Revisiting Rabindranath Tagore

Toward an Inclusive Cosmopolitanism

A Master's Thesis in Literary Studies: Literature in the Modern Age

By

Alexander Pasma

0251658

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First Reader: Dr. Barnita Bagchi

Second Reader: Prof. Dr. David Pascoe

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Introduction

Since its inception, cosmopolitanism has been dominated by discussions along geographical lines. Given the etymology of the word, this is not surprising, as cosmopolitanism contains the Greek words 'cosmos' and 'polis', meaning 'world' and 'city'. Diogenes, one of the first to explicitly refer to himself as a citizen of the world – transcending the locality of the Greek city-state –, probably never had to account for these lines as borders, but these borders have become the common referent in cosmopolitanism for the last 200 years, if Kant's writings are taken as the beginning of that period. This is attributable to the growing sense of nationalism and patriotism that befell humanity. The nation-state has been of special interest, whether in colonial or postcolonial times. As the dominant political structure, the nation could become cosmopolitanism's antagonist, with its borders as the delimiting factors for human interaction based on mutuality. During these last centuries, nationalism has, instead of mutuality, created human stratification and hierarchy, though by different means in different times.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), the Indian poet, writer, painter and musician, aspired toward a type of cosmopolitanism that may be informative about nationalism's menace to society, and also show why many instances of cosmopolitanism have been unable to provide an alternative that suffices. This thesis then, wants to do several things. One of the aims is to reassess Tagore as an artist, and not just as the philosopher or the poet, to name a few categories. This enterprise is important for showing how his cosmopolitanism relies on his position as an artist, and that his cosmopolitanism is more than an intellectual effort. More precisely, the pre-eminence of intellect and reason are suspect in his account of cosmopolitanism, as they tend to essentialize humans into units of production and thereby installs a sameness that denies humanity of its full potential. Nationalism is the ideology that constructs such a limited vision of humanity,

therefore this thesis will discus the anti-nationalism of Tagore, as it shows why nationalism is disturbing the understanding of what humanity entails. It must therefore approach nationalism from a postcolonial point of view, to show what the ideology that Tagore noticed in the early twentieth century has amounted to. The kind of normativity that nationalism installs is countered by cosmopolitanism. Yet I maintain that the contemporary understanding of cosmopolitanism has become confused with globalization, and that it furthermore fails to account for some of the aspects Tagore mentions. I will therefore maintain that Tagore's cosmopolitanism is an inclusive cosmopolitanism, instead of a cosmopolitanism that merely debunks normativity.

Simultaneous with the rise of nationalism, cosmopolitanism has not focused only on matters of geography, but also on universal man. Arguing for citizenship of the world creates ethics, as the citizens have reciprocal responsibility, or else they would confine themselves to their separate localities again. The tendency to discuss such ethics in academic circles has resulted in accusations of the discussion being vague or too philosophical. Martha Nussbaum, who proposes a type of education that makes us "[look] at ourselves through the lens of the other, [lest] we come to see what in our practices is local and nonessential, what is more broadly and deeply shared" (11), has been at the receiving end of such criticism. One of her critics, Robert Pinsky, is clear when he states that "Nussbaum's essay expresses fear toward the eros of patriotism, but fails to imagine a counterbalancing eros of the cosmopolitan. For the cosmopolitan she substitutes the universal, a more abstract, less historical conception" (Pinsky 85). Nussbaum is indebted to Kant, who can be considered as the father of modern cosmopolitanism. His discussion on the value of rights is roughly comparable to Nussbaum's broadly and deeply shared 'things': "[i]t is [...] to be wondered at that the word *right* has not been completely banished from military politics as superfluous pedantry, and that no state has

been bold enough to declare itself publicly in favour of doing so. [...] This homage which every state pays (in words at least) to the concept of right proves than man possesses a greater moral capacity, still dormant at present, to overcome eventually the evil principle within him (for he cannot deny that it exists), and to hope that others will do likewise" (Kant 103). The focus in his account of cosmopolitanism is on the mutual hope that states should embrace to avoid violations against humanity. It is comparable to Nussbaum's insistence on what is shared, as both ideas rely on the supposition that countries will either supply or receive Kant's rights, which makes them into something that is broadly and deeply shared. Hope, however, is a problematic and uncertain principle to rely on. One attempt to dispose such problems, either Kant's or Nussbaum's, is to frame the discussion against or within the supposedly clear reality of the nation, like Kant himself does in his political writings. The introduction of hope or what is broadly and deeply shared cannot, however, withstand accusations of vagueness or indeterminacy by critics.

Strangely enough the trope of the citizen of the world is almost invariably framed against the citizen of the nation (or any other locality that has state-like qualities). Yet, if mutual understanding of people in the world is at stake, the focus on the status of *citizenship*, instead of a focus on worldliness, within cosmopolitanism is peculiar. Other categories are mentioned at times, yet they are usually not explicated, though they are, somewhere, somehow, involved as well:

> If we do not undertake this kind of educational project, we risk assuming that the options familiar to us are the only ones there are, and that they are somehow "normal" and "natural" for all humans. Much the same can be said about conceptions of gender and sexuality, about conceptions of work and its division, about schemes of property holding, or about the treatment of children and the aged. (Nussbaum 12)

These 'familiar options' are the options proposed by nationalism. The second sentence will be important for this thesis, as it wants to revive cosmopolitanism in its academic context. Despite its original meaning which connects it to citizenship, cosmopolitanism's rich history has the ability to include many other polarities than the local and the global.

It may seem strange, then, to strive for sharpening in cosmopolitanism with the aid of Rabindranath Tagore's work. His work is, par excellence, grounded in the classical dichotomy of East and West. Born in 1861 and died in 1941, his primary experience with the West was through the English colonization of India, though his cosmopolitan biography must include the various trips to Europe, America and Asia, which would substantiate his cosmopolitan ideals, as well. His commentary on the dangers of patriotic and nationalist sentiments of the indigenous Indians (the same commentary that inspired Nussbaum to write the essay previously cited from) is conceptualized through his understanding of English nationalism. As such, his accounts do not differ starkly from the traditional discussion in cosmopolitanism. Yet, they do reveal the mechanism behind Western nationalism, a mechanism that pervades not only a national-cosmopolitan dichotomy, but others as well.

Four chapters will be dedicated to the reworking of cosmopolitanism through Rabindranath Tagore's works. Three of those (chapters one, three and four) will focus on three of Tagore's primary writings: *Nationalism*, *Creative Unity* and *The Home and the World*. The first two works are collections of essays and the latter is a novel. All three works, however, show great interdependence and as such make for a largely consistent cosmopolitanism. All three were also written in a short time-span, between 1915 and 1922. The remaining chapter (the second), will center on the issue of globalization and its conflation with cosmopolitanism. Tagore moves to the background here, only to re-emerge in full force in chapter three.

The first chapter is centered on Tagore, and uses him to demonstrate some classical versions of cosmopolitanism. These versions are derived from the supposed dichotomy between the nation and the world. Yet, in Tagore this is essentially not a dichotomy. He maintains that nationalism, in its form of uncritical nation-worshipping, is harmful as it disregards that the same feeling may pervade other nations, which leads to a fight over values of which the preeminent value cannot be determined.

These fights are dominated by feeling, which is problematic for the appreciation of cosmopolitanism, as Nussbaum argues: "patriotism is full of color and intensity and passion, whereas cosmopolitanism seems to have a hard time gripping the imagination" (15). Pinsky has attacked her precisely on her lack of focus on feeling (eros) and the implied preference of reason: "The patriotic and the cosmopolitan: these are not mere ideas, they are feelings" (Pinsky 85). This is not a completely justified attack, since Nussbaum proposes that every patriotic feeling should be measured, to see if it stands the test of cosmopolitanism. That is in itself a genuine feeling about the capacities of reason and about the status of essential and nonessential feelings or acts inspired by feelings. What may be problematic is her focus on reason as the gold standard.

Hilary Putnam, then, is more substantial in his critique, as he argues that what is shared and essential must come in the guise of tradition: "In sum, we do not have to choose between patriotism and universal reason; critical intelligence and loyalty to what is best in our traditions, including our national and ethnic traditions, are interdependent" (Putnam 97). The difference from Nussbaum's position is not entirely clear. She mostly argues for the same evaluation of what is essential or not. The difference here seems to be that Nussbaum states it as a guide, whereas Putnam unequivocally points to the practical use of inherited beliefs.

This analysis of Nussbaum and Putnam is roughly guided by Saranindranath Tagore's[1] assessment of the same discussion. The statement of Nussbaum that we must understand what is broadly and deeply shared, demands the question "What is shared?" but even more so "How is it shared?" The deliberate use of the word 'things' earlier, alludes to the problem the first question poses. Putnam's response to the second question poses another problem, a problem equivalent to Nussbaum's suspicion of value of local beliefs. Consequently, I am greatly indebted to S. Tagore's aspiration to situate Tagore's philosophy, broadly speaking, between Nussbaum and Putnam. He notices Tagore's focus on reason, without losing an attachment to humanity. Tagore's conception of cosmopolitanism therefore evades the critique of an empty or thin cosmopolitanism, not grounded in reality, while it also evades accusations of an unaccounted favor for one or the other tradition. Tagore's writings can be classified as simultaneously reasonable and humanitarian, with accountability towards the local and its traditions (S. Tagore 1076-7).

The local or the particular is in constant danger of being nonspecific for the general. Kenneth Stunkel warns against a reception of Tagore that splinters his authorship, which disrupts any harmony or continuity in his writings as a poet. The main perpetrators are institutes of Cultural Studies or Subaltern Studies (Stunkel 238), who are involved in a mode of thinking that is a continuation of Western poststructuralist thinking (though they would certainly beg to differ).

Similarly, S. Tagore also touches upon this problem of poststructuralist thinking that suffuses thinking about the relation between the local and the global: "The problem with the postmodern account of plurality [...] is that it fails to answer the question of how otherness is to

[1] Saranindranath Tagore is the great-grandson of Rabindranath. To avoid confusion, any future reference of Saranindranath will be "S. Tagore".

be normatively conceived. If tradition is taken to be a fragment shorn of any commensurate relation with other traditions, then the ethical question of one's relation to the other emerges with great force" (1075). Various 'locals' that construct plurality lose their encapsulation within a larger framework if, like postmodern thinking instigates, such a framework is ultimately impossible to determine. The status of the local vis-à-vis the global then becomes indeterminate.

To some extent, this problem is tied to Tagore's supposedly problematic inconsistency. That allegation is frequently uttered, partially because he adheres to it himself. Therefore, the first chapter will treat several of such possible reasons for the accusation, partially also to construct an image of Tagore's thinking and to demonstrate what his ties are. It allows for an understanding of Tagore's vision on East and West and how they complement each other, together with his vision of the importance of the East. Inconsistency, if considered teleological, may be a correct attribution to parts of his philosophy, yet there may as well be more consistency or continuity than is suggested by the various unaccredited allegations. As such there will be an attempt to revise Tagore as not only a poet, for whom inconsistency is acceptable, or as a philosopher for whom it is almost forbidden, but as a creator or an artist. For the second part, his analysis of nationalism and cosmopolitanism is crucial.

The details of that analysis, though touched upon in the first chapter, will be a focal point in the second and third chapter. These two chapters work in tandem: the first will show where the discussion will head to and the second will give it more thrust. That project is not undertaken in isolation. The main point of these chapters will be an analysis of the globalized world and its relation to cosmopolitanism. With the shift in cosmopolitanism that occurred during the last two centuries, there has also been a shift in world affairs. Colonies became nations, which appeared to have gained independence, yet any discussion of cosmopolitanism must invoke their

interdependence as well. Even for a discussion of nationalism alone, rereading Tagore's analysis is invaluable. Though this will not be ignored at all, the discussion will also fold back upon the value of the local for the general.

The local is a problematical category. It can denote every group, as small as a family or tribe or as large as a nation, with internal affiliate ties, which makes it difficult to determine what the precise status of the local is if one wants to determine it in terms of size. This becomes more complicated by the propensity to treat locality as a natural given. James Clifford criticizes this behavior with the aid of Arjun Appadurai, along anthropological lines:

> Appadurai has challenged anthropological strategies for localizing non-western people as "natives". He writes of their "confinement", even "imprisonment", through a process of representational essentializing, what he calls a "metonymic freezing", in which one part or aspect of people's lives come to epitomize them as a whole, constituting their theoretical niche in an anthropological taxonomy. (100)

Essentializing is the key here, whether it is conducted by an outsider (the anthropologist) or an insider (like the citizen). Clifford rightfully poses the "theoretical niche" against an essence. That is the problematic tendency, not only in "anthropological strategies", but in nationalistic thinking as well. Coming from an anthropological point of view, Clifford then extends the notion of the local with the "regional/national/global nexus" (100). What he proposes is an extension of the local towards a larger conception, but he continues to see them as successors, rather than equivalents that are enveloped by the term 'local'.

These categories, whether one refers to them as 'local' or 'national', are dissimilar from cosmopolitanism, which for Clifford is connected to the image of traveling. For the distinction between the local and the global, Clifford relies on travel as an idea that creates hybridity: "[a]nd

once the representational challenge is seen to be the portrayal and understanding of local/global historical encounters, co-productions, dominations, and resistances, then one needs to focus on hybrid, cosmopolitan experiences as much as rooted as on rooted, native ones" (101). The encounters and the corresponding categories are all supposed to bridge the gap between the local and the global. I propose to change the final part of that sentence into: one needs to focus on hybrid, cosmopolitan experiences *as* rooted, native ones. This has to be performed to undo every theoretical niche as an essentialized group. Clifford earlier writes (by citing Eric Wolf): "Rather than thinking of social alignments as self-determining, we need—from the start of our enquiries—to visualize them in their multiple external connections" (100). Again, this citation could do without the stress on the external part of the connections. A focus on connections as such is more interesting.

This strategy is important to withdraw every local group from its "confinement" or "imprisonment". The rhetoric has to shift from the evaluation of the "sender" or the "receiver" toward the "message".

Experience, then, is what may count as the message. It is important to break up the traditional dichotomy of the local and the global. By discussing this process, Tagore's conception of experience is of importance, as it connects people not by their being a citizen of a nation, but as people who, ideally, relate to each other through affect. These chapters will do that, with the aid of not only Clifford, but also others like Bruce Robbins and Paul Gilroy, who have discussed the relation between the local and the global, and the distinction between this frequently occurring pair and cosmopolitanism as well. Ultimately, the idea of experience is the most important marker of what I call Tagore's inclusive cosmopolitanism. Incidentally, his idea of experience is not limited to relationships with others, but also to a harmonious relation with

nature, both in the appreciation of it and in its careful, ecological use. This factor attributes to the idea of inclusive cosmopolitanism and will therefore be considered as well in these chapters.

In the final chapter, I will focus on the individual, its identity and the quality of its relation to the other. Tagore's writings are again useful for some of their anti-normative facets, since many of the norms he describes dominate the forming of identity.

One way to approach this chapter might be through Judith Butler's *Precarious Life*. In this work, there is a chapter (*Violence, Mourning, Politics*) in which she considers what it means to be human. Though the 'politics' in the title might be distracting, this chapter mostly tries to identify human affinity through loss (hence the mourning): "Despite our differences in location and history, my guess is that it is possible to appeal to a "we", for all of us have some notion of what it is to have lost somebody" (20). It is an intriguing idea to consider this as the bedrock of humanity, but the negative tropes that permeate this description are slightly bothersome. Butler's loss repeats the categorical insistence of Nussbaum's anti-patriotism or Putnam's unhindered preference of tradition. Butler, namely, argues against the assumption that "there is a human condition that is universally shared – this is not yet the case" (20). To start, then, with loss and the supposition that it may be a solid foundation, that it will forge the demanded connection, feels self-contradictory. If loss is limited to losing a loved one, then it is too narrow for a definition of human universality, yet if loss can incorporate various types of losing, then it is too unstable as a foundation.

Some proponents of queer theory have adopted a strategy that opposes the negative tropes that border on human incoherence. The choice for queer theory may appear somewhat arbitrary, but it will serve as a proper example of how other disciplines can and must be incorporated in a theory of cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism that centers itself merely on

internationalism, neglecting communities that cannot be determined along geographical lines, is void. Yet, queer theory is not only interesting as an example, as some of its proponents have a view on human contact that is akin to Tagore's. Most notably Michael Snediker focuses on the positive in human contact. Such optimism or utopianism must, however, not be confused with aspects of futurity or hope. The stress is much more on apprehending human contact positively. Though Snediker's arrows are more pointed to the Butler of the early and mid 90's, with her emphasis on gender, sexuality and the ways in which they are performed, it is applicable to *Precarious Life* as well, which is largely continuous with her earlier work. Snediker's idea of optimism is an optimism that is immanent. He argues for the theoretical re-appreciation of terms that are either considered naïve or "ostensible obvious" (100). As such, he argues not only against the negativity of Butler, but also against the idea that incoherence is ultimately what humanity amounts to. Among the terms he invokes are love and experience, terms that resonate with Tagore's inclusive cosmopolitanism.

To demonstrate what kind of optimism Snediker refers to, his analysis of the smile, in gay cruising, is helpful:

> There are many smiles involved in cruising. First comes the smile across the room, or across the street. [...] [I]deally this smile meets with a smile that communicates a specular interest on the part of the other. If smile no. 1 is not met by smile no. 2, smile no. 1 may as well not have occurred. It is a tree falling in the forest without an audience, and its being recognized without reciprocation perhaps results in embarrassment (but not necessarily to termination of the smiling game). If, however, smile no. 1 is reciprocated or reflected back by smile no. 2, then smiling escalates and intensifies. (63)

Naturally the smile is used here is a direct reference to optimism, but even without such an evident trope, the idea of reciprocity is valuable for an analysis of Tagore's focus on an experience of affect. Although one aspect of this experience relies on a supposed natural bond between man and woman, which may seem contradictory to a queer idea, Tagore argues with a consonant insistence on optimism. Though he cannot escape normativity as such (which is exactly not his purpose, nor Snediker's), he does escape the dogma that dictates that within a marriage, man is man and woman is woman, and that they live separate lives together, and thereby conform to a model that supposes superiority of the man over the woman. Tagore, on the other hand, understands marriage as a way to live life more wholly.

I want to demonstrate that that idea – to live life more wholly – is at the core of Tagore's thought, whether in its affinity for another person or for its surroundings. This thesis then, wants to argue that an empty or thin cosmopolitanism can be filled, can be thickened, with the help of Tagore's understanding of experience, by discarding its sole focus on the geographical lines along which cosmopolitanism is mostly understood and by tying it to the idea of experiencing, especially in difference. As such, cosmopolitanism can truly become a means instead of a goal.

Rabindranath Tagore and Nationalism

1.1 An introduction to Cosmopolitanism and Tagore

Three figures of Tagore have dominated the (western) critical reception of him through his texts: Tagore as nationalist, Tagore as a critic of nationalism and Tagore as cosmopolitan. Many other aspects of his personality and theory have accompanied any of these figures, aspects that in themselves may result in any other figuration of Tagore, but I maintain that the aforementioned categories are the overarching categories. A figuration of Tagore as a cosmopolitan must account for several of these 'accompanying aspects', such as spiritualism or creativity, whereas a construction of Tagore as a spiritualist can be performed in a textual vacuum, without any consideration of his (anti-)national tendencies. And even if one has a dissenting opinion on the above statement, there is still the undeniable fact that the analyses of Tagore's texts have resulted in contradictions like the national figure versus the anti-national, both in his theory and about his personality.

Two factors have contributed to these inconsistencies. The first is that Tagore himself is consistently inconsistent, as has been noted by Hogan (10-11). The second is the large theoretical shift from authors (and their texts) as national figures (or emblems) to internationalization or transnationalization of authors and texts in the last three decennia of the twentieth century. These two factors will be explored below to establish the background of the debate about and around Tagore. Combined with this there is a prospect of explaining some key notions for this chapter. It is not the aim to overcome the contradiction between Tagore as a national and a cosmopolitan figure, as that discussion has favored the latter (rightly so) for quite some time now, yet it is important to explain this discussion, as it aptly demonstrates why Tagore could become a

cosmopolitan figure at all. More precisely, it is the aim to overcome that discussion. Furthermore, to assess what cosmopolitanism entails and how Tagore's theory fits that image, it is necessary to focus on the terminology used here, as cosmopolitanism bears several connotations with it, varying from globalism to internationalization to universalism.

Finally, as some critics have pointed to Tagore's inconsistencies, he has become implicated in a political discussion that is not corroborated by his a-political and philosophical interests in his later life. This confusion is understandable, as his philosophy is firmly grounded in social reality and its inequalities. In Tagore's time, politics started to play a pivotal role in the construction of society. Therefore Tagore has to engage with politics, but not with a politics of his own. Tagore's goals are idealistic, akin to those of several strands of cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitan ideals, however, are ultimately political ideals and as a result this thesis cannot avoid politics, nor does it want to.

Although this chapter focuses mainly on Tagore and his prose, these aspects cannot be analyzed in isolation. By favoring cosmopolitan readings over nationalistic readings, this assertion must be accounted for. The reasons for his cosmopolitan image can be found both in his life and in his work. By merely regarding his life, the trope of traveling is probably the most prominent. He was seventeen when he first traveled to England, and he has since then never ceased to visit other countries once in a while. Naturally, being a mere traveler does not make Tagore a cosmopolitan. His experiences with the other cultures he encounters, prompt him to construct a vision of shared ideals and reciprocal learning. As will be displayed below, Tagore's respect for the knowledge of the West results in a statement to incorporate such knowledge into an Eastern project of understanding the world. Likewise, the spirituality of the East is a fruitful source for Western compassion with the rest of the world. And, according to Stephen Hay,

Tagore's understanding of the East is a conglomerate of, predominantly, India, China and Japan (11). Because of the size of this construction and the scale on which Tagore operates, he is vulnerable to accusations of ignorance of local problems, especially when this position is combined with Tagore's tendency to resort to metaphysics. Such accusations have indeed been uttered; varying from insinuations of soft-headedness by Bertrand Russell (Stunkel 248) to complaints about his sense of the nitty-gritty reality by several, Indian, social critics (Collins 1). The criticism is quite unjust, as the combination of a keen sense of reality with the metaphysics is especially productive in a cosmopolitan interpretation of Tagore's writings.

To construe an image of Tagore in cosmopolitanism, an evaluation of the different forms of cosmopolitanism provides the premise for the inquiry of the nationalist and anti-nationalist readings of his work that have developed over time. Yet, the very use of the word 'cosmopolitanism' is problematic in a reading of Tagore. As Kripalani states in her introduction, Tagore "[u]nlike many modern thinkers, [...] had no blue-print for the world's salvation. He believed in no 'isms'" (10). This refusal to avoid dogma's is also noted by Hogan, who mentions that Tagore "often did not aim at establishing a particular position, but rather at disturbing standard beliefs, opening up other, unacknowledged possibilities" (11). These citations are related to the inconsistencies that have gained attention. There is, however, something problematic about Hogan's statement. It politicizes Tagore too much by suggesting that he provides alternatives. Hogan even refers to Tagore's "political writings" (13) and his "political ideals" (22). Certainly, Tagore accounts for politics in his texts, which is unavoidable when discussing the state of a society. As Kripalani aptly explains, "[n]o sharp lines can be drawn to mark off the political from the moral, the social from the economic aspects of life" (10). Tagore could never have dispelled politics from his philosophical, social writings, but does that make his

writings political? I maintain that he does not replace dogmatic beliefs with his own, though he is ignorant of certain dogma's, and that henceforth his ideals should not be termed 'political'. Not, at least, in a comprehension of politics as global affairs. They are not necessarily anti-political or a-political, but those terms are closer to Tagore's project of deconstructing nationalism than Hogan's words suggests.

Tagore may not have believed in 'isms', and he indeed has explicitly stated that "[n]either the colourless vagueness of cosmopolitanism, nor the fierce self-idolatry of nation-worship, is the goal of human history" (*Nationalism* 5). Kripalani, however, suggests that there is a singular construction at the heart of every 'ism'. This begs several questions. Is cosmopolitanism in the same category as globalism? Or is it in the same category as, say, spiritualism? The suffix '-ism' has many connotations, varying from a process to behavior to a doctrine (according to *Collins English Dictionary*). And if the search in the dictionary is continued, there is an intuitive difference between globalism and cosmopolitanism; where the former is attached to a doctrine – the attitude or policy of placing the interests of the entire world above those of individual nations (in *Random House Dictionary*) –, the latter is closer to the process or the behavioral – cosmopolitan: a person who is free from local, provincial, or national bias or attachment (in *Random House Dictionary*). Cosmopolitanism then becomes a strategy of thinking freely, without strict adherence to the manifestations of the local, about interpersonal relations. Nevertheless, the understanding of cosmopolitanism somewhat depends on connotation, if the dictionary is followed, as it is equally defendable to view cosmopolitanism as an act of thinking about the world on a larger scale than the local, yet not on a *different* scale. Tagore, as has been demonstrated, rejects cosmopolitanism as a goal, but the dictionary evokes

the suggestion that the process is more important. If that is the case, cosmopolitanism becomes a mode of engaging, instead of the aim.

A notion of cosmopolitanism as a mode of engaging is, however, irritatingly vague and problematic. Fuyuki Kurasawa has pointed to the distinction between various forms of 'isms' with regard to cosmopolitanism, arguing that some of these various understandings cannot be so easily separated. He uses the classical distinction between cosmopolitanism from above and from below. Cosmopolitanism from above is a "socially minimalist position [that] promotes an understanding of global solidarity [...] [as] a process of trickle-down integration of the world's citizens through their adherence to a common political culture composed of universal principles (participatory democracy, human rights, etc.) entrenched in international law and global institutions" (234). Such an approach is quite similar to the definition of globalism, with the bonus of a few ideals, which are not so prominent in globalism. Kurasawa counters such a singular explanation by adding: "[a]lthough this kind of project from above is essential to achieving a sense of solidarity without bounds [...], cosmopolitanism is, just as importantly, a transnational mode of practice whereby actors construct bonds of mutual commitment and reciprocity across borders through public discourse and socio-political struggle" (234). This, then, is cosmopolitanism from below. Here, the idea of cosmopolitanism as a process surfaces again, with the emphasis on the construction of bonds and its affects.

These affects are not dictated by laws, rights or declarations; they appear from practice. Both positions, however, suffer from what Kurasawa calls thinness, an accusation I have alluded to in the introduction. Even the laws or rights are undergirded by an understanding of universalism that emerges out of reality. How, then, do principles like human rights or 'mutual commitment' materialize? And what is the role of the individual? The first question is

complicated and at the very core of cosmopolitanism. The second question can be answered forthright, with the aid of Kurasawa. He states that "against the argument that human togetherness requires a difference-blind cultural assimilationism, recognition of global cultural pluralism is becoming a *sine qua non* for establishing viable solidaristic ties" (235). This answer is still very much part of the thinness, as these 'solidaristic ties' invoke the first question again, but it at least dispels a vague, ethereal conception of a universal humanity. In his philosophical essays, Tagore scantily touches on the individual. Therefore, using the novel *The Home and the World* at some points is indispensable, as it considers the reality of local people with their local problems, though they are ultimately tied to, as the title indicates, the world.

The problem of materialization, however, remains unanswered in the novel. In general, the thickness that ought to arise out of thinness is a dubious form of materialization for many scholars of cosmopolitanism. Kurasawa asserts that "cosmopolitans' distrust of thick social relations – which they equate too readily with the primordialism of ethnonationalism and other "pre-political" identities – causes them to adopt an excessively formalist and thin conception of the socio-cultural dimensions of collective existence" (234). Against such formalism, Tagore's essays provide more insight. Saranindranath Tagore has taken up this position as well, thereby placing him between conceptions of cosmopolitanism by Martha Nussbaum and by Hilary Putnam (among others). Their understanding of what cosmopolitanism entails differs by their classification of tradition. According to S. Tagore, for Nussbaum tradition is relatable to thickness and hence to normativity, which ultimately treasons reason.

Against Nussbaum, S. Tagore frames Putnam, who argues for the incorporation of tradition into cosmopolitan thinking. This brand of cosmopolitanism is epitomized as: "the cosmopolitan world view ought to be rejected because it subscribes to a conception of reason and

moral life that does not pay sufficient heed to the play of inheritance and tradition in the constitution of the human condition" (1073). Perhaps such a comparable and intuitive understanding of cosmopolitanism is what instigated Tagore's rejection of the "colourless vagueness of cosmopolitanism" (*Nationalism* 5). This is not just a hint, as the claim against what Nussbaum sees as the" value of cosmopolitanism, charged with a moral resonance" – "a detached, transcendent view of rationality" (S. Tagore 1071) – is substantiated by Tagore's focus on concepts like Truth, education and creativity. Education and creativity will be discussed elsewhere in this chapter, but as Truth, with a capital T, strikes the eye, it will be shortly explained for now.

Tagore at times writes Truth with the capital T to put emphasis on the singularity of it. It happens both in *Creative Unity* and in *The Home and the World.* The latter, however, cannot be used, as it is a translation, which can therefore not account for Tagore's specificity of using a capital once in a while. In *Creative Unity*, originally written in English, he states that "Truth is the One, not the disjointed multitude" (15). In the stroke of a sentence, a part of Nussbaum's interest in Tagore becomes evident, though she acquires it through *The Home and the World.* Especially when considering her ideal to "better solve our problems by transcending local allegiances and submitting ourselves to the universal and transcendent ideals of rationality and justice that belong to no particular community or nation" (S. Tagore 1071), her connection to Tagore's statement becomes evident. As the locals are pitted against each other by allegiance, a disjointed multitude arises. Tagore's Truth then becomes a jointed multitude, which is comparable to the ideals mentioned in the citation. The means to achieve such Truth are formed by Tagore's specific image on education and creativity, and partially repeated by Nussbaum,

who uses them to ground her attack on patriotism. Again, comparing Tagore's anti-nationalism with Nussbaum's own anti-patriotism seems plausible enough.

Nussbaum may have willfully ignored Tagore's affinity with tradition in her reading of *The Home and the World*, as one of the protagonists, Nikhil, definitely aspires to Truth (or universalism) by adhering to tradition, though he is, admittedly, an ambivalent figure as he has bouts of progressiveness. Nikhil is a landlord in Bengal, whose life and wife change at the dawn of the Swadeshi movement, the social reform movement that swept over India between 1905 and 1908. Sandip, who embodies the proponent of this movement, starts an intellectual relationship with Nikhil's wife, Bimala, which affects the harmony of their lives. Yet, to demonstrate Nikhil's ambivalence, this would not have happened if he had not freed Bimala from her existence of seclusion.

In India (which at that time also included Pakistan and Bangladesh) there is a tradition of Purdah that keeps women in the inner compartments of the houses, called the Zenana. Nikhil tries at length to convince her to leave this and enter the world, and comes up with arguments like: "Here you are wrapped up in me. You know neither what you have, nor what you want" (7). Here it becomes evident that Nikhil wants women, like men, to live freely and wholly with the whole world at their disposal. The tradition to keep women secluded must be overcome to achieve this. At some point he succeeds, but as she enters the world, other problems occur.

Bimala becomes obsessed with helping Sandip. The Swadeshi movement, with its goal of stimulating domestic industry, becomes tied to a nationalist cause as well. Sandip is clear about his aim when he states that

> [e]very man has a natural right to possess, and therefore greed is natural. It is not in the wisdom of nature that we should be content to be deprived. What my mind covets, my

> surroundings must supply. This is the only true understanding between our inner and outer nature in this world. Let moral ideals remain merely for those poor anaemic creatures of starved desire whose grasp is weak. (26)

Essentially, Sandip's argument repeats those of Putnam, in which there is no function for vague, moral ideals. Here, though, the danger of such a position becomes noteworthy. There is space for tradition or custom here, with the appeal to the true understanding between inner and outer world. Slowly, this custom becomes conflated with a natural right. As such, naturalness, nationalism and other categories become entangled with the result of normativity. According to S. Tagore, Putnam is aware of this problem, and therefore appeals to rationality as well: "Putnam maintains that rationality itself needs to be negotiated through the encounters between traditions, but again it seems that such negotiations must summon some conception of rationality *transcendent to tradition* that would allow for the negotiation to occur in the first place" (1073). Nikhil's position, counteracting Sandip, becomes intelligible by comparing it to Putnam.

The vagueness of Putnam's ideal is substantiated by Nikhil. His ideals may seem as vague, but his actions are interesting. By freeing his wife from Purdah, he has expressed: "What I want is, that I should have you, and you should have me, more fully in the outside world. That is where we are still in debt to each other" (7). Nikhil's ideals are not natural rights and the accompanying benefits, but a life lived more fully, in this case his marital life. This statement also implies harmony through difference. Without any difference, Nikhil and Bimala would not have been in debt to each other. Also, in the turmoil that ensues with the coming of Swadeshi, Nikhil's focus is on equality. Here, I will not explore the details of the turmoil, as it suffices to mention that Muslims and Hindus are involved in it. Both feel that their existence is threatened, and they respond with violence. Nikhil defends the rights of the Muslims, who have a lower

social status, yet by the end of the novel, he also reacts to the Muslims' violence by riding out to defend the Hindus. That he is severely wounded afterwards is discomforting, as it shows what grief is caused by adhering to natural rights that become blended with destructive forces like greed.

Nationalism as such is not really in view here, as these problems are mainly internal problems, but the idea that communities, whether they are defined by religion, social status, locality or any other mix of these and other communal ideas, become destructive when their difference becomes the goal, instead of a means, is relevant. A discussion between Nikhil and Sandip sheds some light on this assertion. Nikhil says: "I would know my country in its frank reality, and for this I am both afraid and ashamed to make use of hypnotic texts of patriotism", to which Sandip responds: "What you call hypnotic texts I call truth. I truly believe my country to be my God. I worship Humanity. God manifests Himself both in man and in his country" (19). The hypnosis is what is dangerous for harmony. It has the capacity to construct dogmatic beliefs, without regarding a different view. Nikhil response is characteristic: "If that is what you really believe, there should be no difference for you between man and man, and so between country and country" (19). Sandip admits to this, yet exacerbates the problem: "Quite true. But my powers are limited, so my worship of Humanity is continued in the worship of my country" (19). Nikhil does not have the final word in this discussion, but he acutely points to the result: "I have nothing against your worship as such, but how is it you propose to conduct your worship of God by hating other countries in which He is equally manifest" (19)? This question relates to the difference between society and the nation. Tagore makes an explicit difference between the two in terms of means and goals. As this will be explained later, it suffices to say that Tagore, here

with the voice of Nikhil, does not oppose certain forms of social organization, nor does he object to politics per se.

Nikhil's ideals manifest themselves in the defense of people regardless of their heritage or beliefs. When adopted by the many, such behavior can restore balance. Though tradition is not directly associated with Nikhil's behavior, there is no fundamental reason why his behavior could not become tradition. Tradition is merely a set of shared practices, and Nikhil's philosophy of acquiring truth is acted upon in practice. Therefore, philosophical engagement within cosmopolitanism is needed, but a turnover of philosophy into action and, hence, tradition is required as well. Tradition is, after all, a repetitive gesture and as such refers to the already expressed idea that there is a sense of immanence and inclusion in Tagore's cosmopolitanism. Though it is not strictly necessary to refer to such immanence in terms of tradition, for it is closely associated with normativity, it may have a part in Tagore's cosmopolitanism.

Consequently, the reverse action from traditional acts into philosophical thinking should also be evaluated. In Tagore's case, tradition and philosophy build towards a truth (Nikhil's fully lived life), but they may also inspire cosmopolitanism. Yet each tradition must be approached cautiously, as they may very well be the result of a trend that disjoints. It is therefore that Nikhil wanted to liberate his wife, as her seclusion hindered a life that aspires toward truth or fullness.

With the invocation of Tagore's Truth, this chapter has slowly turned towards his inconsistency again. He uses the concept in both his essays and his prose, yet not very consistently. A search in *Creative Unity* has resulted in 128 hits. Only a few are written as 'Truth' (not counting those that start a sentence). The difference between the terms 'truth' and 'Truth' is not exactly self-evident. Both terms may relate to the metaphysical, or spiritual, as is evident in the following sentence: "Within him [man] has glimpses of the Infinite, which give

him the assurance that this truth is not in his limitations, but that this truth can be attained by love" (*Creative Unity* 75). Though the referent of 'this truth' is not clear from this citation, it is clear that it relates to the Infinite, which is not just a physical term, and love. Both are as metaphysical as the "Truth that is One" cited earlier. This is roughly comparable with the situation of Nikhil. He rejects the formal traditions of Purdah and the reverence of the wife for a husband in general, but he does not reject norms altogether. The pair of husband and wife is still fundamental for society. Whereas according to Hogan Tagore's interest is largely in the subversion of preconceived standards, here is a norm that is not subverted, but merely reexamined by Tagore. Naturally, Tagore is not militant in the subversion of every standard, but it may be interesting to evaluate why Tagore disposes some norms and keeps other. It is, therefore, interesting to analyze if a shift occurs from the infelicitous to the felicitous in Tagore, and more precisely, if this apparent inconsistency may in fact be consistency in disguise.

Tagore's apparent inconsistency, and hence his elusiveness, reveals itself both in his life and through (and in) his works. This has already been demonstrated partially, but in order to not merely affirm that such 'accusations' apply to him, the occasions for such a reception of his work will be explained below.

1.2 A short Biography of Tagore

Being born to a wealthy but almost ascetic father, Tagore could simultaneously afford him a certain carelessness about his education, acquire knowledge about Western culture and cultural heritage, and imbibe himself with the local and its sublime surroundings, much in the vein of his father. Tagore's lack of care for formal education is evidenced by Kripalani, who registers Tagore's experience with this British form of education: "The only memories of this school

which survived in his later life were the foul language of one of the teachers which shocked the child and the compulsory community singing of an English song before the lessons began" (42). Tagore's reaction is exemplary for his later thoughts on education and creativity, when he comments on the singing by saying that it sought to "introduce an element of cheerfulness into the daily routine" (quoted in Kripalani 42). He was then quickly saved from this routine by his father, who brought him along on one of his many travels to the Himalaya (Kripalani 49). Tagore's later contempt for routine does not denote a lack of received education, as his father made him read "select pieces from Sanskrit, Bengali and English literature" (Kripalani 50) and maintained a strict daily regime (52). During this travel, Tagore and his father visit Santiniketan, and this becomes an important place for Tagore's "intellectual and spiritual development" (Kripalani 50), as it is the place where he starts an alternative to regular education many years later. The key contributor to this development is his immersion in nature. Kripalani holds that Tagore's encounter with the surroundings of Santiniketan was strangely characteristic:

> There is nothing very beautiful or enchanting about the landscape or climate of Santiniketan which would explain its extraordinary hold on the mind of Rabindranath and of the generations of students who were taught there. In fact, the soil is poor, the weather in summer rigorous, made more so by lack of an adequate supply of water. Its chief merit was its openness, its long stretches of barren fields broken by ravines of red earth, its bare and rugged simplicity – the earth and sky facing each other, naked and unashamed. Coming from the confines of the brick-and-mortar prison of the Calcutta mansion, this freedom of space must have seemed to the child a very heaven. (50-1)

Despite the somewhat romantic nature of this assertion, with the implication of the sublimity of the barren landscape, the importance of this place for Tagore is rightfully stressed here. Tagore

was indeed romantically engaged with nature, and an important part of his inclusive cosmopolitanism has its origin not only in human but also in natural affairs.

A few years later, was sent to public school in England at the age of seventeen, without any noticeable problems regarding a lack of knowledge (Kripalani 81), though it remains somewhat obscure what Tagore was supposed to learn at this school and whether it was a simple continuation of his earlier education. Soon after his attendance, however, he receives word that he should leave school and live on his own, for the benefit of his education (81). Though he still obtains education from tutors, this example show the ease with which Tagore could veer between what has become traditional education and untraditional education, which is another of the many advantages of being of high-caste descent. Though he did in fact receive a fair share of formal education, it seems, somehow, that Tagore could also afford to escape the everydayness the less fortunate have to endure, as he was rich and his father was educated enough to understand the importance of education. Although the inconsistency in his education is not exactly related to the type of inconsistencies Hogan probably refers to, it establishes some background on Tagore's way of thinking about the joyless organization of formal education and, moreover, on his emphasis on education that is attached to a lived, or experienced, reality.

After these educational years, Tagore has made regular visits to England, America, Japan and several other countries, and he found both praise for and disapproval of aspects of these cultures, for instance in the treatment of women in England. According to Kripalani, during his first, aforementioned visit

> [Tagore] began genuinely to admire the charm and strength of character of women brought up in a free society. This admiration was freely expressed in his letters written home and published in *Bharati* where he compared the position of women in the two

> societies, western and his own, and sought to show how the same sex was a source of strength to one society and a source of weakness in the other. (86-7)

Contradicting this sort of statement is his philosophical assertion about women in a nationalist society. If he, with Nikhil's voice, writes that man and woman should live life fully, then the inspiration for the necessary freedom for woman might indeed have originated in England. On the other hand he maintains that the formal rigor of the West (as in his education) obstructs truth as well.

The daily routine of the English-oriented public school criticized by Tagore resonates in the "mechanical organization" that is at the heart of nationalism. Tagore argues that "[i]t is owing to this that war has been declared between man and woman, because the natural thread is snapping which holds them together in harmony" (*Nationalism* 10). His former admiration of the role of women is forgotten when he dissects nationalism, a role that has its base in England as well. Of course, there is a forty-year stretch between his first visit to England and the appearance of *Nationalism*, which may explain Tagore's shift regarding women, but, as I have asserted, the mechanical organization that restricts women is not entirely absent in 1873 English thinking.

This is more likely the sort of inconsistency mentioned earlier. Yet, there is a distinction between the two positions that is worth considering. His admiration is directly related to a positive experience with the girls of a London family, at whose house he resides, whereas his worry about the natural bond between man and woman is strictly philosophical, as the result for reality of this fracture never becomes entirely clear. Coincidentally, in both examples, despite a focus on a traditional relation, there is also a sense of emancipatory ideals. In the first example, his personal admiration for the 'strength of character' is notable. The second example leads to Tagore asserting that "woman [is left] alone to wither and to die or to fight her own battle

unaided" (*Nationalism* 10). Though Tagore cannot escape the limitations of his own time, these snippets suggest some progressive or subversive thoughts.

1.3 Tagore the Anti-Nationalist

Michael Collins has explored the intellectual relationship and disparities between Tagore and Gandhi as evidence of Tagore's anti-nationalistic position. Though Gandhi's nationalism should not be readily equated with its Western counterpart, it bears some of its marks, according to Tagore. Here, the evidence for Tagore's anti-nationalist ideas is quite convincing, though he is still difficult to label. Tagore's attitude toward Gandhi was at least ambivalent. He accredited Gandhi with the title of Mahatma (Collins 11), meaning the Great Soul, as he admired Gandhi's qualities as a leader and his "moral stature" (quoted in Collins 13). Simultaneously, Tagore objected to Gandhi's strategy of non-cooperation, which is connected to Swaraj, Gandhi's movement of self-rule as expressed in, for instance, *Freedom's Battle*. The idea of non-cooperation (with the British) is a too political idea for Tagore, who showed more concern for real problems. Amartya Sen points to the disparity as well, arguing that "Tagore was indeed becoming discouraged about the state of India, especially as its normal burden of problems, such as hunger and poverty, was being supplemented by politically organized incitement to 'communal' violence between Muslims and Hindus" (93). As has been demonstrated in *The Home and the World*, the communal violence ultimately tends to dominate and subvert Nikhil's idealistic emancipation of his wife. In reality, this amounts to the idea that Gandhi's political reform is just that: a political reform[2].

[2] It is important to stress, however, that neither Gandhi was the penultimate Indian nationalist. In fact, he was assassinated by a nationalist extremist (Nathuram Godse) who maintained that Gandhi was also the "father of Pakistan", due to Gandhi having "appeased the Muslims" thereby betraying the Hindus (Lal 34-8).

Sen uses Tagore's criticism of Gandhi's symbolism as another example of an empty politics. Gandhi maintained that everyone should spin the charka, the spinning wheel, at home for rural development (Sen 100). According to Sen, "Tagore found the alleged economic rationale for this scheme quite unrealistic" (100). Though Gandhi maintains that the exercise is also a duty on behalf of the memorization of the less fortunate, Tagore finds it an uninspired and intellectually undemanding, and therefore pointless exercise, with no intimate connection with the true burden for these lesser fortunate (Sen 101).

Collins evaluates Tagore's position on nationalism through Tagore's disagreement on Gandhi's anti-English attitude. Collins makes it explicitly clear that even Tagore's contemporaries objected to his supposed negation of the harsh reality the less fortunate were subjected to (2). In Sen's example the idea is put forward that the reverse may actually be true. Yet, Collins also puts emphasis on the respect Tagore had for Gandhi as a revolutionary, which enhances the ambiguous opinion on Tagore, as Tagore did oppose Gandhi's political strategy, while he acknowledged Gandhi's aim of freedom (Collins 17).

1.4 Tagore's Consistent Inconsistency

The diversity in his work (poetry, prose, paintings, songs, philosophy) and the sheer volume of it accounts for the inconsistencies as well. It is even quite probable that consistency was not at his mind – though he was aware of his inconsistency –, as he was first and foremost a poet, for which consistency is not a prescription. Kenneth Stunkel holds that Tagore's acceptance of his own inconsistency is the direct result of a firm anti-theoretical attitude as "[Tagore] disliked theories, especially theory-driven politics, which seemed to him ruthless and simple-minded" (248). Stunkel then quotes Tagore: "I am frightened at an abstraction which is ready to ignore

living reality" (248). Yet, Tagore's philosophical ideas about this living reality have been incorporated in, for instance, *The Home and the World.* Nikhil's aspiration for truth and his rejection of ideals that hypnotize or blind people is a case in point. This makes Tagore vulnerable for the accusation of abstracting reality, even if uniting reality is his intent.

According to Stunkel, the abstraction of reality has reached a peak in post-modernism. The destabilization incited by post-modernism poses a problem that is seemingly contradictory to Tagore's project of unity and universal Truth, which are terms Tagore frequently uses and which receive special attention elsewhere in this chapter. Stunkel contends that, since post-modernism, "[i]nstead of works, which are recognizable artifacts bearing the imprint of authors, we have texts as constructions governed by power relations or variable interests of race, class, gender, and ethnicity, texts viewed as "metaphors" of something or other open to endless reinterpretation assembled from ambiguous sign systems, or texts that are arbitrary narratives" (244). Stunkel's reasons for bringing in Tagore become apparent when he points to the result of post-modernism: "The postmodern version of liberation from tradition and the past must disavow literature as a distillation of a shared human condition" (245). Tagore's poetry and prose relate to the shared human condition by his insistence on harmony and on unity through difference. As such, Tagore's texts become works again, bear meaning again, become intelligible again.

Two problems with Stunkel's observations, however, occur. First, this employment of Tagore does not exactly counter Stunkel's righteous reservations about post-modernism. If Tagore's works contain a philosophy of harmony that respond to the voiding that occurs in post-modernism, then these *works* have to be 'converted' to *texts* before making sense of the philosophy in it. Ironically, this is not at all problematic. For instance, in *The Home and the World* Tagore's philosophy is an inherent part of the story, yet the whole story is not just a

metaphor for the exact same message of Tagore's non-fictional works. In fact, "the imprint of authors" is not just a distillable philosophy, but also incorporates style and, in case of poetry, rhyme and meter. Stunkel notes a tendency "to overshoot and diminish Tagore as artist and humanist" (238). To understand his worth or skill as an artist or humanist, elements like style and substance have to be measured against a criterion standard. According to post-modernism, any criterion standard is by definition defunct. But Tagore himself was also critical of the imposition of criterion standards, yet he did not oppose the very idea of a criterion standard. In other words, if Tagore's ultimate aim is to bring humanity into contact with a singular Truth, one has to understand the relation of certain elements to this Truth. To oppose this would mean to oppose Tagore himself.

When he struggles with British hegemony, he predominantly struggles with their habit of imposing order, logic and hierarchy, and hence with their habit of replacing a metaphysical Truth for this hierarchical system of truths. He disapproves of arbitrary meanings, exactly that very arbitrariness that is, in an ironic move, the foundation of post-modernism. Yet one has to allow himself to theorize between the difference of the relation of parts to a Truth and of the relation between various, arbitrary parts. Post-modernism as theory has an incongruity comparable to Tagore's philosophy. A monolithic theory about arbitrariness is as incongruous as a system which installs a Truth to oppose a hegemonic interpretation of truth, such as the Western system of nationalism. To construct any meaning, one has to specify. To specify, in an academic context, means to theorize. Therefore, if Tagore is allowed to specify, post-modernism cannot be faulted for the same gesture.

The second problem with Stunkel's observations is that Tagore may object to theorization, yet he does not oppose the wide variety of knowledge science produces, nor finds it problematic that Western science may reveal a mechanism unknown to Eastern knowledge:

> On the other hand, the East must find her own balance in Science—the magnificent gift that the West can bring to her. Truth has its nest as well as its sky. That nest is definite in structure, accurate in law of construction; and though it has to be changed and rebuilt over and over again, the need of it is never-ending and its laws are eternal. For some centuries the East has neglected the nest-building of truth. She has not been attentive to learn its secret. Trying to cross the trackless infinite, the East has relied solely upon her wings. She has spurned the earth, till, buffeted by storms, her wings are hurt and she is tired, sorely needing help. But has she then to be told that the messenger of the sky and the builder of the nest shall never meet? (*Creative Unity* 111-12)

What has been referred to as unity through difference, harmony and Truth immediately becomes apparent in this citation. Despite all their geographical and the corresponding philosophical disparities, the East must benefit from Western knowledge that is generated by science. Tagore's phrases indicate that he does not dismiss the idea of the aforementioned criterion standard; the Western 'nest-building of truth' is fundamentally important for harmonization of the Eastern metaphysics of the 'trackless infinite'. Tagore admires what science *can* do; that it can uncover an everlasting law in reality. However, Tagore also evidently maintains that such eternity in itself is not sufficient to attain Truth.

He grants the East with a leading role, as the Eastern 'wings' are already on the right track, yet they have to land once in a while. Western science is, in this metaphor, a mere tool for the Eastern project. The bird needs a nest, but nests can only be built by birds. Yet something

precedes this metaphor, which is indicated by the words 'on the other hand', words that suggest a leading role for the West as well. Surprisingly, what precedes these words is not a marker of inconsistency but of continuity:

> The man from the East, with his faith in the eternal, who in his soul had met the touch of the Supreme Person—did he never come to you in the West and speak to you of the Kingdom of Heaven? Did he not unite the East and the West in truth, in the unity of one spiritual bond between all children of the Immortal, in the realisation of one great Personality in all human persons? Yes, the East did once meet the West profoundly in the growth of her life. Such union became possible, because the East came to the West with the ideal that is creative, and not with the passion that destroys moral bonds. The mystic consciousness of the Infinite, which she brought with her, was greatly needed by the man of the West to give him his balance. (*CU* 111)

It is quite likely that Tagore speaks about Christianity here, an idea already ventured by Schopenhauer (Sen 94), and probably even about Jesus by mentioning the man from the East.

And again, Eastern spirituality has informed Western spirituality, has led the West towards truth. When compared to an earlier statement about East and West, "that the right hand, which wields the sword, has the need of the left, which holds the shield of safety" (*CU* 110), the former citations may indicate some inconsistency, as West and East must complement each other according to the last citation without specific preference of one over the other, but the continuity is far more important. "On the other hand" may be taken as an impetus for inconsistency or indecisiveness, but it is more likely a strategy to invoke a mutual project of truth. Tagore uses such constructions quite frequently, sometimes even literally:

> It does not hurt my pride to acknowledge that, in the present age, Western humanity has received its mission to be the teacher of the world; that her science, through the mastery of laws of nature, is to liberate human souls from the dark dungeon of matter. For this very reason I have realised all the more strongly, on the other hand, that the dominant collective idea in the Western countries is not creative. It is ready to enslave or kill individuals, to drug a great people with soul-killing poison, darkening their whole future with the black mist of stupefaction, and emasculating entire races of men to the utmost degree of helplessness. It is wholly wanting in spiritual power to blend and harmonise; it lacks the sense of the great personality of man. (*CU* 99-100)

If there is any inconsistency here, it lies in the fact that Tagore unequivocally accredits the West with a preeminent task, whereas the other citations suggest that the East has the privilege of being more important. Once more, using the words "on the other hand", suggests the creation of a contradiction, but Tagore merely registers a result of the West as teacher. Science has become "the dominant collective idea", and as such it hampers the liberation of "human souls" (*CU* 99-100.); there is no discontinuity here.

Naturally, a choice of words does not fully indicate complete continuity, especially not as Tagore has admitted to being inconsistent: "When asked what his greatest flaw may be, he said, "Inconsistency." The punch line is that he then was asked what his greatest virtue might be, and he replied, "Inconsistency"" (Hogan 10). Nevertheless, the citations above have demonstrated that at a second viewing many inconsistencies dissolve, which suggests that this may also occur on a larger scale. Therefore, it is interesting to evaluate the effect of the supposed inconsistencies, and what they mean when they indeed occur. I maintain that the flaws do not taint the virtue.

As has been noted by Stunkel, Tagore contests theorization. I have already pointed to the fact that Tagore's opposition to it does not seem to be corroborated entirely by his own texts. Yet, Stunkel was not brought in for mere justification of this project, as that would make him a straw man. He acutely points to Tagore's project of unification, and though this probably does not demonstrate the faults of postmodernism, it does suggest some sort of central coherence in Tagore's works, despite the inconsistencies. And if theorization is the thorn in Tagore's flesh, the question is then how unity and harmony are irritated by theorization.

1.5 Tagore and Western Nationalism

The answers are provided by some of his collections of essays, most notably *Creative Unity* (1922) and *Nationalism* (1917). The latter criticizes the Western nation state by means of a critique on Western scientific normativity, whereas the former mostly tries to unite East and West by overcoming normativity, though it repeats some of the objections to Western scientification formulated in *Nationalism* as well. The criticism of theorization that Stunkel notices is tied to Tagore's experiences with Western colonialism and its focus on the nation state. It is important to note that the following section on nationalism, theorization and science is, for now, limited to the observations of Tagore in his own time. Analyses of Western hegemonic thinking's lasting effect on contemporary society are reserved for other chapters.

Scientification may be regarded as the Western tendency to compartmentalize forms of knowledge or as the abstraction of parts from a harmonious reality. Though some attention to discover the laws that rule reality is unavoidable, as has been demonstrated above, it has become the modus operandi of the West in The late nineteenth and early twentieth century, according to Tagore. Tagore makes an important distinction between society and a nation (Collins 10), and in

the shift from the former to the latter, science plays a pivotal part. In Tagore's analysis of the difference, society seems to be a neutral form of organization, whereas the nation is a form of organization that thrives on its own need of being a nation.

Society, Tagore argues, "is a spontaneous self-expression of man as a social being. It is a natural regulation of human relationships, so that man can develop ideals of life in co-operation with one another" (*Nationalism* 9). In other words, people have a natural tendency to organize themselves for the benefit of both self and, therefore, others. The 'social' that is inherent to being a man must have a means of manifestation, which is society. In this idealistic view of man there is a sense of threat, as there is also a task for power. Tagore continues: "It has also a political side, but this is only for a special purpose. It is for self-preservation. It is merely the side of power, not of human ideals" (*N* 9). Something strange happens here, though this only becomes evident when Tagore discusses the forming of nations out of societies a little later: "But when with the help of science and the perfecting of organization this power begins to grow and brings in harvests of wealth, then it crosses its boundaries with amazing rapidity. For then it goads all its neighbouring societies with greed of material prosperity, and consequent mutual jealousy, and by the fear of each other's growth into powerfulness" (*N* 9). Here, the discussion from *The Home and the World* between Sandip and Nikhil is repeated along philosophical lines.

Disregarding the role of science for now, what is striking is the way in which an apparent historical regression from society to nation becomes entangled with the a-historical naturalness of societies. Nations develop when politics – the mere side of power – replaces the human ideals. There is a suggestion of a snowball effect: when one society turns into a nation, with the accompanying pursuit of wealth, another society must follow the same ideals, or else it will be annihilated. If societies must have politics for some form of protection, against what is this

protection directed? Against such nations, naturally, but how can nations exist when there is just a natural tendency to organize in the form of society? Hence, there is no use for a political side in a world that is strictly inhabited by societies, not until one society transforms into a nation. Yet, in that case, every society with a political side would already be a prototype of a nation. Consequently, this paradox is the recurrence of the problem that was discussed in the critique on Stunkel. Tagore's a-historical world (which may be conceived as the *work*), must be deconstructed historically (as if it were a *text*).

Despite the paradox, Tagore's distinction between society and the nation also shows both sides of Tagore as a thinker. His conception of man and his ideals is very spiritual, but he also displays a keen sense of engagement. In the citations from *Creative Unity* he easily combines the Western "laws that are eternal" (*CU* 112) with Eastern "mystic consciousness of the Infinite" (*CU* 111). Though both have a different origin, he spiritually combines them with the aid of terms that incite unity or wholeness. To achieve such unity, however, he bases himself firmly in reality and actively engages with the people inhabiting that reality. The fundamental flaw of the nation is not just a theoretical flaw, as the paradox may suggest. From his experience with English colonialism he acquires insight in the mechanism of English nationalism. That mechanism disrupts the "great personality of man", which is a recurring theme in the citations from *Creative Unity* (*CU* 100, 111). It is probably better to view Tagore's attachment to reality as continuous with the spiritual project, instead of a theoretical paradox.

If reality is adjusted to the right norms, a spiritual wholeness envelops humankind. The examples above probably explain Tagore's unease with theorization, as it causes regression of wholeness to fractions, fractions that lose touch with reality. The indebtedness of Tagore to reality, and his idea of a wholeness of reality beyond the spheres of science, becomes all the

more prominent when he assumes the task of warning Japan and India against the forms of nationalism the West is spreading over the world. In 1916, a year before the appearance of *Nationalism*, Tagore had travelled to Japan with the message "of a synthesis between Indo-Asian spirituality and Western practicality" (Hay 25). As Japan had recently become the first non-Western country to achieve an important role on an international scale, it prompted Tagore to praise this and simultaneously call for caution of Western influences. One of the most telling statements about such influences, which are tied to science, comes right at the beginning of *Nationalism*:

> In the West the national machinery of commerce and politics turns out neatly compressed bales of humanity which have their use and high market value; but they are bound in iron hoops, labelled and separated off with scientific care and precision. Obviously God made man to be human; but this modern product has such marvellous square-cut finish, savouring of gigantic manufacture, that the Creator will find it difficult to recognize it as a thing of spirit and a creature made in His own divine image. (6)

This citation almost speaks for itself, and it has acquired quite some fame. Collins has also used it to depict the difference between society and the state (5), but the metaphor that depicts the function of science within nationalism is remarkable as well. Especially the "bales of humanity" show the effect of the process that was alluded to earlier. There is a "power that crosses its boundaries" (*Nationalism* 9) fast, and the boundary crossed is the one that protects the human ideals. These human ideals will then become those bales, which provide a mere façade for humanity.

The importance of the façade for Tagore's spirituality cannot be understated. Collins states that "the idea that life, the Real, exists in obstinate antagonism to the Ideal suggests the

importance of *maya* – the world of illusions – for Tagore's philosophy" (9). Science that compartmentalizes aspects of humanity only strengthens the illusion, which makes the Ideal even more unreachable. If, as Collins holds, "[t]he path towards truth is not a straightforward one" (9), then such science is creating, or enhancing, the illusion that such truth can be reached. Nationalism, through its ties with science, obstructs this spiritual enlightenment as it is spreading that very form of science.

As an intermezzo, and as a return to question posed in the first paragraph, it is interesting to note why people may have conceived Tagore as a nationalist figure with the remarks as stated above in mind. Though many of his critics mention such figuration of Tagore, not much support is given, other than that it is "passé" (Stunkel 238) or that he is a "*cultural icon*" (O'Connell 961). Collins, as the exception, provides some insight in an elaborate footnote, where he states that Edward Said and Ken Wolf have depicted him as a nationalist of importance within a postcolonial framework, and that such depiction is all the more harmful (2), as opposed to the relative innocent praise of the cultural icon by "millions of Indians and Bangladeshi" (O'Connell 961). Yet even his biographer Kripalani, who is full of praise for Tagore in the 1962 biography, understands that a simplified notion of Tagore a nationalist is unjust. Though he unequivocally introduces the biography with the statement that "India has undergone such radical changes as no optimist living in 1861", the year of Tagore's birth, "could have envisaged" (1), his views on nationalism are incorporated as well, already creating some ambiguity about his support of the nationalist cause. Like in Collins' article, this culminates in a (friendly) disagreement between Gandhi and Tagore. In 1921, as Gandhi tries to win Tagore for his cause, by pleading that his "Swaraj movement is the natural child of [Tagore's] Swadeshi" (Kripalani 293), Tagore responds: "Gandhiji, the whole world is suffering from a cult of selfish and short-sighted

nationalism. India has always offered hospitality to all nations and creeds. I have come to believe that we in India still have much to learn from the West and its science, and we still, through education, have to learn to collaborate among ourselves" (quoted in Kripalani 293). Tagore had dissociated himself from Swadeshi, a movement for patriotic self-help, in 1908, as many of its members became entangled in chauvinistic feuds and at some point killed innocent British people (Hay 44).

This problem is at the core of *The Home and the World*, as the three protagonists all lose something in the fight for nationalism. Nikhil almost loses his life and Sandip and Bimala lose their dignity, and the latter also loses her nephew. For the cause of Swadeshi, Sandip urges Bimala to acquire 6000 rupees. Bimala steals them from the safe of her husband, and though she immediately regrets this, she becomes entangled in an attempt to cover up the theft. She involves her nephew in this scheme, and he dies when trying to correct his wrongs. Sandip, after first accepting the money and jewelry Bimala offers him, realizes his mistake, hands the money back and disappears. Though it is a rather short account of what happens, it illustrates that Sandip's ideals cause selfishness and drag many other people down into misfortune.

Gandhi's Swaraj, the supposed continuation of Swadeshi, was a movement of self-rule and ideally denounced the English presence in India. It is worth noting that the previous citation about hospitality and the summary of *The Home and the World* are devoid of explicit spirituality, and are almost completely indebted to India's realistic situation at that time. Also, Tagore's use of the word 'nation' in the citation does not seem the bear the negative mechanical connotation he upholds in *Nationalism*, but it appears to have a more colloquial meaning, as if it merely denotes a group of people from a specific region. Trivial as such a remark may seem, it illustrates how Tagore's experience with real life ultimately informs his spiritual beliefs. There is

a remainder of idealism in this citation, which can be found in his emphasis on education and the wish to "collaborate among ourselves".

In *Creative Unity*, a collection of essays, Tagore devotes himself to a project of education and creativity. Thematically, it is a continuation of the dichotomy he created in *Nationalism*, where the pursuit of quotidian needs of man creates a discrepancy with man's spiritual purpose. Here, Tagore writes:

> The instruments of our necessity assert that we must have food, shelter, clothes, comforts and convenience. And yet men spend an immense amount of their time and resources in contradicting this assertion, to prove that they are not a mere living catalogue of endless wants; that there is in them an ideal of perfection, a sense of unity, which is a harmony between parts and a harmony with surroundings. (4)

The difference between the quotidian and the spiritual is much more solidified here than in *Nationalism*, with its focus on the individual needs of man instead of the collective. The problem here, though, is not so much the absolute need of food and shelter, but a pursuit of a surplus that in nationalism, though it is only implied here, dominates the appreciation of other aspects of human life. Tagore's ideal is established through the poet's religion, incidentally the title of the first essay:

> In dogmatic religion all questions are definitely answered, all doubts are finally laid to rest. But the poet's religion is fluid, like the atmosphere round the earth where lights and shadows play hide-and-seek, and the wind like a shepherd boy plays upon its reeds among flocks of clouds. It never undertakes to lead anybody anywhere to any solid conclusion; yet it reveals endless spheres of light, because it has no walls round itself. It acknowledges the facts of evil; it openly admits "the weariness, the fever and the fret" in

> the world "where men sit and hear each other groan"; yet it remembers that in spite of all there is the song of the nightingale. (16-7)

This religion is embedded in the meaning of the word 'poet', coming from the Greek poiesis which means "to make" or "to create". Hence, creativity opens up the Ideal for the Real, albeit temporarily. Combined with the earlier statement that men devote time to things that are not connected to "endless wants", creativity becomes a religion that creates the "ideal of perfection" and the "sense of unity". Again, Tagore does not forget that reality at times can become gritty, but answers cannot be found in meeting that reality head-on, by disposing any lack of convenience or even creating a surplus of it. Yet by admitting to reality, the poet is also indebted to reality. The combination of reality with the poet's religion is developed in the final essay *An Eastern University*, in which Tagore favors a different type of education than the hegemonic Western type.

Many aspects of Tagore's life and ideals are combined in the Eastern University, and as such this part will serve as the conclusion of this chapter. The ideal on which the university is based was realized in 1922, intersecting or continuing the ideals expressed in *Creative Unity*. He founded it in Sriniketan and it was called Visva-Bharati's Institute of Rural Reconstruction. It is Tagore's answer to Western education, which has reduced it to a mere part of the economical sphere (of the increase of wealth). In the Eastern version, education has to connect to nature and creativity, as the goal of education is to understand the whole, or to aspire toward it. The rural is important for two reasons. Both are related to his experience. The first is attached to his idea that, in general, the city is preferred to the countryside. "The idea of doing something to redeem the neglected village came to Tagore when he first went to live on his family's agricultural estates in

East Bengal, where his father sent him as manager in the 1890s. This was his first exposure to the impoverished countryside" (Das Gupta 993).

Again, social action seems to inspire him as much as the raw beauty of the area as mentioned by Kripalani. Yet, Tagore's purpose is not just to recover the glory of the countryside, but it also closely attached to his belief about education. He adheres to folk-education, which was according to him "indigenous to India". It "was one with the people's life. It flowed naturally through the social channels and made its way everywhere. It is a system of widespread irrigation of culture. Its teachers, specially trained men, are in constant requisition, and find crowded meetings in our villages, where they repeat the best thoughts and express the ideals of the land in the most effective form" (*CU* 182).

It is hard to imagine that Tagore's University could have formed without Western education as an effective counterpart. The position he maintains in *Nationalism* is repeated here, directly showing its influence.

> The first step towards realisation is to create opportunities for revealing the different peoples to one another. This can never be done in those fields where the exploiting utilitarian spirit is supreme. We must find some meeting-ground, where there can be no question of conflicting interests. One of such places is the University, where we can work together in a common pursuit of truth, share together our common heritage, and realise that artists in all parts of the world have created forms of beauty, scientists discovered secrets of the universe, philosophers solved the problems of existence, saints made the truth of the spiritual world organic in their own lives, not merely for some particular race to which they belonged, but for all mankind. (171-2)

The University as the meeting-ground is fundamental for his conception of society. A society can reach its full potential only when all aspects of knowledge, namely intellect, empiricism and experience are shared and become part of a complete education. The full implications of this notion will be explored in chapters three and four, but it is palpable that this cosmopolitanism is far removed from the vacuous cosmopolitanism that Tagore dismisses as irrelevant. His cosmopolitanism is an inclusive cosmopolitanism that resists any prevalence of one form of knowing over the other.

Cosmopolitanism in an Age of Globalization

2.1 Postcolonial Cosmopolitanism

To invoke the term 'postcolonialism' invokes, among others, terms like 'nationalism', 'ethnicity' or 'globalization'. In a general sense, globalization is a process whereby the distance between geographical locations, but also between economic and political ideologies decreases. From a different point of view, postcolonialism more generally marks the current historical period, and as such the marker might just as well have been replaced by globalization. As has been stated, cosmopolitanism is mostly framed against discussions of localism/nationalism/globalism. How cosmopolitanism relates to nationalism has been discussed in the previous chapter, yet I hold that the same mechanism that pervades nationalism also pervades globalism. This is problematic, because the ideas of globalism and cosmopolitanism risk becoming conflated, as both terms relate to the interaction of groups of people in the entire world. The question then is: if Tagore's cosmopolitanism is so firmly set against nationalism, what does it mean to read Tagore in an age of globalization? To assess that question, it is pivotal to understand what globalization actually is. The distinction between globalization and cosmopolitanism, how they could have become conflated, and why cosmopolitanism must approach the local in a different fashion are important markers in that discussion. Furthermore, this chapter helps to establish what Tagore's cosmopolitanism ultimately amounts to, though Tagore's writings will only be encountered in the next chapter.

Cosmopolitanism[3] and globalism (or globalization)[4] are distinctly different terms. Cosmopolitanism is supposed to create mutuality, whereas globalism is an ideology that installs sameness. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak creates a distinction between the global in what she calls 'planetarity', thereby making a distinction comparable to the one that separates cosmopolitanism from globalism: "Globalization is the imposition of the same system of exchange everywhere" (*Death of a Discipline* 72). She speaks of a system of exchange, which would make it susceptible to mutuality (as in cosmopolitanism), but the system cannot cope with nor incorporate difference. The goal of cosmopolitanism is finding common ground despite differences, and thereby it immediately accounts for these differences. This is reflected in Spivak's thought of planetarity, in which "referring to an undivided "natural" space rather than a differentiated political space" (*DoaD* 72) is at the forefront. If "natural"[5] is replaced by "human", the idea of an undivided humanity comes up, yet not in the vein of a system that installs sameness. Much more, the 'undivided' alludes to the common ground which is so significant in cosmopolitanism. Spivak's citation relates to Tagore's distinction between society and the nation, which is crucial for understanding the distinction between globalism and cosmopolitanism I am trying to make. Moreover, to compare Spivak's statement with Tagore's, again creates some insight in the way in which the idea of place has become normative.

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[3] For now, the word refers to Nussbaum's version of it.

[4] I take the difference between globalism and globalization as an ideological difference. Globalization is a process, which may originate from globalism, but which may just as well mark a more neutral tendency of an increase of ties throughout the world, by means of modern communication, traveling or anything else that overcomes the geographical distance between people. Globalism, on the other hand, is ideologically charged and projects an ideal of globalization onto people. Therefore, if I am referring to globalization, I understand it as the outcome of an ideology.

[5] Spivak's use of the word 'natural' should not be confused with something pre-given. It literally refers to nature, the planet and to the way in which humans should inhabit the planet. This environmentalist trait of cosmopolitanism (thereby becoming planetarity), valuable and real as it is, will be ignored in this thesis as it is not within its scope.

To recall, for Tagore, an important distinction between society and the nation is the role of politics. Despite the noted incongruity of that distinction, the idea that the nation is directly related to its politics is in itself not an unjustified claim. Tagore writes:

> If we must believe our schoolmaster in his taunt that, after nearly two centuries of his tutelage, India not only remains unfit for self-government but unable to display originality in her intellectual attainments, must we ascribe it to something in the nature of Western culture and our own inherent incapacity to receive it or to the judicious niggardliness of the Nation that has taken upon itself the white man's burden of civilizing the East. (*Nationalism* 20-1)

The answers to this rhetorical question have been supplied by a few decennia of postcolonial criticism roughly 60 years later. This varies from simple, factual evidence in Homi Bhabha's *Of Mimicry and Man* to complex analyses of nationalism, for instance in Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*. Bhabha, for instance, writes that Charles Grant, not only chairman of the British East India Company but also an English Member of Parliament from 1802-1818, and who wrote *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain*, called for an "expansion of company rule in India [that] required a system of "interpellation" – a reform of manners [...] that would provide the colonial with "a sense of personal identity as we know it" (*Of Mimicry and Man* (127). Even 100 years before Tagore, expansion of the nation through politics is happening. That is an unsurprising conclusion, but it is valuable as it makes Tagore's assertions about the nation more palpable. There was indeed a long tradition in the West of a politics of nationalism.

In general, these analyses, like Tagore's or any postcolonialist's, amount to dismantling normative institutions. The 'society' in Grant's title is not the society of Tagore. It is not just a

sense of conviviality or natural affinity. On the contrary, it is already caught in discourse of 'us' and 'them', as evidenced in the idea that one group, 'we', must *provide* this reform of manners to others, creating preference of behavior. Morality is immediately politicized and as a result society is politicized.

Anderson approaches nationalism from a different, but complementary, angle. He envisions nationalism as the slow historical outgrowth of a decline in a vertical belief-system. The bible ceased to be that truth from above, and the vertical relationship between the pairs 'god-man' and 'king-civilian' gradually tilted to a more horizontal understanding of relationality (36). Thirdly, he notices a separation between cosmology and (human) history. In the middle ages, different historical events or behavior could vertically be traced back to the divine, which Anderson calls "simultaneity-along-time" (24). After the Middle Ages this changes, according to Anderson who invokes Walter Benjamin, into a simultaneity that is homogeneous or horizontal, and in which simultaneity is based on "temporal coincidence" (24). Most importantly however, this transition marks the onset of nationalism by two, probably inseparable, means.

Purportedly, Anderson does not offer disclosure on the first idea (that secular science attributes to nationalism), but the second idea is shaped by capitalism, in which the printing machine has a part, and that idea is considered thoroughly. Anderson holds that the printing machine is invaluable to "a new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together" (36). The novel and the newspaper are the start of a new means of communication, of which the speed increases with the invention of new technology. Anderson describes how the choice of language in those prints is trivial or pragmatic between 1500 and the beginning of the nineteenth century (42). Up to that point, language does not have the 'burden' Tagore refers to. Yet, at that early time, printing has become a market industry and, by means of the millions of

books and the corresponding literacy, language as such is becoming the vernacular in community building, against other forms of community building (like Christianity) (42).

That slow shift results in language as one of the primary modes of engagement, and in the nineteenth century "[t]he lexicographic revolution in Europe [...] created, and gradually spread, the conviction that languages (in Europe at least) were, so to speak, the personal property of quite specific groups – their daily speakers and readers – and moreover that these groups, imagined as communities, were entitled to their autonomous place in a fraternity of equals" (84). When combined with the imperialist attitude, language can also become a mode of providing a new morality to the colonies. Bhabha describes this attitude with the aid of Macauly, one of Grant's successors, who "can conceive of nothing other than "a class of interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern – a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (*OMaM* 128). Installing such Englishness is unimaginable without the direct aid of language. Nowadays, the idea that language can impose normativity is widespread within postcolonial studies, and isolated from any context, the remark above is not a fundamental issue. Its importance lies in the combination with tradition, not only as a conveyor, but also as a form of tradition. The way traditions, habits or traits that show familiarity between people, spread or develop is not dissimilar to that of language. Both produce much less a natural connection than an arbitrary connection between people, who thereafter consider themselves to be members of the same group. In case of languages, many times these groups were nations, especially when they became the official means of governmental communication. Anderson's conclusions about nationalism with regard to language can be summed up as following: when the need for a different way of social organization emerged,

different types of community creators were needed. Language, by means of capitalism, was one of the foremost to do so. In its wake, other traditions followed.

The first chapter considered traditions and their role in nationalism or cosmopolitanism. Nussbaum's version of cosmopolitanism neglected these traditions, though it is somewhat indeterminate as to what makes up these traditions. Yet, if these traditions are largely equal to Macauly's tastes, opinions, morals and intellect, Nussbaum's reservations are understandable. Nationalism's ties to these normative tropes are the cause of Nussbaum's dislike of patriotism, as it hinders conviviality on a global scale. Nussbaum's cosmopolitanism's aim, after all, is to denounce the imposition of normativity upon people, and to create a more mutual, if philosophical, relationality. And if language is the great conveyor of normativity, then, according to Anderson, capitalism is the supplier. It is therefore sensible to revisit Tagore's writings on the accumulation of wealth through the lens of Marxism.

To revisit Tagore in this way, also invokes a partial reflection on the first idea that Anderson left largely unexplored: the idea of secular science as a cause of nationalism. Within Tagore's argument, it is not science as such that poses a problem to harmony, since it complements the Eastern vision on life or reality. More specifically, it is the mechanism of what has been called 'scientification' that threatens to dominate other forms of understanding reality. The (neo-)Marxian concept of reification shares some of the aspects of Tagore's scientification. Though the resemblance may very well be purely coincidental, as the ideological origin for both theses could not have been more widely dispersed (spirituality versus earthly labor), an investigation of the same mechanism from two different viewpoints makes the resemblance also striking.

The idea that science separates has been visited in chapter one. The "neatly compressed bales of humanity" produced by the Western "national machinery of commerce and politics" (6) that Tagore mentions, illustrate how humanity is not any longer in harmony. The metaphor works in two, mutually dependable, ways. First, with the trope of the machinery, Tagore invokes the idea that with science, the nation has crafted a disguise of humanity. What the nation sells as humanity is already shattered or separated. They may be parts of reality, but they never connect with each other. To recollect Macauly's statement of the imposition of taste, morals and intellect illustrates this idea. Although there is a difference between these various concepts, together they form humanity. Macauly implies that these concepts not only can be distributed somewhat separately, but that the English version is also inherently superior. Superiority implies irreconcilability, which is exactly what Tagore is arguing against. Secondly, there is a sense of despiritualization of the West. Tagore distinguishes a spirit of the West and the nation of the West. The nation has become the machinery that creates different sets of humanity, whereas the spirit can be traced in the West's aspirations to equality. Yet, this spirit is hardly recognizable, as there is a politics of domination. Tagore finds it in Western law. Though it is imposed as well, there are benefits, according to Tagore. The first reason is pragmatic: Western law has "rescued" India from "sufferings and unrest" caused by "instances of tyranny, injustice and extortion" in its "former days" (18). The second reason is adjacent to this. Tagore continues:

> The protection of law is not only a boon, but is a valuable lesson to us. It is teaching us the discipline which is necessary for the stability of civilization and for continuity of progress. We are realizing through it that there is a universal standard of justice to which all men, irrespective of their caste and colour, have their equal claim. This reign of law in our present Government in India has established order in this vast land inhabited by

> people different in their races and their customs. It has made it possible for these peoples to come into closer touch with one another and cultivate a communion of aspiration. But this desire for a common bond of comradeship among the different races of India has been the spirit of the West, not that of the nation of the West. (18-9)

Many things happen here. Tagore appeals to a Kantian form of cosmopolitanism. Although the focus is on India, the ideal of equality through law in a world inhabited by different peoples is summoned. Moreover, the difference between spirit and nation becomes explicit. To repeat, Tagore considers the Western spirit as invaluable for the East, whereas the East has the primacy of overcoming the "race problem" in reality. The implication of this, however, will be reserved for the next chapter.

Now, a return to Tagore's skepticism is needed. What can be deduced from the above citation is that the machinery of science dominates any aspiration for comradeship based on equality.

Terms like 'comradeship' and 'equality' evoke (half-mockingly) ideas of Marxism. The parallels between this aspect of Tagore and the notion of reification will be engaged from a queer perspective. Kevin Floyd's *The Reification of Desire* tries to combine a historical process of reification with a change in the conception of hetero- and homosexuality. The invocation of queerness may seem peculiar, but there is a point here. Kevin Floyd's own ideas of queerness will not be explored so much, but in a sense queerness is attractive for a cosmopolitan essay. For the sake of comprehensiveness, I argue that queer theory's primary prospect is a critical engagement with heteronormativity. As a result, however, almost every form of normative behavior is questioned, which leads to a general opposition to social tendencies that particularize.

Particularization, then, is one fundamental aspect of reification. With the aid of Fredric Jameson, Floyd constructs the following image of reification: "[r]efication refers to a certain misapprehension of capitalist social relations; it identifies the very process of social differentiation within capital as fundamentally and objectively mystifying, as preempting any critical comprehension of the social" (17). The differentiated society precedes any other understanding of the social. Tagore's Western scientification thwarts its spirit in a similar manner. Suddenly, Anderson's assessment of "print-capitalism" becomes relevant. Through capitalism, print has become commodity (Anderson 37). These commodities, clear cut products that are for sale in the form of goods or labor tie in with Tagore's bales of humanity. Humanity is defined by its adherence to labor, whether it is in the consumption of goods or the production of it by labor.

Furthermore, the intransitives induce parallelism as well. What exactly is this mystification? It is held to be the result of reification, as any other truth of social relations is obscured by the separating forces of capitalism and science. Floyd is somewhat skeptical himself about these traits of reification, which is strengthened by its "dehistoricizing capacity": "[c]apital's subsequent differentiation of the social thereby becomes some brutal interregnum between the idealized periods of organic social wholeness and harmony that presumably both precede and follow it" (18). Even here, Tagore enters the equation. Tagore may seem to follow that same pattern of decline and acclivity. The organic whole of the society was replaced by nationalism with all its fracturing, and there needs to occur a change if that organic whole is to be recuperated. There is difference however, in the way this intransitivity is approximated. Tagore's vision on recuperation is not necessarily future-oriented, nor is it dominated by intransitivity.

Tagore's Nikhil is ambiguous about futurity when he aspires towards a truth: "I longed to find Bimala blossoming fully in all her truth and power. But the thing I forgot to calculate was, that one must give up all claims based on conventional rights, if one would find a person freely revealed in truth" (23). Naturally, any exercise that is invested in progress (or results, for a more neutral comprehension) is in debt to the future. Nikhil's own 'truth' however, is not so easily identified as such. Revealing is always an act of the instance. 'Giving up' (conventional rights) is more problematic, but this term may also shy away from aspiration towards future acts, and be conceived as a state of mind in every act.

Tagore's philosophy, that is supposedly inconsistent, is not merely dismissive of Western science's mystification. Tagore would have been inconsistent, if he had only called for replacing Western nationalism (and normativity) with another, domestic version of it. This reflects the argument he had with Gandhi. Tagore does not just argue against Western scientification; he draws from it. Thereby, he defies the intransitivity that may otherwise hamper his progress. The example of his analysis of law is revealing. Whereas Western law is unjustly imposed on Indian people, and as such is just a different form of scientification of men, in it he finds an aspiration to equality, which helps him create another conception of humanity. Mere subversion would have resulted in the same conception, only in a different form. The same thing happens in *Creative Unity*. The knowledge that Western science produces is not to be countered with Eastern science, as if its more spiritual comprehension of the world is incompatible with Western knowledge. Creativity becomes an important notion then, as it attaches both forms of knowing the world and humanity.

Marxism is different in that respect, as it attaches itself to labor. The idea that human interests are defined by labor is already a reified idea, and a mere adjustment of the properties of

labor does not undo it. Therefore, Marxism is somewhat caught up in its own rhetoric. Floyd makes an interesting point about such rhetoric: "those limitations are indeed traditional, not definitive" (20). What Marxism offers, however, seems to appeal to the definitive, whereas Tagore invokes a different tradition. Marxism's idea of regression to the same state that was before is incomparable to Tagore's emphasis on difference from the societal state that preceded the nation state. This is not merely a trivial remark at the expense of Marxism. This key notion of Tagore's philosophy emerged at a time when Marxism was on the rise and in order to not misconstrue Tagore's philosophy as perfectly relatable to Marxism, this explanation was needed. It was furthermore instigated by the common denominator of capitalism as the adversary in both theories.

This somewhat lengthy analysis of commodification and Tagore's reaction to it begs a question: how does it relate to the question of the local and the global? Tagore understands nationalism as an ideology that connects different parts of the world by means of a normatively Western and scientific practice is central. From this vantage point, the global is as the national, only on a different scale, as the same force permeates the understanding of humanity; arbitrary norms that disguise themselves as universal values.

Many scholars have given primacy to the idea of a fundamental importance for the local within this scheme. With the dissolution of grand narratives and the emergence of *petite histoires*, the local has received much attention as a carrier of, for instance, agency or a more truthful account of human connection. The local has the specificity that lacks in a consideration of the national or the global. Bruce Robbins imagines criticism against such particularizing that is based on the "premise that all universals are merely particulars in disguise" (174). He argues that "[t]he anti-cosmopolitan jargon of the authentically particular and the authentically local

provides no escape from or political alternative to the realm of the professional. It simply conceals the exemplification, representation, and generalization[6] in which any intellectual work, professional or not, is inescapably involved, its own included" (174). Robbins, in short, argues that the inverse is also true: the idea that particulars denote authenticity is a universalistic idea as well. Robbins' introduction of the word "anti-cosmopolitan" is not unproblematic, especially not when he directly attaches it to representation and generalization. The jargon does not have to be specifically anti-cosmopolitan to be exemplifying.

In the introduction I have argued somewhat against Clifford that instead of focusing on "hybrid, cosmopolitan experiences as much as on rooted, native ones" (101) one needs to focus on these experiences *as* rooted, native ones. The 'authentically' particular or local can be tied to cosmopolitanism, but not without the aid of the experiences. The local, however, must be considered as contiguous with the national or the global, an observation that is omitted in Robbins' account, though he does hint at it. He concerns himself with the topic of agency, and argues that there is no inherent consanguinity between agency and the local: "[h]idden away in the miniaturizing precision of the "locality", with its associations of presence and uniqueness, empirical concreteness, complete experience, accessible subjectivity, has been the nostalgia for a subject-in-action that is no longer so easy to localize" (176). The way to conceive of the local is problematic in two distinct ways. One is explicitly mentioned by Robbins, the other is implicit.

The subject-in-action may just as well become active on another scale than the locality. The idea of the subject-in-action is that there still exists a sense of control on a small scale, whereas national or global politics are beyond his influence. Robbins seems clear when he states

[6] The realization of this is important for any work. Spivak tends to approach such problems catachretically. When I invoke terms like East and West, I use them as catachreses as well, as I must follow Tagore's logic to make sense of his cosmopolitanism. The fact that it cannot be done otherwise is no necessary limitation. It just cannot be done otherwise.

that "[t]he unit of coherence where transformative energies have the best chance of seizing hold is not predictable in advance; it might well be larger, not smaller" (176). He probably does not intend to make a distinction between the local and larger, yet he suggests it by arguing that instead of in the local, agency may be found in something larger. This separation between local and not-local is enhanced when he cites Neil Smith: "it is not clear in the current restructuring that, in economic terms at least, coherent regions continue to exist as subdivisions of the national rather than the international economy" (176). Somehow, the international appears to have become a site of agency, more, at least, than smaller "units of coherence", such as the national. While he does contest the primacy of the local as the site of agency, which is just in itself, he alludes to a distinction in sites of agency according by size.

Despite these dubious allusions, Robbins ultimately favors cosmopolitanism that is akin to a more neutral[7] comprehension of that term, by referring to his previous examples: "This suggests the case for a certain cosmopolitanism – not one obsessed with embodying a preconceived totality, but one which does not judge in advance the macro-political scale of its units, which sees "worlding" as a process, to quote Gayatri Spivak, and a process in which more than one "world" may be realized, where "worlds" may be contested" (176). He takes a step back here, by pointing to the inherent difficulty of judgment, irrespective of the size of the units. What is implied here then, to cosmopolitanism's advantage, is that the scale on which a subject-in-action may operate is unrelated to the sense of agency, thereby effacing the difference between sheer sizes of communities. Therefore, the local becomes a unit to which similar methods of qualitative assessment apply as to the national or the global.

[7] The word should be taken in its loosest sense. I imagine Robbins would be the first to realize the exemplifying implications of the citation that follows my assertion.

What remains, however, is Robbins' strange focus on the size of communities as an important factor. If the scale ought not to be judged in advance, when does this judgment become legitimate? The answer is in the qualitative engagement, which is what Robbins introduces by speaking of worlding, by which he contradicts himself somewhat. He seems to consider worlding as not just a movement that fractures the globe into ever-contestable "worlds". He indeed resonates with Spivak, who asserts that "[t]he globe is on our computers. No one lives there. It allows us to think we can aim to control it. The planet is in the species of alterity, belonging to another system; and yet we inhabit it, on loan. It is not really amenable to a neat contrast with the globe. I cannot say, "the planet on the other hand"" (*DoaD* 72). Spivak's alterity ("To be human is to be intended toward the other. We provide for ourselves transcendental figurations of what we think is the origin of this gift: mother, nation, god, nature. These are names of alterity" (73)) is close to the idea of different worlds. These worlds are visions of the same globe (and the two are therefore not contrastable).

2.2 Comparatism

For both scholars, the realization of worlding or of alterity comes through education. Robbins' cosmopolitanism is roughly analogous to Spivak's comparative literature:

> The new Comparative Literature [must] persistently and repeatedly undermine and undo the definitive tendency of the dominant to appropriate the emergent. [...] Training in such persistent and repetitive gestures comes, necessarily, in the classroom [...] This is [...] something to be worked through in the interest of yoking the humanities, however distantly, with however few guarantees, to a just world. (*DoaD* 100)

For many scholars, comparatism has become a holy grail for the type of training Spivak proposes. Indeed, there are quite some benefits of acts of comparatism, but not only within literature. As an interlude, it is interesting to assess what comparatism can and cannot do, and why comparative literature seems to take a prominent place in that discussion.

The interest in comparatism has, according to Haun Saussy, spread over the humanities, though with questionable results (3-4). The introduction of secondary and tertiary languages in literary departments, for instance, has become a norm, which has lead to the reluctant questioning of English as the dominant theoretical or academic language (Apter 3). On the other hand, the various other disciplines that have engaged themselves with comparatism merely seem to use it as an applicable technique (Saussy 4). Though Saussy speaks about the situation on America's universities, the following applies quite well to the situation I am slightly familiar with: "Comparative literature programs in most universities are thinly funded patch-works of committee representation, cross-listed courses, fractional job lines, and volunteer service" (4). The MA program, for which I write this thesis, is such a "thinly funded patch-work"[8].

In other cases, comparatism is hailed for its emancipatory potential. Emily Apter has already been paraphrased, but there are many other's with a specific view on comparatism's merits. David Damrosch, for example, examines canon-forming in *World Literature in a Postcanonical, Hypercanonical Age*, comparing "hypercanonical" authors with "countercanonical" authors. The former category consists of (mostly Western) authors widely read and featured in scholarly work, whereas the latter consists of those who are not.

[8] Only two out of eight courses bear the mark 'interdisciplinary'. One of them is a theoretical course on some fundamental texts for the humanities, which results in students of literature reading texts usually associated with, for instance, the History department. The other is a course for roughly a dozen students of two or three departments. Other courses can be attended by students from different departments, but this is only optional, and the focus is not on its interdisciplinarity.

To drive this point home, Damrosch considers, among others, Tagore as a countercanonical figure (not as a representative of another culture per se, but as an example of someone who, despite the distribution of his texts to all corners of the world, is largely ignored). His intention is to "link our countercanonical and hypercanonical writers beyond the boundaries of national or imperial spaces" (50). Though the motivation may be political, methodologically the focus seems to be on a qualitative assessment of texts. Damrosch relates from his experience with lecturing, that for the comparison of texts it is important to "avoid an either/or choice between well-grounded but restricted influence study and an ungrounded, juxtaposition of radically unconnected works" (50). In short, if one wants to incorporate the countercanon into an act of comparison, the ground for doing so must surpass the mere project of incorporating the countercanon.

That position seems to resemble Saussy's, who argues that "Comparative literature is best known, not as the reading of *literature*, but as reading *literarily* (with intensive textual scrutiny, defiance, and metatheoretical awareness) whatever there may to be read" (23). Again, there is emphasis on the methodology, and not on an artificial distinction between literature and non-literature.

2.3 Postcolonial cosmopolitanism (continued)

To liquefy (or in Robbins' words, to contest) any solidified version of the world requires, for Spivak, an active stance, whereas Robbins seems to proclaim a more informative education of such liquefying: "[i]f cosmopolitanism cannot deliver an explicitly and directly political program", as it would become the exact target of Spivak's Comparative Literature,

> it is at least a step toward [an] internationalist political education. By suggesting there is no uniquely correct place to stand, it can take some of the moralism out of our politics. [...] As a practice of comparison, a range of tolerances and secularisms, an international competence or mode of citizenship that is the monopoly of no one class or civilization, it answers the charges of "particularism" and "loss of standards", insisting confidently that multiculturalism is a common program, a critical program, a positive ideal of interconnected knowledge and pedagogy, that elevates rather than lowers existing educational standards. (183-4)

In Robbins' educational vision, the emphasis appears to be slightly more focused at connectivity, rather than at the undoing of the hegemonic Spivak suggests. What both critics intimately share, however, is that cosmopolitanism is not just a counterweight to the local, it is a modus operandi that tries to undo the local (and hence the global) of its stringent moralism, its insistence on categoricals and its dominance over a more reciprocal exchange of knowledge and values.

These ideas are prone to the accusation that Nussbaum invents with regard to cosmopolitanism. It is supposed to lack the 'color' that nationalism has. Although this may hold through as such cosmopolitanism is far removed from 'normal', everyday practices, Spivak's and Robbins' emphasis on a different type of education is hardly insignificant or desultory. The resulting 'color' must emerge from that, but it cannot always be expected to be immediately appended to cosmopolitan philosophy. Nussbaum herself probably does not believe in her invented accusation either. Her clear-cut examples defy such illogic. Her example about the family and child-rearing is by no means random. "[A] study of the history of the family, both in our own and other traditions [...] can show us [...] that the two-parent nuclear family [...] is by no means a pervasive style of child-rearing in today's world. The extended family, clusters of

families, the village [...] in various places in the world have major child-rearing responsibilities" (11). First, it is a very tangible example, with enough depth to imagine what cosmopolitan education may entail. Secondly, the example is not trivial, as it connects to problems of the Western world with regard to not only child-rearing (which is a form of education as well) or the amount of child abuse in the nuclear family (11), but also to, for example, the emergence of nursing homes, in which the elderly are isolated from their families and society at large. Thirdly, it attacks, indirectly, the trope of the capitalist, heteronormative nuclear family. The earlier invocation of a queer Marxism, which admittedly has not received much attention here, is useful for a short intermission, before proceeding with the connection between nationalism, globalism and Tagore's vision on education.

The nuclear family is, in Marxism at least, widely held to be the cornerstone of a capitalist society. Kevin Floyd points to this by invoking Michael Warner's belief

> that the normalization of heterosexuality is "deeply embedded" not only in "an indescribably wide range of social institutions" but also in "the most standard accounts of the world". These accounts included not only dominant ideologies about democracy, nationalism, and the so-called market but also a range of critical knowledges that fall under the heading of social theory, knowledges that did not simply, innocuously exclude any account of sexuality but excluded it in such a way that a widespread social tendency to universalize heterosexuality by particularizing homosexuality was reinforced. (5)

The way heterosexuality is embedded in, for instance, the market, is omitted, but the suggestion that normalization accounts for nationalism and capitalism is reminiscent of the earlier discussion of capitalism and commodification. The ties between normalization, normativity, and globalism seem to return ever again. It is important to note that heterosexuality should be

conceived within queer theory as identitarian. Otherwise, the general global aversion or exclusion of homosexuality would not have been needed to explain the connection between capitalism and normativity. According to queer theory, which, according to Lynne Huffer's *Mad for Foucault*, mostly follows the logic of Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*, heterosexuality as identity is a relatively new invention of the nineteenth century tendency to turn simple, 'animalistic' behavior, punishable or not, into a medicalized and hence identity-forming conception of personal traits. Homosexuality, then, became identity, with heterosexuality as its naturalized (since medicalization implies naturalization) counterpart.

In an essay called *Merely Cultural*, Judith Butler reacts against the idea that some social movements, like feminist or queer movements, are merely cultural in many Marxist views. The reduction to a site that is not at stake in Marxism both essentializes materialism and ignores the value of the cultural to the economic sphere. She argues against the idea that "homophobia has no roots in political economy, because homosexuals occupy no distinctive position in the division of labor" (271). She then cites Friedrich Engels, who connects production to the family, supporting her idea that social relations are not relegated to the "merely cultural":

> According to the materialist conception, the determining factor in history is, in the final instance, the production and reproduction of immediate life. This, again, is of a twofold character: on the one side, the production of the means of existence, of food, clothing, and shelter and the tools necessary for that production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species. (quoted on 271)

She gives a whole range of examples that connects production to the family, and proceeds to explain how homosexuals are technically excluded from the productive family by mentioning

their lack of rights in the US, for instance with regard to "tax and property law", inheritance or humane rights like medical decisions (273).

Though the link between normative sexuality and capitalism can be constructed convincingly through Marxism, Tagore's nationalism is somewhat removed from the above remarks. The whole matrix however, of capitalism, nationalism, Western (or any other) normativity, sexuality or gender can be deconstructed or reconstructed through cosmopolitan education.

Both Spivak and Robbins share a focus on cosmopolitanism through education comparable to Nussbaum's: "One of the greatest barriers to rational deliberation in politics is the unexamined feeling that one's own preferences and ways are neutral and natural. An education that takes national boundaries as morally salient too often reinforces this kind of irrationality" (11). Though this statement merely seems to repeat earlier invocations of Nussbaum's anti-nationalist stance, it is interesting to note that she specifically mentions "national boundaries". From the analyses of capitalism, nationalism and Robbins' particularism can be deduced that national boundaries are simply the result of these ideologies. Therefore these national boundaries, important though for Nussbaum's argument, are not the main interest of cosmopolitanism. Thinking in boundaries in general is the main effect that is interesting here.

Boundaries may vary from inventions on a map to inventions that separate supposedly specific cultures from one another. Paul Gilroy comments on this idea by situating himself in contemporary society, whereas Robbins and Spivak presented a more idealistic case: "Civilizations are now closed or finished cultures that need to be preserved" (Gilroy 65). This remark may be taken in two directions. The first is that a nationalist culture must protect itself, and the second is that other cultures' authenticity should not be harmed. Though Gilroy seems to

refer to larger 'units of coherence', in its loosest sense civilizations may be considered as a group of people, irrespective of the size, of which each member believes to be attached by some specific traits to the other members. I insist on the repetition of this idea, which has appeared in other guises, as I want to make clear that the features inherent to nationalism are not different from those in localism or globalism. Gilroy connects nationalism with globalism by pointing to the dependence of globalism on nationalism: "It is the national state that supplies the cornerstones for any global system of judicial or governmental regulation" (65). His interest is not in any national state or any global system, as he points his arrows specifically to the US: "[i]n the unipolar global order created by the economic and military dominance of the United States, practical geopolitics suggests that the waning authority of bodies like the United Nations is being replaced rather than augmented by a range of new initiatives that derive directly from American strategic objectives, though they are often presented in universalist rhetoric" (65). The universalist rhetoric is needed to protect or improve the self, but it must suggest that any other, by adhering to this universalism, can protect or improve itself. As an example, the 2003 war in Iraq was called Operation Iraqi Freedom, thereby presenting itself as legitimate since it involves the fundamental right of freedom and appears to be altruistic in its core. The true motives, if discernable at all, were at the very least a mixture of self-interest (that exceeds the protection of the entire world against WMD's, which were evidently not there) and some form of humanitarianism, if not outright self-centered. Robbins has stated that, in some way, a preference for particularization is essentially universalistic. Robbins referred to it with respect to professional or scholarly articles, yet within nationalism, this is embodied as practice. The suggested authentic autonomy of locals or nations is a motif to create a mandate for an all-out universalism.

This universalism (or globalism) has become conflated with the term 'cosmopolitanism', a term that, according to Gilroy, needs to be retrieved from such schemata. He writes that "[t]oday, the point of view that makes the improvement of a resentful and unappreciative world by imperial powers into a matter of morals can call itself cosmopolitan. That designation is, of course, qualified by a continuing attachment to the idea that the national state should remain the primary institutional guarantor of political rights" (69). Herewith, he disavows the adoption by imperial powers of the cosmopolitan, and he accuses them of neglecting the idea of "world citizenship" in a Kantian or Stoic fashion (69), the version that Nussbaum and, by association, Spivak and Robbins propagate.

I must, however, turn to Tagore as the topic of cosmopolitanism and its dissimilarity to globalism have been pointed out through the works of these three scholars. By now, it is evident that they have engaged themselves in a bipolar cosmopolitics, with nationalist globalism on one side and a questioning, contesting version of cosmopolitanism on the other. All three are in some way in favor of the latter idea, yet this thesis is ultimately about Tagore's cosmopolitanism.

Postcolonial Tagore

What does it mean to read Tagore in an age of globalization? That was the question asked at the beginning of the previous chapter. For me, the answer must contain a postcolonial vision of his cosmopolitanism. At the beginning of that chapter, I have stated that postcolonialism in its loosest sense marks a period. Yet, within academia, that period contains specific notions about otherness, the local and the global. The question may be rephrased then: *why* should we read him *now*? Effectively, the italics make it a multiple question. The *why* and *now* both refer to the postcolonial. Why read Tagore in postcolonial times? Since his work contains a cosmopolitanism that defies globalism arising from nationalism. Why now? Because, as Gilroy has argued, in its quotidian use, the cosmopolitan is hijacked by nationalist rhetoric. Furthermore, Nussbaum's cosmopolitanism as counteracting this tendency is too immersed in the "moral rationality" (S. Tagore 1072). A definitive answer, therefore, must also contain a form of cosmopolitanism that is dissimilar to her, Spivak's, Robbins' or Gilroy's cosmopolitanism. Otherwise, reading them would have been sufficient to attain a proper form of cosmopolitanism in an age of anti-normativity.

S. Tagore has situated Tagore's cosmopolitanism between Nussbaum's and Putnam's, by maintaining that Tagore is indebted to the local and its tradition, yet seeks for an overarching universalism that informs these localities, different as they may be. What ultimately counts for Tagore is his retrieval of a united humanity, according to S. Tagore the key image of his cosmopolitanism.

Such uniting must come not at the expense of difference, but with the utmost regard of that difference. Even at his most enigmatic, the spiritual Tagore has this vision of humanity and its purpose:

> Humanity, for ages, has been busy with the one great creation of spiritual life. Its best wisdom, its discipline, its literature and art, all the teachings and self-sacrifice of its noblest teachers, have been for this. But the harmony of contrary forces, which give their rhythm to all creation, has not yet been perfected by man in his civilisation, and the Creator in him is baffled over and over again. He comes back to his work, however, and makes himself busy, building his world in the midst of desolation and ruins. His history is the history of his aspiration interrupted and renewed. And one truth of which he must be reminded, therefore, is that the power which accomplishes the miracle of creation, by bringing conflicting forces into the harmony of the One, is no passion, but a love which accepts the bonds of self-control from the joy of its own immensity—a love whose sacrifice is the manifestation of its endless wealth within itself. (*Creative Unity* 66-7)

Tagore's humanity is characterized by what makes man ultimately human: literature, art, knowledge and wisdom. Human beings speak to each other through these 'languages' of humanity. To take a leap: Anderson's nationalism is embedded in language. For many groups, language is the denominator *par excellence* by which one can recognize a member of the same group. Though Anderson does not argue this, language furthermore becomes separated from (or unjustly connected to) a purpose. Migrants who are supposed to learn a new language are urged to do so because they have to 'participate'. What this participation entails is unclear, but there is a sentiment of placing language in a framework of the political citizen[9]. The aspect of fraternizing seems to disappear from language's usefulness.

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[9] This sentiment is, for instance, expressed on the official Dutch website for the acquisition of Dutch as a second language called *Het Begint met Taal* (It Begins with Language). The introduction states that (in translation): "Understanding and being understood starts with speaking the Dutch language. The language of health care, of our education, the language of our children's future. Therefore, we want everyone who lives in the Netherlands to speak Dutch". A flavor text has that same sentiment, also by conjuring responsibility: "It is difficult to help your child when you do not speak its teacher's language." Though these are by no means inherently unjust requests,

Tagore aims for purposes of humanity when he mentions the universal languages of art or literature. This may seem a tangential remark, but the title *Creative Unity* fully supports the statement. Unity is to be achieved through various forms of creativity. As has been stated before, it was Tagore's intent to realize this by writing (poetry and prose), painting and making music. As he practices what he preaches, the importance of it cannot remain understated. In his version of cosmopolitanism, he actually tries to achieve that harmony of contrary forces. It is, in a wholly other guise, again illustrative for the continuity that may arise out of inconsistency. His self-mocking should not eclipse what he also calls his greatest asset.

The section from *Creative Unity* was quoted in its entire length, as its importance reaches beyond the mere 'verification' of his human or spiritual interest. Among others, there is already an inkling of his inclination towards a more inclusive cosmopolitanism, rather than a cosmopolitanism based on contested worlds. His words about love and endless wealth suggest a more affective and affirmative cosmopolitanism than the rational versions discussed above.

Tagore's inclusive cosmopolitanism diffracts into, at least, three images of his cosmopolitanism. The first, which unfortunately has largely been bypassed so far, is his appreciation of the environmental. The second is his anti-normative philosophy and the third is his focus on education. All these views build up to a cosmopolitanism that is not too remote from S. Tagore's understanding of it, but I intend to make a few adjustments, which will alter the reception of tradition in his work and which will suggest a cosmopolitanism that is affective and affirmative and not so much at risk of being purely deconstructive.

The words 'affection' and 'affirmation' are insufficient to describe the categories they refer to. Tagore's affection consists of a whole range of feelings and behaviors. Love has been

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there is hardly any attention paid to the genuine pleasure of being able to converse, irrespective of the circumstances.

mentioned already, and that is indeed at the heart of Tagore's vision and experience. Affirmation is close to an idea that is not quite anti-normative. To affirm of a specific trait as good or valuable, one automatically positions himself in a certain normative manner. Tagore's anti-normativity, then, is directed against specific traits that present themselves as natural, and it is therefore selective. Incidentally, what the creator views as good or valuable is what he loves. This behavior is also biased, but the thing loved is not seen as inherently good (or normal or natural). Love is what bridges the gap between the object of affection and the affected person. With passion, one is forgetful of the leap that has to be made. The object of passion is inherently, unequivocally good. Affirmation is the category that is also somewhat related to S. Tagore insistence on the value of tradition in Tagore's cosmopolitanism. S. Tagore, however, thereby situates Tagore between Putnam and Nussbaum, whereas betweenness is probably not applicable to a philosophy that is slightly remote from both aforementioned philosophies. The full extent of these two categories will be explored below in an analysis of the three images presented above. The examples will also serve as counterexamples for the imaginable accusation of Tagore's "soft-headedness" or an incomprehensible spirituality that is detached from reality. Tagore's philosophy is firmly rooted in 'earthly' experiences, and though experience can always be attacked on grounds of softness, there is irrevocably a sense of realness in experience.

Tagore's valuation of nature has been mentioned shortly. The area of Santiniketan was important in his realization that nature must become part of education not only as something that can be mastered or is knowledgeable, but also as something that can be experienced. Another experience that seems to reappear in analyses of Tagore's work is a statement from *My Reminiscences*, in which he evaluates a childhood experience. When one of his servants wanted to keep the young boy in one particular place to prevent him from running around, he drew a

chalk circle as a reminder of a fearsome story of punishment (*Ramayana*) for those who dared to leave the circle (Kripalani 39). From within this circle, "the child's interest would shift to the giant banyan tree and the play of shadows round its base" (39). It is impossible to determine if Tagore's later evaluation of those days, which is quoted in Kripalani, is not affected by hindsight, yet nonetheless it describes his immersion in nature vividly: "Looking back [...] the thing that recurs most often is the mystery which used to fill both life and world. This mystery lurked everywhere and the uppermost question every day was, when would we come across it?" (40). Kripalani comments on that statement by arguing that "[t]his sense of wonder and this gift of finding delight in the seemingly commonplace experiences of life was to survive as a major spiritual asset of the poet" (40). That argument indeed reflects his fondness for the Eastern University which tries to incorporate that experience of nature.

Tagore weighs importance on the emphasis on intellect that is derived from the West, yet wants to complement this with an Eastern movement:

> A large part of man can never find its expression in the mere language of words. It must therefore seek for its other languages,—lines and colours, sounds and movements. Through our mastery of these we not only make our whole nature articulate, but also understand man in all his attempts to reveal his innermost being in every age and clime. The great use of Education is not merely to collect facts, but to know man and to make oneself known to man. (*Creative Unity* 196-7)

These other languages can be found in nature or as natural expressions, but they must be given academic attention and not taken for granted. There are two reasons to situate sites of such education in the countryside. The first is purely pragmatic and not mentioned as such, though it is implied: it is simply easier to encounter these languages in an unspoilt land. Unspoilt from the

absence of city life, but also unspoilt from the idea of a purely intellect-based education. Tagore writes: "[w]here society is comparatively simple and obstructions are not too numerous, we can clearly see how the life-process guides education in its vital purpose. The system of folk-education, which is indigenous to India, but is dying out, was one with the people's life" (182). This system of folk-education is connected to the second reason: Tagore considers it to be specifically Eastern. Indian folk-education was conducted by "the recitation of epics, expounding of the scriptures, reading from the Puranas, which are the classical records of old history, performance of plays founded upon the early myths and legends, dramatic narration of the lives of ancient heroes, and the singing in chorus of songs from the old religious literature" (182). This system provides an intricate mixture of knowledge and experience, both in its content and its effect. This type of education that relies much more on listening and singing is somewhat closer to experience. It was an unavoidable method in a community that was mostly illiterate (183). Especially singing and reciting require immersion in what is done. It therefore may alter the way in which this knowledge is received.

Tagore's choice for the local, however, is not only related to the ideal of experience or immersion. These two ideals are complemented by Tagore's understanding of economy. This understanding is somewhat distant to the contemporary, dominant notion of economy as the flux or distribution of money and wealth. For Tagore, economy is more related to its etymology (where 'oikos' means 'house' and 'nomos' means 'rule') and its distribution of materials needed for the sustainability of life. "Our centre of culture should not only be the centre of the intellectual life of India, but the centre of her economic life also. It must co-operate with the villages round it, cultivate land, breed cattle, spin cloths, press oil from oil-seeds; it must produce all the necessaries, devising the best means, using the best materials, and calling science to its

aid" (201). This co-operation must originate in the small unit of the Eastern University, which can be directly connected to the other villages as it is part of the rural. Again, Tagore considers the West (science) as having a part in such education, but not a dominant part.

This turn to an economic understanding of life is partially based on Tagore's original distinction between society and the nation. He argues for a return to an understanding of economy that, according to Tagore, permeated society before the nation: "Society in its early stage was held together by its economic co-operation, when all its members felt in unison a natural interest in their right to live" (200-1). He imagines a society that, unintentionally, was living truthfully and unspoiled by tendencies to compartmentalize intellect-based knowledge from its intuitive, experiential counterpart.

In sum, Tagore's aim with this Eastern University is to create an "institution [that] should be a perpetual creation by the co-operative enthusiasm of teachers and students, growing with the growth of their soul; a world in itself, self-sustaining, independent, rich with ever-renewing life, radiating life across space and time, attracting and maintaining round it a planetary system of dependent bodies" (203). Some of his ecological affinity seems to surface here, with the emphasis on self-sustainability and ever-renewing life, though these terms are formally restricted to the University alone. That Eastern University, however, does serve as a model for the comprehension of a life lived in full truth, of immersion in both the societal and the natural aspects of life.

The model Tagore proposes is ultimately a worldly model, as he has stated in other, already mentioned accounts that Eastern knowledge can complement its Western counterpart. Tagore thereby intricately molds together the local or the particular and the universal in a single

frame. Tagore thereby invests interest in some form of agency of the local that seems comparable to the model Robbins has criticized.

Yet, Robbins' critique is not fully applicable to Tagore's investment, as his objective is not specifically the retrieval of the local from the global. Tagore seems quite specific in his preference of the local over any larger unit of coherence, yet according to Das Gupta, in an opinion to which I am sympathetic, his objective was to "bridge the gap between the city and the village" (992). Tagore's own explanation for turning to the rural is its simplicity: "Where society is comparatively simple and obstructions are not too numerous, we can clearly see how the life-process guides education in its vital purpose" (*Creative Unity* 182). This is not because the rural is better understandable since its size is relatively small, but because the basic economic human needs are unobstructed and become more visible. His choice, then, seems to be more a matter of visibility than of specificity or particularity.

In this light, it is also easier to understand what Tagore means by "attracting and maintaining round [the institution] a planetary system of dependent bodies" (203). These dependent bodies appear to be cities, if we follow Das Gupta's logic, or other "units of coherence". Villages, or at the least those that are near, must be excluded as Tagore expressed the wish to co-operate, which would make his institution dependent as well, thereby contradicting himself. The rural, then, becomes the agent itself, instead of a place where agency is to be had by an individual. It is therefore that I have stated that cosmopolitan experiences must be understood as rooted. When Tagore appeals to an experienced, immersed life, he roots himself in a cosmopolitan fashion. For Tagore, the rural and the cosmopolitan form a conjunction, around which dependent bodies orbit.

It is very well possible that these dependent bodies form a metaphor for aspects of human life, such as the political life or the economic life, aspects that are merely parts of Tagore's society, which are separate from each other and which only meet in this rooted yet cosmopolitan life. S. Tagore has cited a beautiful metaphor, which makes this assumption explicit: "When the science of meteorology knows the earth's atmosphere as continuously one, affecting the different parts of the world differently, but in a harmony of adjustments, it knows and attains truth" (cited in S. Tagore 1077). To translate this into terms of dependency and independency results in an idea that rainfall or sunshine in a particular place is dependent on climate, yet climate, as a neutral term, is independent of this particular rainfall or sunshine. To be more explicit: it would be utterly foolish to determine climate solely in terms of rainfall.

If climate is climate, then man is man. Yet, if societal man wants to fully be this man, he must organize himself in a society that can account for all differentiality. Furthermore, man must not be determined by one of the constituencies of society. S. Tagore is right when he argues that in Tagore "[f]or once the state is devalued in the face of a forceful revalorization of the cultural and the everyday, and when the determinations of political identity are loosened, the overlapping map of other identities can emerge" (1080). It is evident that Tagore wants to diminish the influence of nationalism and its accompanying narrative of scientification. Tagore has a distinct idea of what it means to be fully human, and this human is comprised by its quotidian needs, its cultural output, but also by politics. Ideally, politics do ensure that human beings behave in a way that is not harmful to others. But politics are developed by the needs of man; the needs of man must not be determined by politics. Therefore I cannot fully concur with S. Tagore preceding assertion that "a deep philosophical source of Tagore's cosmopolitanism comes from his ability to keep this rich life of 'civil society' distanced from political and economic

structures" (1080.). If S. Tagore refers to the Western version of economy in which the concern is not only the distribution of goods but also an accumulation of wealth, then he may be correct. In *The Home and the World* Tagore expresses disdain for this concept: "Every man has a natural right to possess, and therefore greed is natural. It is not in the wisdom of nature that we should be content to be deprived. What my mind covets, my surroundings must supply. This is the only true understanding between our inner and outer nature in this world" (25). These are the words of Sandip, and this hyperbole resonates with Tagore's idea that humanity has become too much determined by a supposedly natural connection between needs and wants. To possess may be a natural right, but the assertion that greed is therefore natural is a non sequitur.

This also helps to explain Tagore's reservation to Gandhi's Swaraj. Gandhi's idea of self-government is directly connected to the boycott of English goods. To abolish English goods and prefer self-produced goods, Gandhi was still endorsing a system that falsely produces a "true understanding between the inner and outer nature of the world", only from a different perspective.

As has been stated, economic needs must be complemented by instances of experiences. "The greedy man who is fond of his fish stew has no compunction in cutting up the fish according to his need. But the man who loves the fish wants to enjoy it in the water; and if that is impossible he waits on the bank; and even if he comes back home without a sight of it he has the consolation of knowing that the fish is all right" (*THaTW* 8). Tagore inconveniently uses the word 'greedy' (though this may be a translational issue), but the point is clear. There is nothing particularly wrong with a need for food, as Tagore does not oppose it by saying that a man who loves the fish wants to enjoy it in the water. He merely adds to it. It is understandable that S. Tagore was wrong-footed by these seemingly overt instances of dislike for the economy, but in

the *Eastern University* economy as a structure[10] is absolutely indispensable to Tagore's philosophy.

Likewise, I disagree with S. Tagore's focus on tradition as a key element in Tagore's cosmopolitanism. It may be one of the sites through which cosmopolitanism is negotiated, but the expansion of one's own tradition is merely a result. Again, his general conclusions about (Tagore's) cosmopolitanism are sound: "for Tagore [...] the motivation to be a cosmopolitan is ultimately grounded in an existential orientation, *a way of being in the world*"[11] (1078). The element of being in the world, of fully engaging with nature and other men is pivotal, as is evident in the citation about the fish. It is thereby also a loving experience, even when a fish has remained invisible. S. Tagore argues, on the other hand, that a

> representation of otherness that is not worked through a tradition can only be a colourless token of some universal abstraction of the other and can never be the substance of a rich relationship. The Tagorean conception of rationality does not merely yield postmodern toleration of alterity, but aspires to dissolve instances of otherness altogether by enriching one's own tradition through hermeneutic absorption and assimilation. (1078)

This citation has abundant abstractions, yet somehow that term is only reserved for the colourless cosmopolitanism of Nussbaum. Tradition seems to provide the firm ground, but there is an ontological problem in the hermeneutics of tradition. It is difficult to establish what tradition entails. If it is a single expression of society, like a feast or a musical style, it is somewhat comprehensible (though not even necessarily an act of cosmopolitanism). Other musical styles and feasts can easily be incorporated. S. Tagore gives Hindustani music, a merger of Hindu and Muslim music, as an example (1077). Christmas as a Christian-heathen crossover feast is

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[10] It is, after all, a rule (a 'nomos') which is incidentally derived from the Greek verb nemo, meaning 'to distribute'.
[11] Original italics

another[12]. Yet, tradition can also be considered as a habit of which its origin is not (longer) known. Moreover, tradition can become a Nussbaumian "what is deeply and broadly shared". It is therefore difficult to understand why S. Tagore discovers a Heideggerian hermeneutics ("a way of being in the world" (1078)) in Tagore and finds it concretely attachable to tradition (something else entirely), and yet discards Nussbaum's conception of cosmopolitanism, which is, in terms of concreteness or abstraction, not starkly different from the terminology of "a way of being in the world".

Furthermore, Tagore has stated that even despite a certain commonality, idiosyncrasies are important features of society as well: "There was a time with us when India had her common language of culture in Sanskrit. But, for the complete commerce of her thought, she required that all her vernaculars should attain their perfect powers, through which her different peoples might manifest their idiosyncrasies (*Creative Unity* 190)". Cosmopolitanism, then, must consist of something aside from the 'dissolving of otherness altogether'. S. Tagore does not argue against this, but there is a suggestion of diminishing this importance.

The emphasis on the importance of tradition for Tagore's cosmopolitanism also hampers the inclusion of points that argue against Tagore.

The site that S. Tagore refers to, which I will call the site of experience (in full concordance with the hermeneutics he proposes), is obstructed by Tagore's constant references to a political reality. I am, of course, referring to his invocations of East and West. I have argued that these two terms serve as catachreses, and that they serve as collisions of a geographical site with a political philosophy. This is not overly problematic, but things become more obfuscating

[12] The latter is suspect, however, given its civilizing mission. The reasons of the merger may very well be pragmatic, inspired by the wish to convert as many people as possible, though this is pure speculation on my part. Nonetheless, the idea of conversion (or convergence) in general may very well come in the guise of cosmopolitanism, thereby problematizing the notion of the absorption of tradition as fundamental for cosmopolitanism.

when he specifically takes his site of "rural reconstruction"[13] as an amalgam of everything Eastern: "In this belief, it is my desire to extend by degrees the scope of this University on simple lines, until it comprehends the whole range of Eastern cultures—the Aryan, Semitic, Mongolian and others. Its object will be to reveal the Eastern mind to the world" (*Creative Unity* 175). These ideas were inspired by his various travels to other Asian countries, where such ideas were not embraced wholeheartedly as Stephen Hay shows. The initial cheer Tagore received after delivering a lecture at Tokyo Imperial University (65-6), became mixed with criticism from, mostly, Japanese nationalists. Tagore restated that Asia's spirit could save the harmful aspects of Western nationalism, though it could be complemented by the West's aspiration toward greater knowledge (64-5). He granted Japan with the honor of having that typically rooted Asian spirit, while simultaneously embracing modern progress (65). The Japanese nationalists, however, tended to frame Tagore as merely a poet, only useful for distraction from the daily lives, or worse even "that if [he] really wished to revive [Indian thought] he should look for inspiration to nations like Japan that were repeating this experience of conquering weaker peoples" (87).

The criticism Tagore expresses against Japan in *Nationalism* may have its origin in the palpability of such notions. Though he stated that "Japan may have imported her food from the West, but not her vital nature" (55), this positive assertion is countered by his warning against essentialism. "I must warn [...] that modernizing is a mere affectation of modernism, just as affectation of poesy is poetizing. It is nothing but mimicry, only affectation is louder than the original, it is too literal. One must bear in mind that those who have the true modern spirit need not modernize" (75). Despite such criticism, Tagore maintained an ideal of an originally

[13] This is the description of Visva-Bharati in Das Gupta's title.

harmonious Eastern Asia that "from Burma to Japan was united with India in the closest tie of friendship" (58).

Yet, to comprehend a whole range of cultures is not too problematic either, if it is just taken as a step toward more mutual exchange. Cosmopolitanism is not an electric switch; if it takes one country or people or person at a time, then that is what it takes. Unfortunately, to suggest that they must then have a singular mind digresses from the idea that there are many idiosyncrasies within the East. In this argument, Tagore becomes part of a Westernized world view, in which the East is a neatly separated "bale of humanity".

Tagore's vision of a unified East is inspired by India's history, which may then serve as a role model in international politics. At the beginning of *Nationalism*, Tagore states that "[t]o India has been given her problem from the beginning of history – it is the race problem. Races ethnologically different have in this country come into close contact. [...] It is our mission to face it and prove our humanity by dealing with it in the fullest truth" (4). The question is whether India's role is a political or a qualitative truth. Naturally, cosmopolitanism must start somewhere, and if India is the place where qualitative differences can be overcome or appropriated, then there is nothing wrong by appointing to India the prerogative of a cosmopolitan mission. When Tagore, however, asserts that "India and the East [are] synonymous, that Eastern civilization is distinguished by spiritual profundity, and that the East and West complemented each other perfectly" (Hay 21), problems of essentialism appear. To conceive of the East as an identifiable force, against the West, and to add an essence, is contradictory to his assertions about the normativity of Western science. At last, there is a sort of inconsistency detectable in his work, which forms an important caveat for cosmopolitanism (or any research in general). To assess

what Tagore's cosmopolitanism or anti-normativity entails, one must, to use a quote from Robbins, specify "why it is where it is and why it isn't where it isn't" (175).

Tagore's analysis of Western scientification, and how it tends to swamp every other culture and thereby humanity, works because it is a qualitative analysis, in which there is space for the historical advancement of this idea. Furthermore, the behavior or tendency to think of man in scientific terms, to suppose that man is essentially what science can uncover, has become favorable, and Tagore's arguments against such essentializing are solid. Though the geographical West is not a single unity, Tagore must use it a marker to argue against, as the West's normative behavior is palpable for him. This marker is mostly a metaphor for a certain quality or demeanor. His cosmopolitanism, then, relies heavily on the subversion of Western normative conduct. In general, this is not too different from other versions of cosmopolitanism. Nussbaum's aversion to patriotism is comparable to Tagore's aversion to nationalism, and Tagore's scientification is related to Spivak's epistemic violence, which can be described as the (Western) tendency to impose a singular system of knowledge and the knowledge it produces onto other people, thereby violating and tearing down their own comprehension or perception of (the way to live) life (*A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* 266).

Yet, I have made a distinction between Tagore's cosmopolitanism and Nussbaum's, based on the premise that Tagore's cosmopolitanism is inclusive, and not merely contesting. This aspect of inclusion, though already apprehended in its rural economic sense, must also include an analysis of his focus on love and affinity.

Queer Cosmopolitanism

The problem of mere contesting, which Tagore's cosmopolitanism tries to circumvent, is similar to a problem noted by Michael D. Snediker in queer theory. The step from cosmopolitanism to queer theory most importantly marks a step from the effect of normativity on society to its effect on the individual. As I have shortly explained, the medicalization of human characteristics or behavior is one direction scientification in general has generated. The effect of scientification on the comprehension of humanity and the world is fundamental for a shift that has made biology into an essence of man, into identity. Though Tagore's sexuality is mostly centered on the sexuality of man and woman, and if not, on sex in general, to a certain extent that discussion crosses over to a discussion of masculinity and femininity as well. This section on Tagore and sexuality will show in what ways his anti-normativity is fundamental to his understanding of cosmopolitanism, seen from the point of view of the individual, though several remarks about the general are unavoidable. Here, the aspect of experience and affinity, comparable to Tagore's valuation of nature, becomes a prominent feature for this cosmopolitanism.

Queer theory, as studies that wants to deconstruct normativity, is invested in certain negative tropes that result in a continuing obstruction of human connection. This lack of attention for affinity, and its obsession with deconstruction only, is exposed by Snediker, who opts for a specific kind of optimism. Snediker's optimistic queer theory provides the toolbox for a Tagorean conception of affective cosmopolitanism. Therewith, Tagore's emphasis on sustainability and durability is reflected in Snediker's analysis of queer optimism.

Yet, I will first turn to Tagore's deconstruction of normativity. I have tried to locate the deconstruction of several sexual norms in Tagore's writings. In *The Home and the World* instances of it are sparse, but they are important features of his text. Tagore does indeed write

about sexuality, and even about sexual reform, though in this he maintains a distinction between man and woman and their different tasks. Most notable, however are the aspects of inequality that are passionately rejected. In a particular understanding of it, the title *The Home and the World* even refers to such inequality. Nikhil wants to free Bimala from her seclusion in the zenana, and a short selection of the discussion reveals Nikhil's motives:

> "What I want is, that I should have you, and you should have me, more fully in the outside world. That is where we are still in debt to each other." "Is anything wanting, then, in the love we have here at home?" "Here you are wrapped up in me. You know neither what you have, nor what you want. [...] If we meet, and recognize each other, in the real world, then only will our love be true". (7)

This refers to Tagore's theory that woman, who is confined in the home, "has accentuated those qualities in herself which insidiously impose their bondage over her mate, some by pandering to his weakness, and some by satisfying his higher nature, till the sex-consciousness in our society has grown abnormal and overpowering" (158-9). Simultaneously, this sex-consciousness has not only to be dispelled for its own sake, because without it man and woman can live their lives more fully, more according to a humanitarian truth. Aside from other interpretations of the novel's title – about the political function of the home in the world or how problems of the world do not pass by the home, readings that, though interesting, are inappropriate here – sexual reform is definitely important to Tagore and forms one explanation of the title.

On the other hand, Tagore detects a unique bond in the marriage between man and woman, in which she gives rise to creativity if her distinction from man is acknowledged:

> Woman has that expression natural to her—a cadence of restraint in her behaviour, producing poetry of life. She has been an inspiration to man, guiding, most often

> unconsciously, his restless energy into an immense variety of creations in literature, art, music and religion [...] But if woman begins to believe that, though biologically her function is different from that of man, psychologically she is identical with him; if the human world in its mentality becomes exclusively male, then before long it will be reduced to utter inanity. [...] Thus the Eastern woman, who is deeply aware in her heart of the sacredness of her mission, is a constant education to man. (*CU* 157-63)

The intentions here are similar to the ones expressed in *The Home and the World.* Mutual love and understanding, despite differences, allows humans to live a harmonious, inspired and creative life. Yet, to appoint to these different groups different roles in the aspiration toward harmony tends to essentialize the difference. Indeed, woman's biology is different, but to suppose it has a predetermined function beyond the biological is suspiciously close to essentialism.

This is what happened in his discussion about East and West as well. As long as the focus is on a certain quality that is useful, the catachrestical use of 'East' and 'West' is not problematic as long as the intention of the words is understood. Yet, if one is intentionally critical of this aspect of Tagore's cosmopolitanism, one might argue, along with William Scheuerman's entry in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* that its "universalistic moral discourse" may result in a "convenient ideological cloak for terrible wars waged by political blocs no less self-interested than the traditional nation-state". Though sexuality is not directly impacted by this definition of globalization, the underlying mechanism that creates a new normativity may be problematic for Tagore's renewed conception of sexuality.

In his personal life, the aspect of masculinity and femininity has been brought up, which may generate future readings of Tagore from not just an egalitarian sexual perspective, but may actually deepen his cosmopolitanism from the viewpoint of gender and queer studies.

J. Edgar Bauer has found evidence that Tagore, aside from a biological and psychological difference between individuals, adhered to norms that denote types of behavior as masculine or feminine. Bauer describes the meeting of Magnus Hirschfeld (the sexologist famous for the idea of the third sex) and Rabindranath Tagore. Bauer cites Hirschfeld, who found that one of the teachers at Tagore's University called Tagore "a famous old prima donna" who "shares his elastic lability with most feminine artists – and which artist is not feminine" (451). Tagore's reaction to accusations of femininity incites assertions by Tagore about manliness and how one behaves in a manly fashion (not pacifistic and defeatist) (Bauer 452). Yet, what Bauer presents seems only tangentially related to the direct accusation uttered by the teacher. Nothing specific is added to the already stated idea that Tagore has a somewhat normative idea about marriage and man and woman's function in it.

Inconsistency, however, is also present in his daily life. Kripalani writes that a social comedy by Tagore, called *Radically Wrong*, features an "ironic anticipation of modern psycho-analyst therapy [...] to cure the many ills of love [...] [C]hild marriage was invented as a vaccination against sex neurosis of which a sure symptom is to feel romantic" (144). Some of Tagore's concerns are repeated here, with his emphasis on a potential wrong-doing of scientification, combined with an effort to retrieve romantics from sex as a politicized apparatus. On the other hand, Krishna Dutta and Andrew Robinson mention in *Selected Letters of Rabindranath Tagore* that the arranged marriages for his daughters were even then controversial (57). Having been involved in an arranged marriage himself (though not unhappily, according to

Kripalani), he opposed the idea, yet pursued the tradition with his daughters (57)[14]. This is a form of ambiguity that cannot be overcome by revisiting his texts.

Yet, the point here is not to construe Tagore himself as a role model, but as someone whose texts may inform a different apprehension of cosmopolitanism, in this case with regard to sexuality. As a final example, then, I will point to Saumitra Chakravarty's analysis of one of Tagore's short stories, *The Destroyed Nest*. She speaks of the illicit love between a young woman, Chura, and her brother in law, though the love is never made explicit. She finds evidence[15] for similarity between Bimala's reverence for Sandip and Chura's for her brother in law (as Bimala's marriage to Nikhil was indeed arranged). Such valuing of love in relationships points to Tagore's involvement with romantics, subverting not only arranged marriages, but also the idea that love is what Snediker has called, "ostensible obvious" (100), in this case with respect to marriage.

This involvement with romantics is a key element in Tagore's inclusive cosmopolitanism, which relates quite well to Snediker's queer optimism. A short explanation of what his optimism entails is therefore necessary, to avoid confusion with the quotidian understanding of optimism. Snediker's optimism is directed toward the coherence of experience, similar to Tagore's wish to institutionalize experience. He is clear about this when he states: "[q]ueer optimism, immanently rather than futurally oriented, does not entail predisposition in the way that conventional optimism entails predisposition. [...] Queer optimism doesn't aspire toward happiness, but

[14] I kindly thank my supervisor, Dr. Ms. Barnita Bagchi, for the suggestion of these contradictory details in this section.

[15] Much of the evidence, however, is related to cultural and linguistic knowledge of, respectively, Hinduism and Hindi, of which I have little to no knowledge. Therefore, I can only concur with most of this evidence.

instead finds happiness *interesting*[16]" (3). His wish, therefore, is to come to a critical understanding of happiness, and more generally, of experience.

Snediker reacts to a few prime queer theorists, of which Judith Butler is an important figure. Snediker writes: "[n]ot just particularly gendered or sexual identities, but "coherent identity position[s]" more generally, were within Butler's account suspect. "Perhaps [...] only by risking the *incoherence* of identity is connection possible"" (5). Though Tagore is unequivocally ambivalent in his assertion about the distinct roles of man and woman, there are traces of a shared suspicion of coherent identity positions:

> Along with the difference inherent in their respective natures, there have grown up between them inequalities fostered by circumstances. Man is not handicapped by the same biological and psychological responsibilities as woman, and therefore he has the liberty to give her the security of home. This liberty exacts payment when it offers its boon, because to give or to withhold the gift is within its power. It is the unequal freedom in their mutual relationships which has made the weight of life's tragedies so painfully heavy for woman to bear. Some mitigation of her disadvantage has been effected by her rendering herself and her home a luxury to man. She has accentuated those qualities in herself which insidiously impose their bondage over her mate, some by pandering to his weakness, and some by satisfying his higher nature, till the sex-consciousness in our society has grown abnormal and overpowering. (*CU* 158-59)

Tagore refers to the specific social position of woman, especially of more wealthy families, in the zenana. This "overpowering of sex-consciousness" is targeted in *The Home and the World* as well, when Nikhil offers to liberate Bimala from her zenana and expresses that "I longed to find Bimala blossoming fully in all her truth and power. But the thing I forgot to calculate was, that

[16] Original italics

one must give up all claims based on conventional rights, if one would find a person freely revealed in truth" (23). Yet, Tagore's concern does not extend beyond conventional rights. The supposed convention of coherence is still present in his work, which is evident from his assertion that man and woman have different "biological and psychological responsibilities" and a different nature altogether.

Tagore cannot escape notions of a certain coherence, but Snediker can, instructed as he is by Butler, and yet finds it difficult to do so: "It seemed [...] that I had two options. I could risk my own incoherence [...] or I could attach to coherence [but] the latter could never be an option [since] coherence was constitutively equivalent to reification, naturalization and congealment" (5). He then refers to his experiences, therewith already alluding to an important aspect of his work, with his initiation in queer theory: "My experience of feeling ontologically incoherent, however, had none of the thrill of reading about being incoherent; likewise, my experience of feeling shattered lacked all the thrill of reading about being shattered. [...] It felt humiliating to approximate – even literalize – the conditions that in theory seemed so important, even exhilarating, but only to approximate them, to come up short" (6). Ultimately, the project to retrieve some form of coherence is close to Tagore's cosmopolitanism. This closeness does not occur on the level of the person, but it does in terms of relationality.

Snediker's feeling of coming up short marks the distance between the theory of incoherence and the practice of feeling coherence. Snediker thereby makes a distinction between the person and personhood. He does not argue against the Butlerian understanding of 'person', for whom a person has become equated with its performance, with a fixed and stable identity based on specific traits. With the invocation of personhood he does, however, argue for a revalorization of what it means to be human and to be part of humanity. For Butler, even on the

level of relationality incoherence is ultimately the effect. In *Precarious Life*, Butler writes about grief, which has a tendency to disrupt or disturb "self-consciousness" and "autonomy" through its relation with others (23). Butler then writes:

> I might try to tell a story here about what I am feeling, but it would have to be a story in which the very "I" who seeks to tell the story is stopped in the midst of telling; the very I is called into question by its relation to the other [that] clutter[s] my speech with signs of its undoing. [...] Let's face it. We're undone by each other. And if we're not, we're missing something. This seems so clearly the case with grief, but it can be so only because it was already the case with desire. (23)

Whether grief or desire is at the base of relationality and its undoing, Tagore would not have condoned such a version of the way relations are built. More acutely, it is exactly desire (or passion) itself that disturbs the way in which relationships are forged. Tagore objects to a society that fails to grasp the difference between love and passion.

Though for Tagore, desire refers to more practical need and greed, and not so much to something bordering on Freud, his analysis of desire shows why Butler, with her insistence on ultimate incoherence, relies heavily on a coherent understanding of desire and as such is indebted to the same problematic trope of coherence she is arguing against.

> Life's tragedies occur, not to demonstrate their own reality, but to reveal that eternal principle of joy in life, to which they gave a rude shaking. It is the object of this Oneness in us to realise its infinity by perfect union of love with others. All obstacles to this union create misery, giving rise to the baser passions that are expressions of finitude, of that separateness which is negative and therefore máyá. (*CU* 4-5)

The logic here is almost the inverse of Butler's. Tragedy (and naturally grief) has a disrupting force, but thereby reminds the human of what is disrupted. Through such loss, which the human has to accept, comes the realization of Oneness in joy. If one ceases to do this, in other words, if one conceives of loss or grief as what coheres, then this obstructs union. As such, what Tagore calls misery is created by tendencies that disrupt love and affinity.

As has been argued earlier, Tagore's distinction between love and passion is fundamental, since love is an eternal process, whereas passion is fixed and as such is limited and finite. Snediker's tries to disentangle love and desire as well, with the difference that queer theory is heavily infused with Freudian desire. Nonetheless the comparison is apt enough, since even Freudian desire is concerned with baser (if not fundamental) passions, to invoke Tagore's terms again.

Snediker intention is even quite coterminous with Tagore's ideas: "I mean to distinguish love's reparative, resuscitative energies from the oppositely and variously undoing, destructive energies of desire" (168). In this citation, Snediker does follow the logic of desire, of shattering and destruction that features prominently in many other instances of queer theory. Butler for instance, in a continuation of desire's tendency to undo, writes: "One does not always stay intact. One may want to, or manage for a while, but despite one's best efforts, one is undone, in the face of the other, by the touch, by the scent, by the feel, by the prospect of the touch, by the memory of the feel" (23-4). These gestures and the memory thereof are for Butler expressions of desire, whether love is involved or not. Love is desire's appendix.

Snediker seems to disagree, however, with the supposed coherence of desire. He is wary of terms that present themselves as categoricals: "The axiomatic thrust of [...] "always" makes

the world so irrevocably one thing that response to the world amounts to one thing"[17] (24). Butler is indebted to this idea when she speaks of desire, as even the best efforts fail. Snediker does, however, find space for a revaluation of coherence. His argument is less directed against coherence as such than against instances of coherence that presume disruption or deconstruction. "Dissatisfaction with a given regime of coherence might sponsor a critical commitment to dismantling coherence *tout court*. Such a dissatisfaction, however, might likewise productively sponsor a reconfiguration of coherence – the cultivation of a vocabulary of coherence that more precisely does justice to the ways in which coherence isn't expansively, unilaterally destructive, reductive or ideological" (25-6). Obviously this means the resuscitation of love in an academic discourse, comparable to Tagore's project of the revaluation of love in human interaction but also in his Eastern University.

Both Tagore and Snediker offer similar alternatives to incorporate love in education. Love is a problematic term, however, which is acknowledged by Snediker: "Desire's colonization of love is in part an effect of love's own comparably under-elaborated theoretical vocabulary" (169). Tagore has a flexible understanding of desire, as it is indeed destructive in sex when it is reduced to passion (*CU* 129), but it is also a more economic term and as such fundamental to supply oneself with certain basic needs. In Tagore's vision, desire has not yet incorporated love, though it is threatened by instances of nationalism and scientification and their respective focus on the acquisition of goods. With love, however, both Tagore and Snediker concur that love can be found in experience and that it can be made to work by insisting on its immanence, even when and where loss is concerned.

[17] Here, Snediker refers to Lee Edelman, a queer scholar, in particular, but the argument is as valid for other queer scholars.

Tagore has constructed a fine metaphor for this loss of experience from education: "we have bought our spectacles at the expense of eye-sight" (*CU* 176). The metaphor also forms an argument against the scientific, reified discourse that a scientific invention may make one look sharper in a certain direction, but around the edges vision becomes blurred, thereby separating an otherwise total image. Yet, it is not just an argument against the invention, but also for more reliance on the senses and its sensitivities. Though this may seem slightly unhappy as a metaphor, as vision can be reduced to a biological function, there is also an element of joy, of relationality in sensations.

Snediker, likewise, appeals to the senses. He cites from a letter by Elizabeth Bishop, a gay poet:

> Have you ever noticed that you can often learn more about other people – more about how they feel, how it would feel to be them – by hearing them cough or make one of the innumerable inner noises, than watching them for hours? Sometimes if another person hiccups, particularly if you haven't been paying attention to him, why you get a sudden sensation as if you were inside him – you know how he feels in the little aspects he never mentions, aspects which are, really, indescribable to another person and must be realized by that kind of intuition". (quoted in Snediker 177)

Of course, the same objection can be made to this idealization of a feeling that inspired Snediker to write his book: this experience is only an approximation of an other. For all the things it is (affective, genuine, heartfelt), it is not recognizable as something demarcated and therefore suitable for studies. Approximation, however, is exactly what makes this citation important.

This citation is about attentiveness and adopting a certain mode. It runs counter to Butler's assertion that people undo each other ultimately. If this sort of identification becomes a

mode to engage the other with, a cosmopolite may be born. This position, which can be found in Tagore, is what makes this form of cosmopolitanism slightly different from Spivak's planet-thought ("that opens up to embrace an inexhaustible taxonomy of such names [of alterity]" (*DoaD* 73)) or Nussbaum's broadly and deeply shared traits.

For Tagore, there is a pivotal distinction between being able to identify and being able to relate. Snediker's citation refers to the latter verb. Bishop's experience of the hiccup does not entail identification (which is an act by which you perceive of the self as comparable to another) but relationality (which is an act of comprehending the other without the negation of difference). Admittedly, this arbitrary distinction is not unproblematic and indeed debatable, but perhaps another citation by Tagore sheds some light on this assertion. "Life finds its truth and beauty, not in any exaggeration of sameness, but in harmony" (*CU* 157). Strict identification results in an exaggeration of sameness, whereas being able to relate does not ignore difference altogether, after which harmony ensues.

So far, the focus has been more on the quality of experience and less on the way to achieve cosmopolitanism, from a Tagorean perspective. Experience must become a mode or mentality in order to attain cosmopolitanism. That was already implied in Tagore's appreciation for folk-education, about which he states: "Owing to this vital method of culture the common people of India, though technically illiterate, have been made conscious of the sanctity of social relationships, entailing constant sacrifice and self-control, urged and supported by ideals collectively expressed in one word, Dharma" (183). Awareness of the importance of social relationships is constantly reinvigorated, which is pivotal for a mentality of experience.

Snediker refers to a mentality of reinvigoration with the use of seriality. He has detected such seriality in diverse poems by poets who he has hence determined as queer-optimistic. In the

introduction, I have referred to the instance of the smile, which can be found on various occasions in Hart Crane's poetry. The idea of the smile, of something that is an expression of affect and relationality, that is iterated, becomes serial. Snediker reserves the term for a specific instance of iteration. He points to "[s]eriality's additive, accretive effects depart from the negative stall [...] attributable to many instances of repetition" (127). Snediker dissociates this from Butler's performativity (127), the idea that the contemporary social system dictates norms to which each individual is bound by involuntarily repeating those norms, as well (Culler 513).

Such seriality must be considered as an attitude toward the other. When affectivity becomes an immanent mode in the engagement of others, mankind generates an accumulative idea of a social relationality through coherence. The future result (through accumulation) is what is ultimately at stake, but it is the immanence that deserves a critical revaluation.

In Tagore, this can be recognized in his emphasis on sustainability and durability. Usually, these terms are reserved for economic independence and the adjacent ecological responsibility of such economy. This is also the case in Tagore's Eastern University and its affinity with the rural. Yet, for Tagore, as in Snediker, sustainability also encompasses an economy of society:

> Our society exists to remind us, through its various voices, that the ultimate truth in man is not in his intellect or his possessions; it is in his illumination of mind, in his extension of sympathy across all barriers of caste and colour; in his recognition of the world, not merely as a storehouse of power, but as a habitation of man's spirit, with its eternal music of beauty and its inner light of the divine presence. (*CU* 27)

This element of sympathy must be immanent, must be "a habitation of man's spirit", in man's engagement with the world. Though this may seem too metaphysical, with the invocation of truth

again, the barriers of social difference he mentions are as real as possible. This element of genuine affect must also install true harmony, true sym-pathy, and not mere empathy, which contains an aspect of distance and may therefore become an element of superiority (the storehouse of power).

To illustrate the point, and to show not only his affinity for the metaphysical, but also for humanity, even when there is initial difference, Tagore's following statement is useful: "Let me say clearly that I have no distrust of any culture because of its foreign character. On the contrary, I believe that the shock of such extraneous forces is necessary for the vitality of our intellectual nature" (*CU* 193). The shock, then, is the experience, but despite the shock one must be affirmative of the other culture and insist on a relation with that culture.

This element of shock and awe is vital for Tagore's conception of a creative unity. I have earlier cited that "the harmony of contrary forces, which give their rhythm to all creation, has not yet been perfected by man in his civilisation, and the Creator in him is baffled over and over again" (65-6). After this, the creator returns to his work (66). The constant "interruption and renewal of aspiration" (66) is a sign of the importance of seriality in creativity. For Tagore, creativity is a form of experiencing the world as one: "[p]oetry and the arts cherish in them the profound faith of man in the unity of his being with all existence, the final truth of which is the truth of personality. It is a religion directly apprehended, and not a system of metaphysics to be analysed and argued. We know in our personal experience what our creations are and we instinctively know through it what creation around us means". Though usually religion is well within the realm of metaphysics, Tagore's reference is related to the meaning of the Latin word 'religare', meaning 'to connect'.

This position is different from Spivak's or Nussbaum's, I believe, since this position ultimately strives for harmony of all aspects of humanity. Although alterity is an important notion, as is the focus on contesting different worlds, for a comprehension of humanity as one it seems insufficient. Most importantly, however, their analyses rely on the rational, whereas Tagore maintains that humanity is more than merely rational and more than its political position in the world. Snediker's tools, which dissect certain categoricals of contemporary theory, may serve the academic discussion of the categories of love, affection and harmony that Tagore refers to.

Epilogue

I have called Tagore's cosmopolitanism alternately inclusive, loving, affirmative, affinitive and experiential. At times, some of the words are almost synonymous, but the important point is that they are all part of the same matrix. With an inflection of Clifford's words, these five words have been used to depict cosmopolitanism in a way that roots humanity. These words, especially the words 'love' and 'experience' (since they depict what is most at stake), should inspire a renewed academic apprehension that disjoints them from both their negative colonizers 'desire' and 'undoing', and their vagueness or, in Snediker's words, 'under-elaboration'. In this way, the whole of humanity can be inspired to be rerouted toward (or re-rooted as) cosmopolitan(ism).

When I compare this inclusive cosmopolitanism with the undoing cosmopolitanism, I do not argue that they are distinctly different or irreconcilable. Both cosmopolitanisms must be negotiated in the classroom or at the university. Proponents of these cosmopolitanisms, if there are any, must continue with the contesting of worlds. Yet, where the contesting version seems to stop there, or to rely on a leap from the acceptance of alterity to a better world, the inclusive version seeks for positive terms of coherence in an –ism that depends on coherence. It is difficult, even virtually impossible[18], to strive for a kind of university comparable in its aspiration to the one Tagore founded in 1922. Not here, in the Netherlands, at least. To some extent, however, that project can come from within existing structures, but such will only be possible through a reworking of the terms mentioned at the beginning.

Experience or feeling, then, is also what has guided me in the various topics I have discussed. The lengthy and technical discussion about nationalism and globalism feels important because its effects have become stronger since Tagore's writings. In Tagore's time, Western nationalism, with all its normative associations, was just one ideology that competed, not

[18] Tagore's university garnered quite some interest, but soon after his death decline had started (Das Gupta 1001).

directly, with others. Communism, though naturally more directed against capital, was among them and traces of it can be found in Tagore's cosmopolitanism. These traces even seem pivotal to his emphasis on experience and creation. One has to depart from scientification and reification of humanity and society to achieve the unity that is truly man.

In modern times, after the colonization, the nation has become the dominant political form in the world. Some of those have considered it their task to secure this recent autonomy, at times on behalf of the indigenous people (as in the Iraqi Freedom), other times for stability in the region by obstructing ideology (Vietnam would be a good example), but always accompanied by the moral ideas of democracy, capitalism and prosperity (in an economic sense). As Tagore has shown, such categories are not inherently malevolent; they become this when they are presented and implemented as the ultimate conditions for a stable humanity.

The world nowadays, however, relies on the assumption that the nation and peace require basic assumptions like democracy and capitalism, and that nations are coherent and natural forms of societies that are internally connected by language and other specific cultural traits. Tagore's position on language illustrates once more that language itself is not a problem; it only becomes a problematic trope of coherence once it is tied with the idea of nationalism, though this latter statement is not part of Tagore's vision on nationalism. "There was a time with us when India had her common language of culture in Sanskrit. But, for the complete commerce of her thought, she required that all her vernaculars should attain their perfect powers, through which her different peoples might manifest their idiosyncrasies; and this could never be done through a foreign tongue" (*CU* 190). It is evident that Tagore does not oppose a certain instrumentality of language; it can express the various needs of people, needs being either artistic or practical. What he seems to maintain is a natural beauty of diversity. The boundaries of a language are in their

use, not in their geographical limitations. The importance of language for Tagore's understanding of nationalism must not be overstated, but the citation shows how Tagore could on the one hand maintain an idea of the East or Asia, and on the other hand fully acknowledge the necessary differences related to individual needs.

Problems of hegemonic ideals were different in Tagore's time, when nations were not as 'set' as they are now. Anderson points to other ideas than the nation that still prevailed in Tagore's time, even though they began gradually to adhere to "languages-of-state" (85). These dynasties, these empires ruled over groups of people that were not united by heritage: "Romanovs ruled over Tatars and Letts, Germans and Armenians, Russians and Finns. Habsburgs were perched high over Magyar and Croats, Slovaks and Italians, Ukrainians and Austro-Germans" (83). We know most of these people nowadays as citizens of nation-states. This transition from other ideas of coherence to nationalism, which Tagore, as a well-read and well-traveled man must have noticed, combined with his experiences in Bengal with British colonialism (and hence nationalism) must have informed his aversion to nationalism and its effects on humanity.

Despite such resistance, the idea of nationalism has since dominated international politics. Any renewal or re-encounter of ideas that counter this hegemony, if one indeed recognizes some inherent problems in nationalism, is at least interesting. Many of Tagore's ideas about nationalism are corroborated by other anti-hegemonic theories, like Nussbaum's, but a revisit of Tagore may generate new, or sharpen arguments, of which their relevance might come across as all the more striking when the trend Tagore noticed has indeed progressed.

This thesis, then, has shifted from political reality to a theoretical, but still political, discussion. The political reality was needed to demonstrate what theoretical cosmopolitanism

was against. The distinction between theory and practice has directed me toward the idea of Tagore's inclusive cosmopolitanism and toward the idea that Snediker's revaluation of the vagueness of positive categories, and away from Spivak's cosmopolitanism, though by no means fully.

In a way, this is related to imagination. I fully support Spivak's argument that cosmopolitanism must be learned in the classroom, but it is difficult to see how the ever-contesting of worlds results possibly in a just world. In theory, I can even understand what it means to think in terms of worlding, of the acceptance of alterity. Several normative systems or ideals can exist at once or in succession, and normativity (or coherence) is suspect, since it generates fixed norms for persons, thereby denying them their full rights of being human. Yet in reality, it is hard to see how the policemen of the classroom can construct a singular world in which all human beings have their full human rights[19] *at the same time*, even when their ideas somehow, through osmosis, have been able to saturate the outside world.

It is difficult to regard cosmopolitanism without the intention to relate it to reality. The nature of the term commands that its theory not merely opposes theoretical accounts of nationalism. The word 'cosmopolitanism' expresses a wish as well. To give expression to that wish, Tagore's inclusive cosmopolitanism tries to find what it is that makes us human, and what connects us as humans. If man is distinct from other creatures by its social and creative capabilities, then one must dare to determine what the 'social' and the 'creative' comprises.

Any cosmopolitanism that wants to do justice to the implication of the term, must also somehow aspire for simultaneity. Pointing to the problems of normativity demands a theoretical framework indeed, but any theory that finds itself relatable to an experienced reality might require a positive, or optimistic, theoretical framework. Love, affinity and sympathy are the

[19] I am not referring to the human rights as protected by the UN, but to human rights as an idea.

terms that are closest to a venture of simultaneity. A theory based on those terms might just think through the ways in which humanity cannot only accept alterity, but also experience connection.

This is due to the nature of cosmopolitanism as a critical theory. If cosmopolitanism as critical studies seeks for a fairer world, then a construction of an ideal and idealistic version is justified, but it must somehow show why we are human.

As such, it can become a force against globalism and globalization. Whether one regards them as processes or ideologies, they invariable seem to take humanity for granted. The problem with globalism and globalization is its silence force. Though there are many people who take globalism and humanity for granted, and though many of them propose ideologies, whether that is capitalism now or Marxism in history, not many will explicitly make *interesting* and theoretical statements about the supremacy of globalism, and why it is an ultimate form of connecting humanity.

I have tried to explain the reasons for this in the second chapter. Whereas globalism is merely a silent force, nationalism has indeed many proponents. If one regards the influx of migrants to Western Europe or the USA, various ideals are explicitly stated. Assimilation is one of them: if one enters a new country, one should not only respect its laws and habits, but also adopt its identity and beliefs, and acknowledge that its beliefs are fundamental to the coherence of that nation. For many[20], the nation is a static, natural and largely a-historical entity. It has a presupposed stability that is probably make-belief. History has taught us that nationalism as an

[20] This is a large statement indeed, but it is beyond the limits of an epilogue to discuss them. Yet, I want to refer here to recent statements by the Dutch Minister of Internal Affairs, Piet Hein Donner, about integration politics. He states that "Keer op keer blijkt dat veel Nederlanders de etnische en culturele diversiteit die Nederland kenmerkt niet als een verrijking ervaren, maar als een bedreiging ervaren" (1) (Time and again, Dutch people experience the ethnic and cultural diversity that characterizes the Netherlands not as an enrichment, but as a threat). Even if his account is not based on true expressions (though I think it is), it is disturbing that a Minister who is aware of its natural diversity maintains that such sentiment amounts to a fundamental truth (and not to an experience, worthy of investigation).

ideology has been worth fighting for, sometimes with the specific intention to dominate. In recent times, such variations of nationalism, bordering on globalism, have been unpopular in the West. Its affiliation with war prevents explicit statements about globalism as an ideology, but it tends to gradually flow out of Western nationalism, combined with its affinity for capitalism. Giorgio Agamben has shown that democracy's capacity to shift easily into totalitarianism is frightening. They are contiguous since there has been a tendency to politicize the body. One is not just born somewhere, but one is born in a specific country, and therefore becomes part of specific ideals and ideologies. That idea of determinism is the breeding ground for nationalistic tendencies, or the supposed natural connection between ideas, beliefs and geography (121-22). Likewise nationalism's capacity to turn into globalism is, though not always made explicit, as frightening.

Therefore, it has been important to undo the ties between the geography of nationalism and cosmopolitanism, as cosmopolitanism must resist becoming part of a scheme that involves globalism. The ultimate problem in an ideology of nationalism, however, is to see humanity (with all its ideas of human rights) as "ostensible obvious" (Snediker 100). Cosmopolitanism, either Spivak's or Tagore's, argues against such obviousness. Yet, whereas Spivak merely argues against the obviousness, Tagore seeks to find coherence in what distinguishes humans from other beings. Ultimately, this resembles an idea by Robbins, who argues that "if we do not need "easy generalizations", we do need difficult ones" (175). We must shy away from what appears to be obvious, but only to find what is not so obvious, yet closer to a truth.

I have used Snediker, then, to argue against the essentializing of terms that are important in Tagore's inclusive cosmopolitanism. Snediker's account though, is not illustrative for queer theory in general, which is more concerned with the task of discounting coherence in human

identity and relations. Butler has been used as the example of this tendency. In a way, her orientation is the inverse of Snediker's. She writes: "Despite my affinity for the term relationality, we may need other language to approach the issue that concerns us, a way of thinking about how we are not only constituted by our relations but also dispossessed by them" (*PL* 24). What she can relate to in reality is for her theoretically unintelligible, whereas Snediker started because the theory did not meet his experience. Moreover Snediker argues against the idea that a "constitution by our relations" depends on a categorical idea of the negative and the negating (like desire, grief and the otherwise unmentioned shame and melancholy).

Though some of the similarities between him and Tagore were remarkable, the true value in Snediker's account is in the academic comprehension of terms like love, experience and affect. Yet Snediker's love was not an exclusively heterosexual love and distinct from passion, but a more general comprehension of the function of affect in human relations. This may have been underdeveloped, which is at least due to the nature of that book. Most of the theory is based on extensive poetry analysis, from which his theory is to be distilled. To fully comprehend his argument requires lengthy citations and paraphrases that are beyond the capacity and comprehensibility of this, or possibly any, thesis.

From this perspective, the mutuality between Tagore and aspects of queer theory, though specific instances of it are hard to trace in Tagore, demonstrates the value of Comparatism as an intellectual approximation in any critical field that is concerned with humanity. Cosmopolitanism is close to, or an aspect of postcolonial theory. Within this theory, there is much emphasis on structures that are similar to those of the nation, and as such many analyses of the local and the global do not depart from the idea of the nation (which is more than nationalism per se, as Tagore's view on the scientification and (proto-)capitalism has demonstrated). At first, it is

important to depart from such 'units of coherence', but to assess their quality, one must, according to the inclusive cosmopolitanism, turn to optimistic theoretical tools. Not because the result is necessarily positive, but because the approach may be stimulating.

Tagore's idea of affection, affirmation and love may be important qualitative markers, if the act of comparatism is sound enough. If Spivak detects a function for Comparative Literature, then maybe there is a function for Comparative Studies or other acts of interdisciplinarity in general. Yet, Comparative Literature must not solely focus on its potential to disturb normativity, as the very act of comparison may also generate instances of positive similarity. One can imagine, for instance, how a critical understanding of the word 'love', in all its forms, may spark the attention of several scientific fields. Sociologists and psychologists may provide interesting views of loving relations, not just those that are also sexual, but also between siblings, friends or any other kind. Likewise, biochemists may focus on the neuronal and chemical reactions that trigger and are triggered by love[21], again irrespective of the specific type of love. If such findings can be reworked to the aid of cosmopolitanism, one does true justice to the implication of that word.

It is important, in Snediker's words, "to depart from the negative stall – one step forward, two steps back" (127). Tagore then, may be revisited as a reminder of many things at once. Naturally, his inclusive, optimistic cosmopolitanism may yield even more interesting visions on humanity. Simultaneously, the element of inconsistency must be regarded. Any idealistic version of Tagore is suspect for ignoring elements that are simply not there. Tagore is not flawless, nor could he have foreseen all the developments in terms of politics of the body, the society and the world at large. Yet even flaws have their virtue as thankful reminders. Neither, however, should

[21] If we are indeed our brain, it is useful to be remindful of its constant alterations. Consequently, it is not just a receptor or a transmitter, but also creative.

he be considered as hopelessly soft-headed. Though he may appear as a spiritual person in the vein of many gurus, his practical engagement defies such a simplistic notion. Even without the spirituality, his inclusive cosmopolitanism is insightful for a harmonious understanding of humanity.

From an academic point of view, it is at least *interesting*[22] to reread Tagore in a different age, in circumstances already noticed by him that have become dominant, with new intellectual instruments, for the benefit of academic scrutiny and maybe, just maybe, for a better world.

[22] To repeat Snediker's word.

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