

Citizenship, Narrative and Neo/colonial Histories One-day symposium

Abstracts

Madeline Clements, University of East London

'Each and every citizen of Balochistan is equally dear': how fine art and English-language literature reveal less comfortable positions

In 1947 the British formed the Pakistani province of Balochistan out of historically and ethnically disparate elements for geographical, administrative and security reasons. Baloch nationalists believed that the postcolonial state had agreed to the independence of the Khanate of Kalat, which they saw as the historic Baloch national state. When Kalat was forcibly "integrated" into Pakistan, they felt betrayed. Revolts ensued in the years 1948-9 following Kalat's accession; in the late-1950s after Balochistan was merged into West Pakistan under the geopolitical "One Unit" scheme; over the building of military bases and distribution of revenues from the Sui gasfields in 1963-1969; when President Bhutto dismissed the province's moderate nationalist government in 1973; and from 2005, following the rejection of Bugti's demands for greater control and his subsequent rebellion. As Declan Walsh observes, the ethnic Baloch 'have always been reluctant Pakistanis'.

Deep resentment regarding the Punjabi-dominated central government's exploitation of the oil and mineral wealth of Pakistan's largest province, ethnic 'swamping', and the abuse of its indigenous people continue to this day. Pakistani Army generals may assert that 'each and every citizen of Balochistan is equally dear'. But a picture of equality in terms of basic human rights, access to political life, or national belonging is not what emerges in journalistic reports or other cultural forms from this troubled region – where (thwarted by censorship) any picture emerges at all.

This paper will explore how recent English-language fiction, non-fiction and fine art works inform local and international understandings of how ethnic Baloch are positioned as (non-) citizens, and of how they would position themselves, in relation to the postcolonial nation state. It also questions how (far) artists and writers may intervene to expose Pakistan's failure to extend full human rights to its Baloch citizens.

Texts considered will include Jamal Ahmad's book of linked historical fiction, *The Wandering Falcon*; Mohammed Hanif's narration of the 'stories' of the families of disappeared people, *The Baloch Who is Not Missing*; and sculptures and paintings by contemporary Baloch artists.

Allison Drew, University of York

What does citizenship mean in Africa?

Citizenship denotes a two-fold relationship between individuals and the state, on the one hand, and amongst individuals under state authority, on the other. African anti-colonial and national liberation movements generally framed their citizenship aspirations by reference to citizenship within the imperial and colonial powers. New post-colonial African states, seeking incorporation into the international state system, typically adopted those citizenship norms. Nonetheless, reflecting state-society power relations following independence, criteria for citizenship were often modified as states sought to stabilize their social bases. Citizenship, as a political relationship, is always contested, even when codified by law. Using examples from Algeria and South Africa, this paper explores whether notions of citizenship modelled on European political relations have been adequate to address the political and social aspirations of formerly-colonized societies.

Jack Harrington, Open University

Imperial Subjects: Britain and French Algeria

If British traditions of political subjectivity were shaped by empire and by historic animosity with its neighbour, France, how were they influenced by the French empire? By answering this question, my paper explores the radical differences between metropolitan ideas of the citizen, state and society in Britain and France. It then compares the ways in which such ideas were applied through the government of societies under imperial rule.

The empirical focus of the paper is British perceptions of the French conquest of Algeria in the 1830s and 1840s. In particular, how did British commentators understand French Algeria in terms of issues of metropole and colony, of imperial occupation, of race and settler society, and of the 'civilizing mission' of empire? The parallels and contrasts Britons drew with their own larger and more politically diverse empire reveal a great deal about how that empire was imagined. My main sources are those writings which specifically compared the British and French enterprises. These include contemporary journalism and travel accounts and diplomatic records for the French and Ottoman Embassies and the Consul of Algiers, together with the writings of canonical political theorists such as Alexis De Tocqueville, John Stuart Mill, Harriet Martineau, Frederick Engels and Karl Marx.

David Johnson, Open University

Scripting post-apartheid citizenship at the University of Robben Island

Based upon the papers of Robben Island prisoners from the 1960s and 1970s now held at the Robben Island Archives at the Mayibuye Centre at the University of the Western Cape, the paper contrasts the constitutional preambles of Vietnam and Mongolia which prisoners circulated as blueprints for a post-apartheid settlement with the preamble of the 'Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996'. Reflecting upon the differences between the socialist constitutions embraced by anti-apartheid activists and the post-apartheid constitution (modelled principally upon the Canadian constitution), the paper poses questions about how citizenship is scripted within national/constitutional narratives, and about how legal-political identities are articulated within neo-colonial economies.

Pavan Kumar Malreddy, Chemnitz University of Technology

Margins of India: Kancha Ilaiah's Postcolonial 'Nationalogues'

It is often argued that nationalism as an emancipating paradigm/narrative has lost its political potency both within and outside of the postcolonial studies. As the idea of postcolonial (modern) nation became a contested and even a competing discourse, globalization, transculturality, and cosmopolitanism have come to replace 'nationalitarianism' as viable alternatives to nativism and indigenism. However, this presentation draws attention to a latent surge of postcolonial nationalism in the newfound genre of what I would call 'nationalogues'. By 'nationalogues' I refer to the semi-biographical texts that combine life history, travel writing, memoirs with those of the national autobiographies. Edward's Said's *Out of Place*, Michael Ondaatje's *Running in the Family*, Joe Sacco's and Edward Said's *Palestine*, Anand Giridharadas' *India Calling* are some of the prime examples of this genre that ceaselessly blend the personal, familial and communal predicament with the quest for national identities. Featuring Kancha Ilaiah's *Why I am Not a Hindu* (1996) and *Post-Hindu India* (2010) as the prime examples, this presentation sets out to explore how Ilaiah's narratives challenge the existing literary genres by virtue of the 'ethical bind' they impose upon their reader. In particular, by forging the narrative strategy of a 'collective monologue', Ilaiah's narratives resist all the generic parameters set forth by autobiographical studies. Accordingly, the presentation

underscores the affinity of Ilaiah's narrative strategies to the formative aspects of autobiography, testimonio, parabiography, and minor literature, while advancing the notion of 'nationalogue' as a monologue of a nation that arises out of lack of proper dialogue with the dominant discourse.

Javed Majeed, King's College, University of London

Indian constitutionalism and transnational cosmopolitics

This paper addresses the question of how the Indian Constitution negotiated the problem of postcolonial citizenship in a traumatic context through transnational and cosmopolitan dialogue. It argues that the Constitution and Indian nationality emerged from within a global and cosmopolitical field of meaning, fields which underpinned the historical development of some strands of anti-colonial nationalism. Ideas of a deterritorialised, spatially unbound India in parts of this nationalism continue to resonate today in conceptions of Indian citizenship.

The paper suggests that by considering the Indian Constitution as a process of cosmopolitan and transnational dialogue, we might move away from the paradigm of originality and imitation which grounds criticisms of it as derivative. Moreover, we need to distinguish the different relationships with cosmopolitanism in proposals put forward for the Indian Constitution in order to understand the range of options available in resolving the question of postcolonial citizenship.

The paper also attends to the aesthetics of constitutionalism by arguing that the discursive sites for the Indian Constitution should include not just the Constituent Assembly debates but also the dramatisation of different forms of self-rule in a variety of texts. Indian constitutionalism and its relationship with individuality was articulated through a variety of discursive sites, from political documents and debates to literary genres such as autobiographies. Within this variety, there is a conflict between the disposition of a cosmopolitan self in disarray evoked in life-writing such as Nehru's autobiographies, informing the language of secularized constitutionalism as an open-ended project, and the exclusionary effects of the nation-state as a mode of governance and political agent with its distinctive legacies of colonial authority. The paper ends by considering whether or not the Indian Constitution has overcome its colonial legacy, or whether its language of constitutionalism continues to constrict the play of the political imagination.

Alessandra Marino, Open University

Straight arrows and rebellious archers: Mahasweta Devi on the scandal of post/colonial citizenship

In presenting Indian citizenship as a contested issue, Rajeswari Sunder Rajan (2003) and Niraja Gopal Jayal (2013) highlighted the gap between the entitlement to citizenship rights and their actual enjoyment by the poor, rural villagers and women. Adivasis (or indigenous people) account for modern India's poorest and most neglected citizens. Following Gopal's analysis, I underline that the constitutional legislation on citizenship adopted a strategy of inclusion that depended upon retaining and creating categories of exception (such as STs and DNTs). The work of the activist and writer Mahasweta Devi denounces the persistence of the colonial nomenclature of 'notification', which is reminiscent of the Criminal Tribes Act passed by the British, among these modern categories of exception. In this paper, I look at Devi's novel *Chotti Munda and His Arrow*, whose story spans from colonial rule to independence, to discuss the place of tribals within the geography of contemporary Indian citizenship. The novel raises questions related to land rights after the primitive accumulation of resources carried out by the British and demonstrates the limits of difference management in creating subjects as governable. Devi's narrative, which supports the right of the tribals to live with dignity in the modern nation, prompts crucial questions on the universalizing ideal of citizenship. Finally, on the basis of Devi's fiction and non-fiction writing, I ask if orientalism can be considered as a critical tool to understand, and possibly counteract, adivasis' social and cultural discrimination.

Alex Tickell, Open University

Slum Citizenship in Fictions of the New India

The Indian novel in English has often been read as an extended (and often exilic or cosmopolitan) literary engagement with the postcolonial nation and the politics of nationalism, but - in contrast - this paper asks how recent fictions of the so-called 'New India' have engaged with civic politics and the partiality of democratic citizenship. My paper concentrates on the urban slum as a zone of insecurity but also as and as an important locus for political debates and literary imaginings about issues of equality and political enfranchisement in the 'New India'. Reviewing influential theoretical readings of slum citizenship and civic society by theorists such as Partha Chatterjee, my paper reflects on how slum-dwellers have been staged as 'political' in a number of different ways, and how their access to political representation is often achieved through collective identities or via influential intermediaries. I also take into account the importance of the slum as a supposedly alternative political space in which new forms of civic solidarity and collective acts of citizenship and a site that might be envisaged.

Texts to be considered will include Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games* and Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*.

Alice Wilson, University of Cambridge

Innovated citizenship in exile (Western Sahara)

Following the pattern of many post-colonial nation-states, Western Sahara's liberation movement has sought to implement a 'package' of citizenship, based on a liberal model of voting rights and belonging to a nation-state. Yet, unusually, these ideals have been pursued in a context of unfinished decolonization and exile. Following the partial annexation of Western Sahara by Morocco in 1975, the territory's liberation movement, Polisario, has governed a civilian population of Sahrawi exiles based in refugee camps in south-west Algeria. This paper examines the innovations introduced in exile to liberal ideals of citizenship. These include familiar and less familiar forms of inclusion, exclusion, and rights.