it tends to become one-sided. Many anthropologists talk disparagingly about the jargon of 'globalbabble' or 'globalitarism',[8] and tend to react against simplistic generalisations by reinserting (and reasserting) the uniqueness of the local, or glocal, as the case might be.

There is doubtless something qualitatively new about the compass, speed and reach of current transnational networks. Now, some globalisation theorists argue that the shrinking of the world will almost inevitably lead to a new value orientation, some indeed heralding the coming of a new kind of person.[9] These writers, who seem to proclaim the advent of a new man, or at least new set of uprooted, deterritorialised values, are often accused of generalising from their own European middle-class habitus. The sociologist John Urry, lending himself easily to this criticism, argues in the final chapter of his *Global Complexity*[10] that globalisation has the potential of stimulating widespread cosmopolitanism (however, he does not say among whom). But, as he readily admits in an earlier chapter in the same book, the principles of closeness and distance still hold, for example in viewing patterns on television, where a global trend consists in viewers' preferences for locally produced programmes.

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5 See: BAUMAN, Zygmunt. *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity, 2000.

6 See: GIDDENS, Anthony. *Modernity and Self-Identity*. Cambridge: Polity, 1991.

7 Notwithstanding a few dissenting voices like: FRIEDMAN, Jonathan. *Cultural Identity and Global Process*. London: Sage, 1994.

8 See: TROUILLOT, Michel-Rolph. Close Encounters of the Deceptive Kind. *Current Anthropology*, 2001, Vol. 42, p. 125–138.

9 E.g.: SENNET, Richard. *The Corrosion of Character*. New York: W.W. Norton & C°, Inc., 1998.

10 See: URRY, John. *Global Complexity*. Cambridge: Polity, 2003.

The newness of the contemporary world was described concisely by Castells already in 1998, in a lengthy footnote to the final volume of his trilogy *The Information Society*:

> Why is this a new world? (...) Chips and computers are new; ubiquitous, mobile telecommunications are new, genetic engineering is new; electronically integrated, global financial markets working in real time are new; an inter-linked capitalist economy embracing the whole planet, and not only some of its segments, is new; a majority of the urban labour force in knowledge and information processing in advanced economies is new; a majority of urban population in the planet is new; the demise of the Soviet Empire, the fading away of communism, and the end of the Cold War are new; the rise of the Asian Pacific as an equal partner in the global economy is new; the widespread challenge to patriarchalism is new; the universal consciousness on ecological preservation is new; and the emergence of a network society, based on a space of flows, and on timeless time, is historically new.[11]

A few years later, he could have added the advent of deterritorialized warfare and political battles involving the question of humanly induced climate change to the list. He might also have spoken of post-Fordist flexible accumulation[12] and mass migration.[13] Be this as it may; Castells adds at the end of his lengthy footnote that it does not really matter whether all this is new or not; his point is that this is our world, and therefore we should study it. I disagree. It does matter what is new and what isn't, if we are going to make sense of the contemporary world.

This world began in 1991 ...

There is simultaneously something very new and something very old about the contemporary world. John Gray, towards the end of his book on "Al-Qaeda and What It Means to be Modern", argues that "it is the interaction of expanding scientific knowledge with unchanging human needs that will determine the future of our species".[14]

Put differently, shifting circumstances have something to do with any narrative trying to make sense of the world. The growth of science and technological developments create new frameworks for the enactment of human projects, which may nevertheless be rooted in fundamental human experiences of community and alienation, security and individuality. Perhaps nowhere is this tension more evident than in the politics of culture and identity in the world of the early 21st century, to which I shall return very soon. The beginning of the 21st century, incidentally, may be dated to September 11, 2001 or, perhaps, to 1991. I prefer the latter option, if nothing else because it generates a more ambiguous present and a more open future than its alternative.

First of all, 1991 was the year when the Cold War was called off once and for all. The two-bloc system that had defined the post-war era, was suddenly gone. The ideological conflict between socialism and capitalism seemed to have been replaced with the triumphant sound of one hand clapping. By 1991, it was also clear that apartheid was about to go; Mandela had been released from prison the year before, and negotiations between the Nationalist Party and the ANC had begun in earnest.

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11 CASTELLS, Manuel. *End of Millennium*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998, p. 336.

12 See: HARVEY, David. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1989.

13 See: CASTLES, Stephen & DAVIDSON, Alasdair. *Citizenship and Migration: Globalization and the Politics of Belonging*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000.

14 GRAY, John. *Al Qaeda and What It Means to Be Modern*. 2003, p. 119.

Second, Yugoslavia began to dismantle itself with surprising violence, fed by a kind of nationalistic sentiment many believed to have been overcome. Around the same time, the Hindu nationalists of the BJP (*Bharatiya Janata Party*, Indian People's Party) went from strength to strength in India. The identity politics of the state, or of state-like bodies, was thus not something of the past. In other words, openness and closure were still twin features of politics, but they were operating along new lines.

Thirdly, 1991 was the year in which the Internet began to be marketed to ordinary consumers, so that Mr and Mrs Smith could enter the shop and buy their subscription to America Online. This was new, just as new as the small pocket-sized mobile phones that all of a sudden began to spread all over the world, from Mauritius to Iceland, around 1991. Deregulation of markets had taken place in the preceding decade, but many of the effects of a weaker state and a less manageable and predictable markets were being felt only now, helped by new information and communication technology.

... and it is an overheated world ...

This post-1991 world is, in addition to everything else, one of intensified tensions and frictions. One need only count the present number of transatlantic flights or the number of transpacific telephone connections to realise that the webs of connectedness are hotter, faster and denser than in any previous period, with repercussions virtually everywhere. The growth of urban slums throughout the Third World is an indirect result of economic globalisation, just as the relative disconnectedness from the Internet in Africa – bracket South Africa, and there are more Austrians than Africans online – is a significant fact alongside the growth in text messages in China, from nil to eighteen billion a month in less than ten years. The networked capitalist world, in a word, is a framework, or scaffolding, for almost any serious inquiry into cultural and social dynamics.

This is an accelerated world, where everything from communication to warfare and industrial production takes place faster and more comprehensively than ever before. Speed, in physics, is just another way of talking about heat. In other words, when one says of someone that he or she is suffering from burnout, the metaphor is apt. The burnout is a direct consequence of too much speed.

This, I believe, is a main reason why the notion of global warming has caught on in such a powerful way in the North Atlantic middle classes. The risk of global warming may be real, but that is not the point: By focusing on literal heat as an unintentional consequences of modernity, the narratives about global warming fit perfectly with, enrich and supplement, the other narratives about the contemporary age. It functions as a natural-science corollary of stories about terrorism and imperialism. All these narratives, and their relations, depict the contemporary world as one "out of control", fraught with alienation, powerlessness, global forces and injustices brought about, and reproduced, by the rich and powerful – yet they are, without knowing it, digging their own grave. Above all the notion of global warming feeds into an even more comprehensive story about acceleration.

Zones of tension are manifold in this world. In addition to the old and perhaps universal lines of conflict – power versus powerlessness, wealth versus poverty, autonomy versus dependence – new conflicts, frictions and tensions appear today:

- Globalisation versus alterglobalisation – the new social movements looking for viable, locally based alternatives to the TINA doctrine ('There Is No Alternative');

- Environmentalism versus development – a very real, if undercommunicated tension in countries like China and India, but also in the rich countries (my native oil-rich Norway being an excellent example);
- Cosmopolitanism versus identity politics (including xenophobia and religious fundamentalism) – a main dimension of politics almost everywhere in the world now, sometimes supplanting the left/right divide;
- Inclusion versus exclusion – walls, physical and metaphorical, preventing the free movement of people and their full inclusion in society;
- Uniformity versus diversity – shared templates of modernity articulating with local specificity; and finally –
- Cultural autonomy versus the quest for recognition – finding the balance, as Lévi-Strauss once put it, between contact and isolation.

It is clear that the heightened speed with which encounters take place entails an unprecedented need for traffic regulations. Movement has to be restricted. Laws regulating immigration and citizenship are obvious examples, but so are attempts – in some countries – to keep the language free of contamination from foreign (often English) influence and purification attempts taking place in some religious groups, such as the Deobandi movement in Pakistan seeking to purge Pakistani Islam of Hindu elements.

Boundary work is also an important element of personal and collective identification processes: Who is inside and outside the group, what are the criteria for being an insider, and what does it mean to be an individual with proper, socially recognised credentials and personal integrity? Let us begin this exploration with an examination of one of the most intriguing and shocking characters of the classic modern literature.

... where identities are uncertain ...

Henrik Ibsen's plays from the latter half of the nineteenth century are widely admired for their psychological depth and their accurate depiction of profound contradictions in the bourgeois family of pre-First World War Europe. However, in some important ways, his earlier plays *Brand* and *Peer Gynt* (1867–8)[15] speak more directly to the sensibilities of the early 21st century than the dramas dealing with late-19th century bourgeois society. *Brand*, Ibsen's first masterpiece, was a play about a Christian fundamentalist despairing at the moral decay and confusion he saw all around him, and his attempts to bracket off his own existence and that of his flock of faithful, from the surrounding turmoil. His attempt to escape from modernity can be described as a project intended to create a controlled space where all questions could be answered, a community which was predictable and morally consistent. Brand is a puritan in the literal sense of the term; he seeks purity and simplicity. By contrast, the protagonist of Ibsen's next play, *Peer Gynt*, is an entrepreneur and an adventurer who lies and cheats his way across the world, who makes a small fortune in the, by then illicit, slave trade, who poses as a prophet in North Africa and as a cosmopolitan gentleman on a Mediterranean coast, before returning to his native mountain valley only to discover that his personality lacks a core. The struggles involving collective identification in the contemporary era, with which much of my research for nearly twenty years has incidentally been concerned, revolve around the questions raised by Ibsen in the 1860s. "Be who you are fully and wholly, not piecemeal and partially," pro-

[15] See: IBSEN, Henrik. *Oxford Ibsen: "Brand" and "Peer Gynt"*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972.

claims Brand, a prophet not only of evangelical Christianity but also of the integrity of the person. Peer Gynt, for his part, boasts of having received impulses from all over the world, introducing himself in the fourth act as a "citizen of the world in spirit" (*Verdensborger af gemyt*).

Whereas Brand can be said to inhabit a closed universe, Peer Gynt's universe lacks boundaries. The two characters cover, between them, the span between fundamentalism and collectivism on the one hand, and voluntarism and individualism on the other. Brand stands for destiny and security, while Peer stands for freedom and insecurity. The contrast between the two, and attempts to stake out third ways, is part and parcel of the experience of the children of immigrants in Western Europe, to mention just one contemporary parallel.

In order to begin to understand social belonging and identity, we first have to consider personhood. I realised this, belatedly, when some years ago I was writing a book about identity politics,[16] discovering one day that I had not done the groundwork of studying the foundations of any kind of identity, that is the person. This led me, among other things, in the direction of developmental psychology and evolutionary theory, but that is another story. For now, we shall restrict ourselves to the person and his or her forms of attachment, seen as the basis for security.

The Latin term *persona* originally meant mask, which indicates that personal identity is shifting and can be treacherous.[17] Life is a stage (Shakespeare), and personality is like an onion – layer upon layer, but with no core (Ibsen). When all the layers of makeup and make-believe are peeled away, do we then encounter the real person – or do we instead meet a faceless monster? The answer from social science is: neither. Even "real persons" have to play out their realness through an identity which is recognisable to others. He or she must, for example, possess a linguistic identity. The phantasmagoric point zero, where the "real person" coalesces with the faceless one, is tantamount to autism. There is no "other person" behind the social person.

Personal identity is shaped through social experiences. Some of them are easily forgotten, some can be interpreted to fit a present state one wants to belong to (it is never too late to obtain a tragic history or a happy childhood if one needs it), some may be more or less fictional, and yet others cannot be modified at all. In this sense, personal biographies are reminiscent of national historiography and religious myths of origin. Personal experiences are as malleable as national histories, neither more nor less. They can attach us to a great number of different communities based on gender, class, place, political persuasion, literary taste, sexual orientation, national identity, religion and so on. Yet they cannot be bent indefinitely; certain facts about ourselves are unchangeable. One can deny them, but they keep returning – as the ageing Peer Gynt discovers in the final act. As Bob Marley once put it: "You can't run away from yourself".

Peer tries to just this, and he thus sacrifices security for the sake of freedom; Brand does the opposite. A parallel to the contrast between Peer Gynt and Brand is found in a metaphor used among some West African peoples. In describing what a person is they compare it with a tortoise. It may stick its head out, making itself visible and vulnerable, but it then retracts its head into the shell, rendering itself hidden and invincible. This metaphor seems to travel well into the world of mass media and reality TV. Some of our contemporary tortoises prefer to stay inside their shells most of the time, while others live almost continuously with their heads stuck out for all to see.

What the tortoise metaphor does *not* claim, is that there exists an insulated, pure self in the inner recesses of the individual, a self which is independent of its surroundings. Such a creature is, be-

[16] See: ERIKSEN, Thomas Hylland. *Røtter og føtter: Identitet i en omskiftelig tid* [Roots and Boots: Identity at Crossroads]. Oslo: Aschehoug, 2004.

[17] Cf.: MAUSS, Marcel. *Sociologie et anthropologie*. Paris: PUF, 1960.

sides, difficult to envision. For example, we depend on thinking through linguistic categories, and if we should usually keep our thoughts to ourselves, at least we share them with a few confidantes. The metaphor of the tortoise, transposed to contemporary modern societies, is best understood as stating that human beings switch between being socially extroverted and directed towards the open, uncertain external world, and being socially introverted, limited to that which is secure and familiar. It deals not so much with the internal life of the individual as with two forms of sociality; the secure and the insecure, the closed and the open.

… and nobody knows the precise meaning of 'we' ...

Secure sociality moves in a sphere of undisputed we-feeling. In this realm one may be *backstage*; one can speak one's dialect, laugh at in-jokes, savour the smells of one's childhood and know that one has an intuitive, embodied cultural competence which one succeeds in performing without even trying. In a field of secure sociality, everyone is predictable to each other, and if they are not, there are ways of demarcating displeasure which are immediately understood by others. A relaxed intimacy engulfs secure sociality. It is related to the late 19th century sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies' concept of *Wesenswille*, which in his view characterised life in the *Gemeinschaft*, that traditional community where everybody knew each other and had a limited horizon of opportunities. The *Wesenswille* recommends itself, it makes us behave along certain lines without asking critical questions.

Insecure sociality is to a much greater extent characterised by improvisation and negotiations over situational definitions. Whoever meet in this kind of field are much less secure as to whom they are dealing with, and as a result, they are less certain as to who they are looking at in the mirror. The opportunities are more varied and more open to a person in a state of insecure sociality than to someone who rests contented in a condition of predictable routines of secure sociality, but the risks are also much greater.

Insecure sociality appears, typically, in cosmopolitan cities, along trade routes and – especially after the industrial revolution – in societies undergoing rapid change. Suddenly, something new happens, and one finds oneself in a setting with no preordained script to be followed. One is faced with the task of rebuilding the ship at sea.

A typical reaction to this kind of insecurity is withdrawal, but it is equally common to try to redefine the situation to make it resemble something familiar. When Columbus became the first European to set foot in the Caribbean, he was convinced that he had reached India. Later conquistadors were aware that they had arrived in a country which was not described in the Bible that is an entirely new land with unknown and undescribed inhabitants. Many of them still tried to interpret their experiences through biblical interpretations. In *The Conquest of America*, Tzvetan Todorov[18] shows that the Aztecs and the Spaniards interpreted each other into their respective pre-existent world-views. Neither group was ready to acknowledge that something entirely new had entered their world, which required new cognitive maps or even an intellectual revolution. In a word, they were not yet modern.

The work amounting to making insecure situations secure takes many shapes. Imperialist powers may try to reshape their new lands to make them less threateningly different, or they erect physical boundaries against the aliens, as the architects of apartheid did in South Africa and Israel is doing presently. Dominated peoples either may try to imitate their rulers to mitigate the sense of insecurity on both sides, or by establishing their own boundaries – separatism, revolution or independence.

[18] See: TODOROV, Tzvetan. *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*. Oklahoma: Oklahoma University Press, 1989.

Is insecurity a good or a bad thing? That depends. In social anthropological theory, different terms are being used, which provide different answers to the question. Mary Douglas,[19] who belongs to a tradition focusing on the study of social integration and assuming it to be a good thing, regards departures from the existing order as *anomalies*. They are cumbersome since they do not fit in. Many person who appear as anomalies, besides, become anomic, that is normless; alienated, confused and unhappy. In Douglas' great intellectual mentor Durkheim's view, anomie was an important cause of suicide.

An opposite approach is found in the early work of Fredrik Barth,[20] who, in the early 1960s, directed a research programme about the entrepreneur in Northern Norway. According to Barth's definition, the entrepreneur was someone who bridged formerly discrete spheres; who found new commodities to sell in new locations, new ways of running a business, new niches and so on. He thrived on uncertainty and change, building his empire in the interstices. In his purest form, Barth's entrepreneur was a Peer Gynt; poorly integrated into the moral community, but hardly a candidate for suicide. It may perhaps be said that the entrepreneur fares like everybody else in the age of neoliberalism, which values freedom so highly but neglects security: Whenever one has success, the range of options and the scope of personal freedom feel fantastic, but the moment one hits the wall, freedom is reinterpreted as insecurity and the choices as a kind of coercive compulsion. The entrepreneur becomes an anomaly the moment he fails to succeed.

It has been well documented that identification in our day and age can be an insecure kind of task with many difficulties and poor predictability. People who formerly had no mutual contact are brought together, new cultural forms arise, and the dominant ideology dictating that life should consist in free choices puts pressure on everyone. Good old recipes for the good life may not have been lost, but they are conventionally discarded as reactionary and inhibiting. The result may just as well be frustrated confusion as positive self-realisation.

Even without the aid of this kind of freedom ideology, capitalism is capable of creating insecurity and new social dynamics. It has been a massive force, uprooting people from their conventional ways of doing things, moving them physically, giving them new tasks and bringing them into contact with new others. When mining began in the copper-rich areas of the eastern parts of present-day Zambia, just after the First World War, workers were recruited from all over the colony. They spoke many languages and had many different customs and kinship systems, but very soon, the workers began to sort each other, in a rough and ready way, on the basis of ideas about social distance. The people hailing from the western regions were seen as a category apart, likewise the Lozi speakers, the matrilineal peoples and so on. Some of the groups had experienced regular contact before urbanisation, and had conventionalised ways of dealing with each other. Some even enjoyed an institutionalised joking relationship with each other.[21]

... where recognition is a scarce resource ...

Todorov, in his memoir from the 20th century,[22] describes three dangers facing the post-totalitarian world. One is instrumentalisation of social relations – typically expressed as unfettered market

[19] See: DOUGLAS, Mary. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966.

[20] See: BARTH, Fredrik (ed.). *The role of the Entrepreneur in Social Change in Northern Norway*. Bergen: Norwegian University Press, 1963.

[21] This wonderful African institution deserves being exported elsewhere. Perhaps Jews and Palestinians, or Christians and Muslims, might want to give it a try?

[22] See: TODOROV, Tzvetan. *Mémoire du mal, tentation du bien*. Paris: Robert Laffont, 2000.

liberalism, or rather, a loss of the social principles of solidarity and decency, which prevented markets from expanding outside the economy strictly speaking, and which also curtailed the power of state bureaucracies in liberal societies. In passing, it may be mentioned that these anxieties are neither uncommon nor new. Similar concerns with bureaucracies were expressed by the inventor of the theory of modern bureaucracy, Max Weber, and worries about the expansion of the market principle were voiced by Habermas in the 1960s, Lukács in the 1920s, and Marx in the 1850s. The second danger is moral correctness – sanctimonious and authoritarian conformism, in Europe typically expressed through the recently implemented bans on smoking in public places. The third danger identified by Todorov is the topic of the present discussion: Fragmenting identity politics, where universal values are bracketed in the name of group self-determination, where commitment to shared societal projects is weakened, and where open conflict between identity based groups may easily flare up – not so much because they are culturally different, but because they have few interests in common. This is a vision of a classic plural society without a colonial ruling class.

I share all his anxieties, although I might have wanted to add one or two of my own. Yet there can be no easy way out. The only credible responses to the challenges facing humanity have to be ambivalent, doubtful, cautious, with instincts favouring pluralism and a multiplicity of voices rather than universal recipes for happiness. It is, in other words, the openmindedness of the Renaissance and the optimistic view of human nature of the Enlightenment we need to carry with us in this new, old world. It is an ironic fact – given that neither the USA of the Bush II era (2001–2008) nor its adversaries, real as well as imagined, are easily given to ambivalence – that the perhaps two most influential ideological thinkers of the American right are both partly correct, although they are wrong in crucial respects. Both are authors of widely distributed books about the "new world order", and both are keenly listened to in circles near the White House. However, they seem to be saying opposite things. Francis Fukuyama[23] has argued that Western democracy is the only game in town worthy of the name, and that global politics nowadays simply consists in attempts, by the less unfortunate nations, to achieve the same levels of consumption and liberal rights as those enjoyed by Americans. In this context, he also argues that the quest for recognition is fundamental and accounts for various forms of identity politics. The late Samuel Huntington,[24] on the other hand, has argued that current and future conflicts will take place not between ideologies, but between "civilizations", that is related clusters of cultures, such as the West, Islam, Hinduism and Eastern Christianity. Both Fukuyama and Huntington have been severely criticised by academics and other intellectuals, and this is not the place to repeat all the criticisms. On the contrary, I would argue that they are both partly right. Fukuyama is right to assume that recognition by others is a notoriously scarce resource in the contemporary world, but he is wrong in believing that recognition can only be achieved through the successful adoption of Western values and ways of life. Huntington is correct in saying that cultural differences are important, but he is hopelessly off the mark when he tries to map out those differences – his concept of civilizations is theoretically inconsistent and empirically misleading – and there is also no reason to assume that such differences necessarily lead to conflict. In fact, it has been argued that *none* of the armed conflicts of the 1990s were in line with Huntington's predictions.[25]

[23] See: FUKUYAMA, Francis. *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Avon, 1992.

[24] See: HUNTINGTON, Samuel. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of a World Order*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996.

[25] See: FOX, Jonathan. Clash of Civilizations or Clash of Religions: Which is a More Important Determinant of Ethnic Conflict? *Ethnicities*, 2000, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 295–366.

We must nonetheless concede that these conservative American thinkers correctly claim that recognition and respect are important, and that cultural differences matter in politics. Now, where does this lead us?

Well, it sems to lead us in the general direction of postcolonial theory. According to writers like Frantz Fanon, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Edward Said, the most difficult form of decolonisation consists in purging the mind of imperial categories and prejudices;[26] in developing a self, and an identity, and a self-consciousness which is not confined to the frame of mind imposed by the colonisers. In giving the people of the world the choice of being either with the US or with the terrorists, Bush II refused to acknowledge any position which is developed out of other concerns than the US–al-Qaeda axis. This attitude is the opposite of a cosmopolitan vision based on trust and the laws of gift exchange, and this way of thinking has had repercussions in many parts of our societies, from the idiotic and humiliating security checks in airports to earnest debates about the possible incompatibility of Islam and democracy. The postcolonial view, by contrast, insists on equality and mutual respect across differences.

In the context of the 21st century global security crisis involving US global military hegemony and violent reactions often based on the politics of identity (a situation which has deep structural dimensions and will therefore not end with the election of Obama in 2008), this starting-point implies certain preliminary conclusions: Effective human rights activism requires at least a minimal knowledge about local contexts and, particularly, about local conflicts. For poor countries to give wholehearted support to notions of the inalienable rights of the individual, more is required than decisions to cut aid to countries which are not yet committed to a free press and multi-party parliamentary democracy. What is needed are social reforms which give people increased control over their own existence – land reforms, job opportunities, accountable state institutions and so on, in order to be able to engage in symmetrical relationships with others in situations of work as well as play. As an implication, a global policy is needed where both big power (state, geopolitics) and small power (family, community) are more equitably distributed. This struggle, moreover, is as much about the means of communication as about the means of production. As the Algerian author Rachid Mimouni put it, what ought to be required of the Europeans is "an attempt to understand rather than material aid. What can democracy mean in a country like Ethiopia, where dozens die of starvation every day?".[27] There are, in other words, serious problems which are not solved by a formulaic introduction of human rights, and there are people who for perfectly understandable reasons see talk about the freedom of expression as a diversion from the real issues. One may by all means argue that Muslim men should give their wives the same rights and opportunities as, say, Scandinavian women have, but it would be silly to assume that they think in the same way as we do. If one does so – promoting human rights with the subtlety of a bulldozer – one implicitly says, as missionaries and foreign aid aristocrats have done for years, that the experiences of others have no value, and that the others had better become like ourselves before we bother to listen to them. *They* are obliged to accepting *our* gift, but there is no reciprocal obligation applying to ourselves. In effect, one says that they *do not exist* until they have become similar to ourselves. Respecting other life-worlds is, it must be emphasised, not the same as ethical relativism, but on the contrary a recognition of the need for a dialogue to go both ways, since the alternative is monologue or worse: the sound from one hand clapping.

[26] See: NGUGI wa Thiong'o. Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature, 1986.

[27] MIMOUNI, Rachid. *De la barbarie en général et de l'intégrisme en particulier*. Paris: Le pré aux clercs, 1992, p. 156.

The very conceptual pair "The West" and "Islam" is deeply problematic. "The West" is a vague relational, pseudo-geographic term, which includes the EU, the USA and their richest satellites (Canada, Norway etc.), as well as two of the easternmost countries in the world, Australia and New Zealand. Islam is a universalistic religion with adherents in every country, including all the Western ones. Could "The West and the East" have been used instead, as a more consistent dichotomy; or perhaps "Christianity and Islam" as in the old days? Hardly. All such dichotomies are Trojan horses concealing the hidden agenda of overstating the importance of one particular boundary at the expense of neglecting all the others.

There is little to indicate that religion as such can be a source of conflict. A Christian fundamentalist has more in common with a Muslim fundamentalist, at the level of basic values, than each of them has with non-religious persons. The forms of religiosity and the expressions of respect for al-Lah (or God, as we say in English), are similar in both cases. Some European Muslims have discovered this and have joined Christian Democratic parties. Moreover, there are important ecumenical dialogues taking place across "religious divides" in many places, including a major Islamic conference in Cairo in 1995, where central Muslim leaders condemned all forms of terrorism on Islamic grounds, calling for extensive dialogue with the other monotheistic religions from West Asia. At a more everyday level, it is easy to see that folk religiosity on either side of the Mediterranean, for example, has many similarities – saints, prayers, beliefs in the evil eye, and so on. Following the attacks of 11 September, one should also keep in mind, all Muslim heads of state except Saddam Hussain and the Taliban condemned the mass murder. Already on the same evening that the towers fell to the ground, the *Tehran Times* stated that Islam forbids suicide and that a murder of an innocent, according to the Koran, is tantamount to a murder of all humanity.

Malaysia's prime minister Mahathir offered to negotiate between the USA and its adversaries in the autumn of 2001, and this might have been a fruitful move: Malaysia is an overwhelmingly Muslim country, but it is also committed to Western notions of modernity. The USA did not take the offer up, and during a visit a month after the bombing had begun, I heard of no Malays who defended the terrorist attacks, but a lot of them seemed to admire Osama for his courage.

If Malaysia's "moderate Islam" had been granted its place in the sun, fewer Malays would have looked up to Osama bin Laden, and more Westerners would have discovered the similarities between the three great West Asian religions. Seen from a Hindu or East Asian point of view, the three religions appear as virtually identical. Even from the inside, the parallels are striking. The Muslims who have joined Christian Democratic parties in European countries have done so because Christians and Muslims have shared interests in fighting phenomena such as religious slackness, secularisation, birth control and divorces. During another Cairo conference, in the autumn of 1994, the Catholic Church and Muslim clerics joined forces to make a joint statement condemning abortion. Moreover, many – anthropologists, journalists and others – relentlessly show the absurdity of lumping together Indonesian rice farmers with Turkish merchants under the umbrella of "Islam"; just as intellectuals in Muslim countries are perfectly well aware that "the West" contains something close to a billion individuals with a variety of values, societies and ways of life.

... and boundaries become fuzzy frontiers.

In the misty dawn of time, when the world was still young and fathomable for the common people – say, 15 to 20 years ago – not only was it seemingly possible to understand global politics, one could also easily divide the world into discrete cultural regions – the world simply seemed to

be a composite of cultures. Thus, in Denmark they spoke Danish, and the Danes were liberal Protestants with characteristic Danish features, a characteristic body language, and a love for red sausages and pilsner beer; in Bangladesh the Bengali Muslims had their own customs and traditions; all the tribes in Kenya had their particular, unique cultures and languages, and so on. According to the prevailing worldview at that time there was not much contact between these cultures, although there was some exchange and mutual influence going on between them. Cultural contact, which developed through missionary work, aid, migration and the diffusion of modern institutions such as the modern nation state and the capitalist labour market, gave rise to a set of problems related to the encounter of separate cultures, each with its own special, internal logic. Often the results were misunderstandings and conflicts, and fairly often the stronger culture came to dominate the weaker. This was often referred to as cultural imperialism – a term which is today rarely used, though it was common in intellectual discourse a surprisingly short time ago.

This understanding of culture and cultural differences, which has been fundamental to European thinking ever since Romanticism and crucial both in nationalist ideologies as well as in cultural anthropological method, today, all of a sudden, appears old-fashioned and dated. This sudden change partly relates to a change in our way of thinking; however, far more important is the fact that the world has changed. Although cultures never have been completely isolated and without contact with other cultures, and despite the fact that cultural isolation often has been exaggerated both by scholars and others, the possibility of cultural isolation shrinks day by day. Both economy and politics have become globalized – that is, to an increasing extent processes affect people in different places at the same time as they cannot necessarily be traced back to one specific place. Because of advancements in communication technology, money, goods, people, ideas, and power travel across the world with little friction and at a high speed. There has been an enormous growth in air traffic during the past 60 years, and airline fares continue to drop. Satellite television, the Internet and related technologies have accelerated the development of a world without delays, where certain events can take place in all places at the same time and where distances are shrinking rapidly.

At the same time the huge contrasts in life opportunities across countries and regions create an unstable situation and make it advantageous for some people from poorer countries to move permanently or temporarily to rich countries. This is visible even in geographically peripheral regions such as Scandinavia, and questions concerning immigrants and integration are a recurrent issue in Scandinavian public debate.

Needless to say, changes of this magnitude will have consequences on a cultural level and consequently demand new ways of approaching culture and cultural differences. Some people believe that the processes of globalisation will lead to the annihilation of cultural differences and that human beings throughout the world are becoming more and more alike. This view is shared by both optimists such as the historian of ideas Francis Fukuyama, who hopes that the entire world will become politically and economically similar to the USA, and by pessimists such as Lévi-Strauss, who has for seventy years been convinced that the great cultural diversity of the planet is about to be lost. A different perspective, which for obvious reasons is common among intellectuals in poor countries, focuses on the neo-colonial aspects of globalisation; how economic differences are sustained, and how the seemingly boundless openness that has characterised the era of globalisation also has delimiting and marginalising effects.

A third approach involves the new forms of cultural variation that are evolving in the context of global modernity, because modernity does not equal cultural homogeneity. The globalisation

of culture does not create global people. But globalisation creates "cultural creoles", people who live at the intersection of different cultural traditions, constantly bombarded with impulses, expectations, demands, and opportunities from several different angles, and who continuously create themselves, not from ready-made prescriptions but by crafting their own unique, complex cultural fabric.

Let us take a random example of a country with an undisputed, bounded and rich national identity in a recent past, and ask: Is Sweden still Swedish? To some extent, the answer naturally is yes. The country is a sovereign nation, with a number of common public institutions, a rich and diverse public life that includes everything from voluntary organisations to national newspapers, and certain customs and traditions that are perceived of as typically Swedish. However, the notion of cultural "Swedishness" is under considerable pressure these days, and the content of the national cultural identity is as controversial, variable, ambiguous, and fuzzy in Sweden, as it is in many other countries. The primary reason is that cultural creolisation creates a discrepancy between theory and practice; the map and the territory no longer fit together, as it were.

The old map reveals a world of cultural islands. On each island, people have their special way of living, with their own traditions and so forth, but there is relatively little contact between the islands. It is extremely difficult to navigate the world of today using such a map. That is a main reason that a significant part of the intellectual community has been at work revising that map for some time. (Naturally, it is also possible to change the territory so that it matches the old map – a solution which might take the form of ethnic cleansing.) This revision process is evident in the bifurcation of history into different narratives – stories or histories; new nuances and a new diversity are incorporated into the conception of Swedishness, and new groups of people attain a sense of subjective and objective belonging to Swedish society. The same work is being undertaken in other countries as well – as mentioned, the Swedish example was chosen more or less at random. It is a necessary task.

In this kind of world, we are all strangers in a strange land. And at the same time, we are all in the same boat, divided by a shared destiny.

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GYVENANT „PERKAITUSIAME" PASAULYJE: SKIRTINGUMAS KAIP UNIVERSALI BŪSENA

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S a n t r a u k a

Šiame straipsnyje įvairiais aspektais aptariami šiuolaikinės globalizacijos proceso paradoksai vietinės regioninių kultūrų raidos kontekste. Nagrinėjant sudėtingą šio fenomeno sampratos koncepciją, jo santykį su kitomis istorinėmis ir lokalinėmis ekonominių bei socialinių formacijų apraiškomis, įsitraukiama į kitų šios tyrimų srities autoritetų – M. Castellso (1996), U. Hannerzo (1992, 1996), etc. – metodologinio bei tiriamojo pobūdžio diskusijas, pradėtas XX a. 9-ajame dešimtmetyje. Atkreipiamas dėmesys į tai, kad tiek globalizacijos šalininkai, tiek ir jos kritikai visų pirma turi pripažinti esminius šio proceso priežastinių ryšių, konkrečių apraiškų bei struktūrinių dalių įvairovės faktus, kur stabilius atskaitos taškus dažnai keičia iš esmės ar pavieniais epizodais nestabilūs bei subjektyviai suvokiami ir aiškinami pasaulio raidos veiksniai. Konkrečiais atvejais jie gali sudaryti įvairias globalizacijos sudėtinių dalių hierarchijos struktūras, jų tarpusavio įtakų lygmenis, objektyviai ar subjektyviai lemti daugialypius šio proceso pagrindinių stimulų išskyrimo bei apibrėžimo parametrus. Šia tema autorius polemizuoja su M. Hardtu, A. Negri (2000) pastabomis apie lokalių įtakų svarbos problemiškumą, šių įtakų silpnėjimą net ir ekonominiu bei socialiniu aspektu stipriose imperijose. Pratęsiamos diskusijos, pradėtos pastarųjų autorių tyrimų globalaus ir regioninio pobūdžio kapitalizmo raidos kontekste, kur M. Castellsas savo paties pasiūlytą globalizacijos proceso atskaitos sampratą „vietų sfera" (*space of places*) vis dažniau keičia kita, jau deteritorializuota sąvoka „srautų sfera" (*space of flows*).

Esmine atsvara *globalizacijos* sampratai autorius laiko sociologinių ir geografinių tyrimų literatūroje santykinai rečiau vartojamą *glokalizacijos* sampratą (Robertson, 1994). Šiame straipsnyje jis detaliau aptaria šios sampratos esmę, konkrečius jos vartosenos aspektus. Pagrindinį dėmesį jis skiria globalizacijos ir glokalizacijos procesų tarpusavio santykių bei įtakų tyrimams, pateikia konkrečius tokių apraiškų pavyzdžius („Microsoft“ kompanija, etc.). Autorius daro išvadą, kad priešprieša „lokalus – globalus“ pamažu praranda savo esminį kontrastingumą ir šios savokos vis dažniau ne tik daro įtaką, bet ir papildo viena kitą.

Greta minėtų sampratų šiame straipsnyje analizuojamos teorinės ir praktinės „refleksyvumo“ (*reflexivity*) ir „nestabilumo“ (*fluidity*) sąvokų interpretacijos. Jų kontekste daug dėmesio skiriama Z. Baumano (2000) pasiūlytai „nepastovaus modernumo“ (*liquid modernity*) sampratai, kuria nusakomas individualios identifikacijos, asmens socialinio bei ekonominio veiksnumo sąlyginumas „globalios eros“ akivaizdoje.

Straipsnio baigiamojoje dalyje atkreipiamas dėmesys ir į individo ar lokalios bendruomenės „teisių problemas“ (*rights issues*) globalizacijos ar glokalizacijos procesų bei tendencijų atžvilgiu.