

Report on the Third International Diversity Conference, 2003

Cultural Diversity in a Globalising World, 13-16 February 2003,
At the East-West Centre, University of Hawai'i, Manoa.

Hosted and organised by RMIT Globalism Institute, in partnership with the Globalisation Research Centre at the University of Hawai'i and Common Ground Conferences.

Summary

The Diversity Conference has a history of bringing together scholarly, government and practice-based participants on diversity and community. This was the first time the conference had been held outside Australia, with Hawai'i being an ideal location with its intersection of questions of Indigenous sovereignty and a complex mix of various settler communities, tourists and military personnel. Throughout the conference the organisers observed the Hawaiian custom of offering a *lei* (a flower garland), ensuring the venue always had a scattering of participants wearing beautiful *leis* of orchids. It was a reminder we were engaged with layers of different systems of culture and governance. The conference was made possible by a close collaboration between the RMIT University Globalism Institute, the Globalisation Research Centre at the University of Hawai'i and Common Ground Conferences.

The four days of the conference involved nine main plenary sessions (summarised below) interspersed with almost 130 parallel sessions covering a remarkable range of specific topics joined together by the conference themes. These parallel sessions covered issues from the discourses of multiculturalism in Japan, various institutional applications of diversity policy, through to the significance of the phenomenon of the "manifestation of the Madonna" in the Sydney suburb of Coogee. The depth and range of presentations is impossible to capture here, suffice to report that a common response from participants was an appreciation of the opportunity for exposure to related but separate professional and academic disciplines, allowing for a productive cross-pollination of ideas and strategies across the boundaries that usually separate us.

The core focus seemed to be a move away from under-theorised affirmations that 'diversity is good' to a much more nuanced account of the effects and uses of diversity on differently situated communities in the context of our current epoch of globalisation. The conference heard Indigenous perspectives on the desire for both basic human rights and recognition of sovereignty on the one hand, and more subtly, for an ethical response to the cultural and intellectual wealth of Indigenous epistemologies. Throughout the conference there was a concern with the very serious consequences for communities, cultures and the environment emerging out of an intensified phase of globalisation. However, the concept of 'diversity', while being critically examined as part of this historical process, was argued by many to be a significant and useful tool in struggles for a more just, humane and sustainable world, with a number of speakers declaring a 'strategic optimism' about the future.

Opening Session: Introduction and Welcome

The conference opened on Thursday morning with an elaborate formal ceremony. It began with a series of chants and dances by an ensemble from an Indigenous Hawaiian ‘charter school’ organised through the Hawaiian Studies Centre of the University of Hawai’i. It was performed to begin the conference with an acknowledgement of native Hawaiian sovereignty and epistemology, based on ancient *hula* dance and chants. A translation of the chant was provided: ‘Calling the ancestors, grow, expand, the multitude of ancestors. Grow Kane and Kanaloa, grow ‘Ohi’a-laulkoa, and Ka-‘ie’ie, settle here and dwell in your alter. Here is water, life-giving water. Grant life indeed!’¹ A Maori delegate, **Cheri Waititi** from the University of Waikato, New Zealand, unexpectedly reciprocated with a Maori oration from the floor of the auditorium, acknowledging the connections of ancestry and language between Maori and Hawaiians: ‘The Call To the Young Children. Greetings to the descendents of our ancestors of Hawai’i. Greetings to you for your love, your treasure (the Hula) gifted towards us. Greetings, greetings, greetings.’²

Professor **Barry Gills**, Director of the Globalization Research Centre, University of Hawai’i, related a message from the Governor of the State of Hawaii. **Lt.-Governor James Oiona Jr** also sent a message apologising for his absence. We had heard earlier about background considerations of a heightened security alert associated with the ‘War on Terror’ and the impending war on Iraq. The next speaker in the opening formalities was **Jackie Huggins**, co-chair of Reconciliation Australia. She responded to the welcome ceremony of the *hula* and chants as an Indigenous Australian, acknowledging the welcome of the traditional custodians and a sense of the related struggle of the Indigenous peoples of Hawai’i and Australia. **Deane Neubauer**, Acting-President of the University of Hawai’i, brought greetings from the Executive of the University, and talked about the mission of the University’s Globalization Research Center as one of identifying the dynamics of globalisation, a shift in the tide of human practice related to the emergence of the modern era over the last couple of centuries. He welcomed us all to Hawai’i as a series of islands located far from any continental land mass, a place touched by *mana* (sacred power), and a place that is uniquely placed to host a conference such as this on cultural diversity because of its own complex history. He expressed his delight at being approached by the RMIT Globalism Institute and being offered this opportunity to co-host a conference of international significance on this important subject. Professor **Mary Kalantzis** reciprocated the welcome, representing the Australian side of the partnership between the Globalism Institute (RMIT) and the Globalization Research Center (UH), and expressed a sense of the common themes of the issues of diversity facing Australia and other parts of the world. She emphasised the conference as an act that creates a community of colleagues as well as being a discussion of the issues that confront communities.

Finally as the culmination of the opening event, a dance group headed by Vicky Holt Takamine performed *hula* and chants. Cheri Waititi responded with another Maori oration: ‘Greetings to you, the warrior woman, the beautiful woman. Hold fast to the treasures of our ancestors of Hawai’i. Be strong, be steadfast and be of great heart. Greetings, greetings, greetings.’³

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- 1 *E ulu- Calling one’s ancestors / E ulu, e ulu tini o te atua / Grow, expand, multitude of ancestors / Ulu Kane me Kanaloa / Grow Kane and Kanaloa / Ulu ‘Ohi’a laukoa me Ka ‘ie’ie / Grow ‘Ohi’a-lau-koa and Ka-‘ie’ie / A’e mai a noho I tou tuahu / Settle here and dwell in your alter / Eia ta wai la / Here is the water / He wai, he ola / Life-giving water / E ola no e / Grant life indeed. /*
 - 2 *Te Karanga – The Call to the Young Children / Tena koutou nga tamariki-mokopuna o tatou tipuna o Hawai’i. / Greetings to the descendents of our ancestors of Hawai’i. / Nga mihi ki a koutou mo to koutou aroha, to taonga tipuna ki a matou. / Greetings to you for your love, your treasure(the Hula) gifted towards us. / Tena koutou, tena koutou, Tena koutou. / Greetings, greetings, greetings.*
 - 3 *Tena koe te wahine toa, te wahine ataahua / Greetings to you, the warrior woman, the beautiful woman / Kia mau nga taonga o tatau tipuna o Hawaii / Hold fast to the treasures of our ancestors of Hawaii / Kia kaha, kia toa, kia manawanui. / Be strong, be steadfast and be of great heart. / Tena ra koe, tena ra koe, tena ra koe. / Greetings, greetings, greetings.*

Cultural Diversity in a Globalising World

The first speaker was **Ashis Nandy**, until recently Director of the renowned Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi, where he continues his work on nationalism, popular culture, ethnic and religious violence and alternative futures.

In a challenging preamble he argued that we should not protect cultures; we should recreate them. Protectors of culture all over the world are *a dime a dozen*, he said. He then turned to modern colonialism as the first systematic stage of globalisation while acknowledging counter-positions such as the claim that the slave trade was a form of systematic globalisation. *For all its problems, in contrast to contemporary globalisation, colonialism was never able to bring the whole world under its scope, and selectively allowed some spaces to exist beyond its reach, such as the 500 princely states of colonial India. Christianity, for example, would never give up on the idea of redeemable and unredeemable souls. The problem is that imperialism did not suffer any decisive defeat. The impression was given that the colonial powers were the defenders of democracy after World War II. Because there was no direct global challenge to colonialism, the imperial powers became central to the post-war reconstruction. In this context, the 'developing world' are seen as expectant mothers, delivering a baby on a street-corner with passers-by offering lots of advice. Her future has already been defined. Developing societies are being sucked up into the brutal process of development. The psychological history of development is flattening societies and rendering them one-dimensional. Indeed the societies themselves are prepared to sacrifice their selfhood in order to part of the modern world. Diversity unfortunately has to qualify as rational, sane and able to fit in with the proper structures of thought. Diverse cultures are put into museums, tourist precincts, and studied by anthropologists.*

Ashis then turned to question of how cultures are increasingly monitored in terms of concepts of cosmopolitanism. In this, he said, there is a contradiction between the city and the village. *The village as a reference point to the city is being annulled; cities are being defined either against other cities or against its own slums and ghettos. The city becomes an embodiment of globalisation and the slum a resistance to it. The slum becomes the anti-city, and carries the surviving fragments of village life. In this there is little scope for culture to survive in its own terms; it survives as a series of adaptive moments. Traditionally cities were composed only of ghettos.*

Cochin is a city with a recorded history 3,000 years old, with fourteen communities living harmoniously for the last 600 years without being beset by communal violence. Why? Each of the communities stay in their own ghettos, they all thought lesser of the other communities. Each community respected the right of the other communities to dislike them, but they could not imagine a social life that was not bound up with these hostile others in their midst. Ethnocentrism thus does not necessarily lead to violence. However, in the modern world it is seen as a negation of civility. It is permissible to say that you are different, but I am the person that you will be tomorrow—better and more developed.

Globalisation and Indigenous Rights

Owens Wiwa, the Executive Director of the African Environmental and Human Development Agency, and a Research Fellow at the Centre for International Health Research, Toronto, argued that corporate globalisation is profoundly affecting Indigenous culture. He addressed the situation of his people, the Ogoni of Nigeria, to suggest how this is happening. His brother, renowned human rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, was hung by the military government of Nigeria in 1995, and a later speaker, Mililani Trask, dedicated her address at the conference to his memory.

Ogoni culture revolves around and through the environment. For example, masks are made from fallen trees, rather than cutting a living tree unnecessarily. The Ogoni and their environment survived hundreds of years of the slave trade, British colonialism and the modern formation of Nigeria by continuing farming and fishing, and maintaining their traditions. The Ogoni were never poor, and always had good health, nutrition and education. In 1958, Shell corporation came to the land in search of oil, and extracted the resource with massive profits (so far US\$ 20 billion of oil extracted from Ogoni lands). The manner of extraction involved the destruction of forests for roads and infrastructure, the pollution of air with heavy chemicals from gas flares and oil processing. By 1980, 90 per cent of the water was polluted by oil slicks and the air was filled with nitrous oxide. The Ogoni became poor: the fish died, the animals ran away, the air and water made people sick, the schools and hospitals could not pay the teachers and doctors; things had gone terribly wrong.

The older people asked how could it be that the gods did not punish the intruders in accordance with the law. We were the ones dying out, not the ones who did wrong against the sacred places. In 1994, 300,000 people were on the streets asking the company to stop flaring gas and spilling oil. People were jailed. My brother and some of his colleagues were hanged. Drilling has now been stopped. We have gone to court in the US, petitioning for the company to be held liable for human-rights abuses and environmental destruction. Like the two speakers that were to come after him, he finished on a note of optimism qualified by careful recognition of the difficulties

Jackie Huggins, co-Chair of Reconciliation Australia and Deputy Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies at the University of Queensland began by thanking the traditional owners of this place for their welcome ‘as is my duty as a member of my people’. Jackie Huggins briefly summarised the colonial history of Australia, explaining that as a result of policies of genocide, forced assimilation, the stolen generations and language repression, she and most Indigenous Australians no longer speak their own languages. She explained the severe disadvantage of Aboriginal Australians, expressing her despair at Indigenous mortality rates by saying: ‘I get tired of going to funerals of people in their forties and fifties’. She said: *The landscape from which I come has been lived upon by 3,000 generations of people. Our people are now the most disadvantaged in Australian society, with high levels of infant mortality and early death rates. The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation was set up in 1991 and after a decade has been disbanded. It cost less over the decade or so of its existence than the erection of the beach volley-ball stand on Bondi Beach for the 2000 Olympic Games. The Australian government under John Howard has refused to deal with many of the issues raised by the Council. This is not helped by the way that ATSIC itself is under-represented in terms of women and younger people. This is doubly an issue in the context of ongoing gender issues including domestic violence. A treaty is still to be signed between Indigenous people and the settler population. Aboriginal people are becoming invisible again as governments concentrate on fighting wars in foreign lands rather than caring for their people. The government response to Native Title claims and calls for a formal treaty with Indigenous Australians has been to emphasise “practical reconciliation”, which throws responsibility for the failure of Indigenous programs onto Indigenous people’s refusal to assimilate to settler society norms.*

Mililani Trask, Pacific Representative to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Hawaiian attorney and Indigenous human rights law specialist, began by calling out Aloha to all present and demanding a full-hearted reply to this greeting of love which expresses so much of the Hawaiian generosity of spirit; sharing their lands and food and culture with people despite all that has happened to them. She dedicated her talk to Ken Saro-Wiwa (brother of Owens Wiwa who spoke before her), a human-rights activist whose place she took on the United Nations' group on Indigenous rights after his murder by the Nigerian government. She also thanked RMIT University for inviting her to this conference, as she is seen by some at the University of Hawai'i as too controversial to speak there. She then related some of the history of the state of Hawai'i.

Trask emphasised that the Pacific has never been decolonised; from 'French Polynesia', 'American Samoa', through to Hawai'i, the biggest nuclear military base in the world. She began by describing the conditions Hawaiians endure today: *The independent kingdom of Hawaii was overthrown by the United States' military, putting Stanford B. Dole into power. We are still to emerge from colonial status, she argued. Indigenous people are living in poverty. Look at the paper today. A SWAT team carrying sub-machine guns, evicted five families from their land because they could not pay the bills. Last year, 1,500 armed-guards oversaw a demonstration of a few hundred. SWAT teams will be 'sweeping' the beaches of Oahu to exclude homeless people, to keep the world safe for tourists.*

The second half of the address turned to broader questions about the place of Indigenous peoples in the context of corporate globalisation. *Colonisation is the mother of globalisation. The history of Indigenous peoples is a history of profound culture-clash. Today we have a new form of oppression of North over South. The international organisations such as the WTO operate beyond national law. For example, a national campaign for restraint on dolphin fishing was reconfigured as a constraint on trade in Geneva and overturned because countries complained their fishing fleets would have to get new nets; thus we no longer see Congress passing such laws. Now we have multinational biotechnology companies with projects like the human genome project taking our body tissue; companies like Monsanto taking our plant-base medicines and patenting them for the market. Indigenous intellectual property should not be patented. It was given to us, and cared for by us for the benefit of all mankind, not to be owned as the intellectual property of a corporation that will use the genetic materials of our peoples and lands for profit. The Hawai'ian traditional law says to our people, "Be guardians of the sacred earth, Share with your brothers and sisters". How are we to respond to all of this through non-violent means? The law offers one of the important means, such as through the United Nations Charter of Human Rights, but under current international law most Indigenous peoples are not offered the right of self-determination. We must continue our advocacy of human rights for all, not just for Indigenous peoples. We cannot allow the patenting of life-forms. We cannot allow Indigenous people to continue to be subjected to international property law.*

Mililani recommended people read the recently published book *Hawaiian Epistemology* to get a better understanding of the intellectual and political implications of seriously engaging with Hawaiian culture. She explained that her culture has a treasury of knowledge that has something to offer the world in its current state of distress. She described the world as ill, a shrinking place, beset with war and violence and sickness. When asked how she continues her struggle under such conditions she answered with a Hawaiian response, "With a song on your lips and a prayer in your heart, sing, sing every day". Mililani Trask received a standing ovation from the assembly.

Epistemic Diversity, Violence and Globalisation

Walter Mignolo, Distinguished Professor at Duke University, Director of the Centre for Global Studies and the Humanities, summarised his approach and the core of his paper as being about working with Indigenous intellectuals (not as someone studying them). He contextualised this work as coming out of groups of Latin American intellectuals from the liberation theologians to the Zapatistas and many many others, and having a relationship to thinkers in other places such as Ashis Nandy. This work is also related to the Critical Cosmopolitanism group at Duke University (who are launching a project in March called “Multiple Intelligences”).

Walter argued that discourses of cultural diversity can reduce the importance of racism. It is a white epistemology. Modernity and Eurocentrism had the effect of subalternising and diminishing other forms of knowledge as folklore. He asked what can we do about this epistemology from within the university which has worked together with capitalism and Western colonialism. The (Indigenous) Intercultural University of Ecuador founded last year is based on Indigenous epistemology. It does not have a campus; it goes to the people. The University uses interculturality, not multiculturalism as its central principle. The curriculum focuses on relationships with the land, including technologies of modernity, and involves learning to unlearn, maintaining a sensitivity to inequality between epistemologies. Walter Mignolo referred to this as ‘border thinking’.

The discussion turned to a consideration of epistemic diversity, a world in which many worlds can co-exist. This is not the world of difference envisioned by tolerant well-meaning liberal people or Marxists under one epistemology, but a question of epistemic diversity. If we don’t unlearn this mono-epistemology, we will continue to reproduce the same mistakes. In the Andes the Inca concept of *AIYU* is exchange, economy and a foundational basis; it is an alternative to the Western concept of economy.

Border-thinking brings us to critical cosmopolitanism; the possibility of many worlds co-existing outside relations of domination. Mignolo distinguished global coloniality as a different phenomenon from colonialism in that it is the underlying darker project of modernity. He argued that: ‘When modernity is in the field, coloniality is next to it’. He argued with Hardt and Negri’s *Empire*, that the big change of globalisation is not in the nature of imperialism as a now de-territorialised practice, but as an epistemic violence.

Mignolo argued the university of the last century (or more) was an imperialist, colonial formation, and is now a corporate university, focussed on the production and reproduction of experts. He proposed that universality should be replaced with polyversality. He says he does not see himself building a future with the tools he has inherited from good Christians, liberals and Marxists, but having to work collaboratively to invent new tools.

A question was asked about Inca cosmology being that of an expansive empire that was itself a structure organised to accumulate surplus. Walter responded that in 1550 Suleiman was Ottoman emperor and supremely powerful in the eastern Mediterranean, Ivan the terrible was laying the foundations of the Russian Empire, but the flow of commodities from the new world to Spain made a new order over the next two-hundred years. With this concentration of commodity accumulation and control old, non-capitalist empires were crushed by the emergence of the nation state, capitalism and modernity.

A question from a ‘New Zealander’ suggested that there is a similar emergence of Indigenous universities in the *Fanai waranga*. The questioner asked for clarification about critical cosmopolitanism as compared with postmodernity. Walter responded that critical cosmopolitanism is based on an understanding that the places from which to think are multiple, whereas postmodernity looks back at itself from within itself; a modern, colonial, Western epistemology. The postmodern, he suggested, is a noble but limited project trapped within

Eurocentrism and limited to a few languages: French, German and English.

Paul James, Director of the RMIT Globalism Institute, briefly summed up the day. He described the morning dance performance as enacting an embodiment of a different epistemology that the conference audience was forced to consider. He gave a brief summary of the day's discussion, emphasising the emphasis on the limits of diversity and the different circumstances under which such limits might be asserted in the defense of communities, languages and cultures. The day then ended with a performance from the University of Hawai'i Dance Ensemble, including a solo performance by a Japanese student of Bharat Natyam (the renowned dance form of Southern India now practised across India, its diaspora and the world) a performance of hybrid Brazilian Capoeira/contact improvisation, and a short extract from the eight-hour long Tipeng Rumiang performance from West Java.

Conference Dinner: The *Luau* as Social Practice

The second day of the conference saw a large number of participants attend the conference dinner organised by the conference hosts at 'Germaine's Luau', a commercial operation owned and managed by a Japanese tourist company. This event proved to be a seminal moment in the life of the conference, linking us in a shared experience of superficial suffering, while serving as a powerful example of the commercialisation of Indigenous Hawaiian culture (or any culture) into a massified tourist theme-park experience. The *luau* was the subject of substantive discussion, and attempting to make sense of the experience was a theme that occupied a fair amount of the final discussion of the conference (see 'Questions from the Floor').

A *luau* is a Hawaiian feast, which has become a popular, almost obligatory, tourist experience of a commercialised form of Hawaiian culture. Conference participants were bused along a freeway in the south-western corner of Oahu, past many miles of military bases and the run-down industrial and residential infrastructure that maintains them. All along the way the bus hosts kept up a repartee of good humour, perhaps to distract us from the traffic jams and industrial wastelands we were part of. The bus hosts created a fictive kinship of cousinhood between us, interspersed with friendly jokes about Australian degeneracy, demanding audience participation from reluctant academics on board. The buses came to a stop beside an oil-processing plant, with Owens Wiwa, who knows the smell all-too-well, confirming the acrid smell of oil processing and its associated petro-chemical wastes burning our nostrils. This was the site of Germaine's Luau, where we were unloaded, factory style, to line up, be 'traditionally greeted by a Hawaiian host' with the gift of a *lei* of shells manufactured in the Philippines, and pose for a photo against the backdrop of the sun setting over the sea and a couple of surviving but sick-looking coconut palms. Conference participants, being quick to appreciate the irony of their surroundings, quickly turned their cameras on the aging industrial infrastructure that had been remarkably selected as the setting for this *luau*.

The evening involved our large group with many others sitting at large benches and tables, and being subject to a Las Vegas style floor-show performance of 'Polynesian culture' broadcast over loudspeakers. This was interrupted by visits to the bar for our '3 complimentary exotic cocktails' of toxic-looking chemicals (in keeping with the environment) with names like 'Blue Hawaiian' and the famous 'Pina Colada'. We were invited to witness 'the King and Queen' of Hawaii preside over the ceremonial opening of the earth oven (set in concrete), and removal of the cooked pig from within. We were sent by the table to line up and serve our 'authentic Hawaiian meal' of rice, poi, pork, chicken, fish and so on, on a polystyrene platter.

While the setting invited possible responses of horrified anomie, particularly from academics who might be said to have a predisposition for anomie when subject to such experiences, the conference participants made the most of the evening and most even tried to enjoy themselves. One Australian academic was enticed to join the 'audience participation' segment of the floor-show, being dressed with a few other male visitors in grass skirts and coconut brassieres for a

transcultural ‘drag show’, where the audience voted by voice for the best dancer. The staff at the *luau* appeared undisturbed by this performance of a thin parody of their cultures, being seen enjoying a meal and conversation, laughing relaxed together off to the side of the main scene. Afterwards, as we were reloading on to our buses, some of the ‘professional Polynesian’ protagonists of the floor-show were practicing their fire-stick skills, and appearing to coach each other in slight improvements in performance, which along with some of the dancing showed moments of real virtuosity. These small moments of normal behaviour in the ‘behind-the-scenes’ narrative are a reminder of the every-dayness of the flattening out of social and community life into forms available for easy commodification. Perhaps the *luau* gave us the opportunity to reflect that all of us are at the edge of becoming inured, paid performers of parodies of our culture, just as the *luau* made us parodies of the tourists we might hope not to be.

Globalisation, Diversity and Democracy

Barry Gills, speaking on ‘Globalisation, Democracy and Diversity’, argued that in this time of neoliberal globalisation we find ourselves in an era of a new Hellenism. The old Hellenism was characterised by a plutocracy where a power elite seized control. It effected the destruction of democracy. Democracy continued in content, even as the new hierarchy annulled its previous substantive form. If we turn to the present period, despite the developing polarities of power, the capitalist market assumes that it is a neutral social form. In reality, neo-liberal capitalist globalisation not only undermines social rights but also directly attacks those rights—with one exception, the right to vote. ‘Formal democracy’, as it is called in contradistinction to ‘substantive democracy’, maintains the status quo and the current distribution of power oriented towards a transnational class. In resistance to this process, people have to find new spaces to recreate democratic practices, spaces which are more inclusive, participatory and directly organised. The movements against neo-liberal globalisation involve the globalisation substantive democracy. The current situation offers new hopes and possibilities for the recreation of democracy. In conclusion, he ended on a note of qualified optimism suggesting that the more neoliberal capitalism impacts upon the lives of people, the more it forces people into action.

Mary Kalantzis opened her address by responding to Barry Gills’ paper and discussing a series of phobias heightened in the context of corporate globalisation. *There are increasing and mixed paranoias about the movement of refugees, the degradation of the environment, the extension of terrorism into the homelands. The more powerful backlash at the moment is not the anti-corporate globalisation movement, but a paranoia of the ordinary person that means that we bury ourselves in self interest, and in the metaphor of Thomas Friedman, the turtles, too slow for the new fast life, and fearing that they will become road kill, end up destroying their own environment as without any ideological rationale they act to protect themselves.*

In response, what we have tried to do through our ‘productive diversity’ project in Australia is to argue for the harnessing of diversity across a series of realms. In the workplace the project looks to the reform of Fordist and now post-Fordist modes of regulation from within. Productive diversity requires a series of epistemological and language shifts. Secondly, in the civic realm, and against the flattening out of democratic practices, the strategic response should be to effect multi-layered sovereignty or civic pluralism. In the realm of self-formation, the current dominant phenomenon of our time is hyper-individualism. Strategic optimism requires new ways of negotiating multi-layered identity. This is not a diagnosis of where we are going, but a goal that sets up an alternative that can be made relevant to all.

Majid Tehranian, Director of the University of Hawai’i Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research, began with a reflection on the previous two papers. *You have heard two different versions of strategic optimism, In light of these two papers I am going to offer a series of propositions about the world that we face. Globalisation is fostering three kinds of*

democracy: liberal, social and communitarian democracies. These are associated with different senses of identity and different fetishisms. The dominant form is liberal or formal democracy associated with consumerist identities and commodity fetishism. For those without access to an emerging global network society globalisation is also fostering resistant social democratic movements focused on identity fetishism. For a third group of the world's population that has been displaced either voluntarily or by force, globalisation is producing diasporic identities focussed on communitarian democracy. In the background to these three processes, divisions of wealth and counter-movements of terrorism and communitarian totalitarianism such as in Iraq and Iran is associated with security fetishisms.

In closing his talk, Majid turned back to strategic optimism based upon an argument about a renewed consciousness of diversity as the basis for renewal. He linked this possibility back to the importance of recognising its long-term history, and took us back to the Central Asian mystical world-view of Sufism. *It responds to the needs of the present*, he said. Instead of developing this point analytically, he poetically used the thirteenth-century Sufi poet, Rumi, to make the argument for him:

What shall I say, O' Muslims, I know not myself
I am neither a Christian nor a Jew, nor a Zoroastrian, nor a Muslim
Neither of the East, nor of the West, nor of the desert, nor of the sea.

Indigenous Rights and the Law

Before introducing **Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa**, Majid Tehranian asked us all to stand and pay our respects in silence to a recently deceased person who had been a central benefactor and patron of the Centre of Hawai'ian Studies. Lilikala was introduced as person who as an acclaimed researcher, author of many books on Hawaiian culture and activist, has acted to support the Hawaiian language that was dying out in the early 1970s but has been strengthened along with the sovereignty movement.

Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa, Director of the Centre for Hawaiian Studies began with an 'Aloha', and with a prayer to the ancestors and gods of different earthly realms, invoking their presence in the room. She went on to explain that her names translate roughly as 'champion of the intense heat of the sun'. She took us through the history of Hawai'i from about 2,000 years ago, describing colonial history from the eighteenth century as a period marked by massively declining population. Her predominant focus was on the late twentieth century as the sovereignty movement became stronger, particularly with the 1993 Hawaiian Sovereignty March of 18,000 people. Her argument focussed on the Draft Declaration of The Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the basis of reconciliation in Hawaii. *We are dedicated to the education of our nation, reflecting both the complexity of Indigenous culture and the diversity of the setting in which we live*, she said.

The Draft Declaration may be a draft because it has not been ratified yet, but we treat it as a working document. Article 1 is on human rights declaring that Indigenous people have those rights too. Article 2 asserts equality, but equally importantly, Article 4 states that 'Indigenous people have the right to sustain and develop their own cultures, as Article 8 have the right to identify themselves as Indigenous. Ancestors taught that the nation is like a body: when all work together there is 'ea'. It became apparent that this Indigenous Hawaiian notion of sovereignty based on negotiation and co-operation is in many ways a potential model for contemporary modes of Indigenous Hawaiian governance. We are not a race; we are a genealogy. Hawai'ians define themselves as being descended from Halo'a, the first divine chief, and not as a blood quantum (one quarter Hawaiian, etc.), nor as voyagers from Samoa and so on. What is right behaviour? We would pray to the four major gods. When the ceremony was done properly we would achieve poa.

Consociational Modes of Government

Echoing Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa's discussion of her name, **Brendan O'Leary**, Director of the Solomon Asch Centre for the Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict at the University of Pennsylvania, declared himself an Indigenous person of Ireland (with his name meaning black-haired prince of cattle). He began by suggesting that we need to think about the ways that states can respond strategically to ethno-political difference—from elimination of difference (genocide, expulsion, partition, secession, assimilation, hybrid fusion) to setting up strategies to management strategies (control, arbitration, federation, autonomy, consociation, both temporary and durable). He set to argue for consociation as a viable form of governance.

The notion of 'consociation' as a 'society of societies' is based on work of Althusius. It involves both autonomy and integration. Against those who have suggested that consociationalism is inherently undemocratic, Brendan argued that it is possible to have significant opposition from within all segments of the consociational governments, and outlined the technical mechanisms that have been used in various places from South Africa, to Northern Ireland, and the ways in which some groups might be excluded from consociational governments. He discussed, for example, varying models for forming consociational government executives, with examples of existent systems for elections of president from the EU and a range of national and regional governments. Veto rights.

Current international climate for consociational models is more congenial, given the increasing unacceptability of genocidal, exiling and assimilationist responses. For example in Iraq such a solution might be imposed by a great power that would never use such models for itself. Consociationists are suspicious of cosmopolitans, integrationists and social progressives, with the argument that 'good fences make good neighbours'.

Native Issues in Hawaiian Politics

Jonathan Okamura argued that aspects of the multicultural model have been appropriated by a movement in order to undermine any special rights of Indigenous Hawaiians. There is a widespread belief, he suggested, that Hawaiianness with an 'indigenous' inflection is available to all people who act locally or eat native. *The Rice decision of the Supreme Court, a case that was originally lost at the state level, legislated almost exactly three years ago (in 2000) that Indigenous identity is a race-based category. It thus opened up questions of Indigenous rights to a series of legal challenges that were based on what the plaintiffs called the 'Aloha spirit'. This is part of an increasing gap between the dominant and subordinate cultures. Ulla Hasager* followed this argument while linking legal-cultural questions to property-political questions. She discussed the high-density housing of certain areas in Hawai'i where domestic and social conflict is rife and local schooling is ill-supported. *Seven landowners own most of the freehold land on the islands. This has its origins in the 1848 land-settlement, leaving most Indigenous Hawaiians landless. The 1893 annexation confirmed this process. In the contemporary period 200,000 acres (out of a total 4 million) were set aside for native 'homesteading', but even now most of this land has not been allocated. In the 1990s a backlash against native Hawaiian rights occurred with many legally trained proponents setting out to annul such special rights. Ibrahim Aoudé* read the third paper because **Marion Kelly** was absent with ill-health.

In the discussion that followed the panel, two different interlocutors asked why the panel did not have a native Hawaiian on it. Ibrahim Aoudé, the chairperson responded that the panel was constituted through assembling members of the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of Hawai'i, and that he had set up the panel in the context of a conference that included two of the most prominent activists in the sovereignty movement—Mililani Trask and Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa.

Representing Cultural Difference

The thrust of **Michael Shapiro's** thought was to challenge the Jeffersonian view and legacy of thought. We need to look, Michael argued, for the stain upon the landscape, the unseen context. *In Jefferson's case for example his immediate landscape was deeply stained—through chattel slavery, through treating persons as freehold property. Jefferson enacted two grids: natural history and nature as property. The second grid is evidenced in the Land Ordinance, a geometrical abstracting grid that worked to obliterate diversity and homogenise the landscape. Thomas Jefferson's garden was a microcosm of the Ordinance, an English garden. Throughout, and despite this obliterating of difference, counter-voices emerge. How can this fractal social order be transported into the political?*

Jonathan Friedman, Directeur d'Etudes, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Science Sociales, Paris, set up a more structural argument, but began with a series of paradoxical illustrations. The world is full of paradoxical crossovers, he argued. Referring back to Majid Tehranian's use of a Sufi poet, he found parallels in the sentiments of a quote from a contemporary management consultant. Again, he asked, whom would you expect to be the source of the following quote? 'In fifty years the nation-state will be a thing of the past'. It is not Appadurai or Bahbha, but Goebbels. These apparent coincidences across different periods, he suggested, can be used as analogies sensitising an analysis of globalisation and cultural diversity.

The various periods of globalisation across history relate to the dominance and decline of shifting hegemonies. In the current system where the Western hegemonic system is declining, a series of parallel changes are being produced. We are in a phase of disintegration. During cycles of hegemonic expansion there are pressures for the integration of peripheral, of less powerful locales, and of minority cultures. By contrast, in the current period, despite its great difficulties, we are seeing an opening up of re-identification, a renaissance of cultural minorities, and a resurgence of nationalism. There is, in other words, a general politicisation of culture. Globalisation and hegemonic decline go hand in hand with increasing divides of wealth. However, the way this is being managed is through allowing cultural diversity in the cultural realm, and advocating liberal neutrality in the realm of the market. In the cultural realm, fear and dislike of people at the top, evidences itself in strange paradoxes where in one city of the United States the head of the Ku Klux Klan is the former head of the overtly anti-racist Students for a Democratic Society. From the top the unified cosmopolitans, persons who can afford to be citizens of the world, live in very small circles. Just as Negri and Hardt describe the world-at-large as 'the multitude', the cosmopolitans look down from the top and misunderstand what they see.

Ashis Nandy made two related points. First, dominance is exercised less and less through economic pressure and more and more through categories—unless you define, you are defined. Dominance continues by monitoring and managing diversity and dissent, for example, the recognition that one is Indigenous took a long time to learn, and in that learning one finds oneself to be disposable. They live in the present, but people prefer to talk about them in the past tense. Some Indigenous groups become professional indigenes in the consumption realms of tourism, sport and para-academic dissidence. Thus we see the neutralisation of the so-called 'Indigenous peoples'.

Secondly, Nandy argues the number of Indigenous people is now constantly expanding, but they are being dispersed and individualised. The tribal depth of Indigenous people is being lost, but the number of people claiming tribal status is increasing. To get past these two processes we need to find alternative places outside of the dominant paradigms.

Deep Diversity and Hybrid Identity

Ien Ang, Director of the centre for Cultural Research at the University of Western Sydney, argued ‘In defence of Hybridity’. She introduced her paper as being a response to Friedman’s ‘pessimism of the intellect in which he revels’ and instead took up Mary Kalantzis’ claim for a stance of strategic optimism. She suggested Friedman’s attempt to bridge the macro and micro-levels of social analysis ultimately failed in both. She argued for human co-existence in difference rather than homogeneity, presenting it as an argument for hybridity. The celebratory stance of hybridity has discredited it as a concept in many places: Dirlik, Hutnyk and others critiquing hybridity as ‘a rhetorical cul-de-sac of culture’ (Hutnyk). (See also Rita Sels in *The Doxa of Difference*). Ang argued it is mistake to conflate cosmopolitan privilege with hybridity, indeed it is necessary to argue for the broad application of the concept of hybridity, in application to group from Taliban to Maoist revolutionaries.

Hybridity resides in the realm of micropolitics, in the orbit of what ordinary people do in their local context. The claim of those without territorial sovereignty or claims to Indigeneity, stuck in a country they are not allowed to call their own (Rey Chow), e.g. Japanese in Hawai’i, Chinese in Indonesia, etc. The relationship between the diasporic and Indigenous needs to be developed, and a resolution of the gaps between hybrid identities and strategic essentialism sought. Hybridity is a mundane necessity for these people in a situation of unchosen coexistence. Hybridity is not a resolution or utopian hope, it is a lived experience of a form of life for increasing numbers of people. It is a heuristic devise for living with situation of complex interrelationality.

Paul James, Research Director of the RMIT Globalism Institute, began by suggesting that as Australians we are linked with Hawaii by blood in the sand—in the figure of Captain Cook; a shared history of being part of a colonial/imperial past and coming towards a globalising future. James argued that (in advertising and other media) we are increasingly presented with a thin and vacuous version of difference, but if we stay at the level of liberal plurality we miss the nuances and implications of deep diversity. Deep diversity, he argued, is a lived experience beyond a single ontology is (and has to be) therefore uncomfortable. If that difference is not uncomfortable, we may simply be dwelling in the shallow diversity of the *luau* (commercial Hawaiian feast and performance) the other night: the difference that makes no difference (of Benneton and Singapore airlines advertising).

Taking a structuralist stand, James argued against Friedman about the basis for a loss of the force of hegemony within the old imperial centres of Britain and the USA as being based in technological and social transformations, (rather than as merely being a shift in the location of capital). Along with the notion of individual freedom, the idea that ‘I am a citizen of the world’ has become the dominant ideology, allied with an official version of multiculturalism that closes down deep difference. This phenomenon was reflected in question time when two questions rejected theorising identity, in favour of a difference-encompassing individualism (very comfortable for corporate capitalism), to which James responded by historicising that concern with individualism and a refusal of set identities as symptomatic of that hegemony of thin difference. James suggested the refusal to ‘tick a single identity box’, has become the normative response to contemporary calls to identify as this or that. Another question argued a more nuanced version of this however, suggesting (with Nandy) that this tendency for the disappearance of identities might be differentially located (i.e. in the still-assimilating development nation-state vis the overdeveloped).

James found in O’Leary’s paper signs of a possible direction for how ontological differences could come to be responded to in the form of the democratic processes of the state. James argued with Marion Young’s vision of the good society as the ‘city of contiguous strangers’ where difference is experienced face to face. He suggested that this is the difference that doesn’t make a difference, otherness as a facile daily pleasure. By contrast, Nandy implied the possibility of a city of ghettos where ontological difference is lived more fully.

Closing Session—Debating Diversity

Mary Kalantzis: *We have opened the discussion to the floor to reflect the desire of participants to have a full participatory discussion on the nuances of diversity. Reflecting on this conference, we came here to move beyond the restrictions of the Australian national context and return to theory, and we are very glad that we have. This conference needs to be aware that in our work the thing we produce is communities of thought and practice.*

Walter Mignolo: *Two points: 1. Globalisations as global designs (Christianity, civilising mission, development and then the market) are temporally sequential but they do not simply replace each other. Coloniality as the classification of peoples, biological phenomenon, the planet, but particularly, in this context, the racialisation of humans continues on. 2. The hegemony of a white male western European epistemology is the key limit to our current thinking. Jonathan Friedman was defending the purity of his discipline from Jen Ang's claim for hybridity.*

Ashis Nandy: *They (peoples marginalised by modernity) are perfectly capable of defending themselves, you don't have to do it for them. History is a seriously overrated Enlightenment construction which most peoples have lived without for most times. History is used to justify political and social power. Nandy seemed to be arguing that mythic histories, epics, folk-knowledge and non-historicised versions of the past open up possibilities for thinking. Utopian thinking is the only response possible when you have destroyed all other possibilities for thinking the past when history has become the only legitimate resource for accessing the past. This situation has come to dominate Western societies experience of the past. The west has destroyed its past outside history.*

Paul James: *against Mignolo: it is not enough to talk of challenging an epistemological dominance. 'Knowing how' has to be located in a broader framework of living within, and negotiating across, the boundaries of ontological difference. Contra Nandy: we all face the same problem of creating a critical utopian future from the past. It is not a problem unique to the West.*

Questions from the Floor

- *My interpretation of the luau was the danger of hybridity: that you come to stand for nothing.*
- *The conference has been utterly compelling. We are witnessing the enactment of parallel processes: first, an enactment that suggests the distress of our social system; secondly, we are concerned with was being enacted in this conference itself. For example, the fact that Lilikala did not get a question time, whereas the non-Indigenous speakers this morning were given an extra 15 minutes of tea-time for questions.*
- *I'm trying to understand the luau in relation to Mililani Trask's work.*
- *Response from the podium: When I asked Mililani about the luau she said: "Go to the luau!"*
- *The luau was crass—more so for Indigenous people.*
- *Cheri Waititi: The phenomenology of the luau was that we went to learn... Maori epistemology now exists as border thinking. Border thinking is how I live every day. My ancestors say, 'You need Western epistemology, and you also have to keep your own epistemology strong and with you all the time'. We (Maori) live in the past, present and future at the same time.*
- *There was a suggestion to team up practitioners with theoreticians to present together in the plenaries.*
- *Samoa is an Indigenous-dominated society living with minorities brought by missionaries. These new minorities are not assimilating and are driven by capitalist values with no respect for the Indigenous majority's way of life.*

- An historian of medieval France attempted a defense of Eurocentric epistemology.
- Somebody countered: *I would argue for Ang's hybridity and Nandy's metaphor of the community of Cochin, against the defense of Western historicity ... the debates about the sterility of hybrids was a concern of slave traders, scientific racists and gardeners, which was clearly disproved in relation to concerns about racial miscegenation. The concept of 'sterile (human) hybrids' was discredited in England by 1870. No more talk of sterile hybrids please.*

Mignolo: *What kind of theory do we need that will eventually make its way through to public policy and practice?*

Nandy: *The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission is one of the most profound theoretical acts of our time. The idea that practice is somehow more moral than theory-about-practice is unsustainable and dangerous.*

The conference closed with **Mary Kalantzis** and **James White** thanking all those involved organising the event, and then a performance of *hula* by the group headed by Vicky Holt Takamine. The *hula mele* included a homage to Pele, goddess of the volcano who survived the missionary phase of Christianity, a new composition recording a recent lava flow, a homage to the new century in the year 2000 and a parting song. The final word of the conference was a Maori language response sung out by Cheri Waititi from the University of Waikato, New Zealand:

Poroporoaki / The Farewell

Tena koutou mo to koutou poroporoaki ki a matau

Greetings / Thank you for your farewell to us

Nga mihi ki a koutou mo to koutou manaaki o koutou taonga, o koutou kanikani

Greetings / Thank you for your sharing of your treasures (the mele, hula, song)

Aroha hoki ki a koutou katoa

All the love to you all.

Peter Phipps and Paul James, March 2003