JOHN RUNDELL: STRANGERS, CITIZENS AND OUTSIDERS: OTHERNESS, MULTICULTURALISM AND THE COSMOPOLITAN IMAGINARY IN MOBILE SOCIETIES

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INTRODUCTION

- Definitions
  - Absolute stranger
  - Outsider
- 2 Strategies
**ABSOLUTE STRANGER**

“In modernity, the stranger is the category of contingency and will be referred to here as the absolute stranger. There are at least three sites through which the absolute stranger has been constituted in modernity: the metropolis, the nation-state, and the interstate environments. The images of the metropolis and transnationalism have conventionally generated the image of the mobility of strangers as they move from, or within, one national state to another, sometimes caught between them. It is this mobility that gives the stranger a sense of contingency. “ (Rundell 2004: 86)

**OUTSIDER**

“The argument in this article is that outsiders are also absolute strangers, but with one significant difference. **Their status as outsiders is configured not by their contingent existence, but by their juridical status with regard to nation-states.** This gives them a unique existence as illegalized outsiders. Another no less important, but significantly less mobilized, strategy emerge in modernity to address their different status, that of cosmopolitan hospitality.” (Rundell 2004: 86)
STRATEGIES OF MODERN STRANGERS

- **Assimilation**
  - Mediation or management of cultural differences (emerged under the broad term of **multiculturalism** (Rundell 2004: 86)

FROM CONDITIONAL TO ABSOLUTE STRANGERS (P. 86-89)

- Abstraction of Strangers (Simmel)
- Differenciation between
  - **Conditional** Stranger
  - **Absolute** Stranger
ABSTRACTION OF STRANGERS

„The images of strangers has always played a key role in capturing the dynamic of modernity, which has often been couched in terms of the simultaneity of closeness and remoteness between ist inhabitants (Simmel, 1978). In Simmel’s classical analysis social actors who experience this simultaneity of closeness and remoteness undergo a process of objectification, and as a result, strangers – the objects of remoteness – are not treated as individuals, but are abstracted as a certain type (Simmel, 1971: 143-9). Strangers, be they individuals or groups, are abstractions in the sense that those characteristics, which are not in common with the host group or habitus (in this instance a city – but it could quite easily be a country or an ethnic group), are singled out on the basis for a differentiation between „us“ and „them“. (Rundell 2004: 86)

CONDITIONAL STRANGER

„...,conditional strangers can be viewed as outcasts from a home, a country, or a position to which they can potentially return. In this sense, their own centre of gravity, that is, their self-identity, can be maintained as an existential voyage towards home, even if they are perceived as strange by others who either do not understand them, or do not participate in their voyage. It is this ontological certainty of a home once left, and to which the stranger may one day return, that gives security to the mutual self-perceptions of the host group and the conditional stranger.“ (Heller, 2000; In: Rundell 2004: 87)
**ABSOLUTE STRANGER**

- “The case is quite different with the absolute stranger, for **he or she has no home to which to return**. The absolute stranger’s voyage is one of disconnection from home and thus also past. In this way, the absolute stranger’s existential sense is orientated towards, and even defined by, the host group to which they wish to belong.“

  (Rundell 2004: 87)

**DISCUSSION**

- Can you think of examples for conditional strangers, absolute stranger and outsiders?


**DISCUSSION**

"If being free means being born socially contingent, it is an empty kind of freedom, freedom as nothing. **Actually, being thrown into freedom or being thrown into nothing means exactly the same thing.** But this nothing (our contingency) is, nevertheeese, something because it promises that men and women can (equally) become free as no pre-set destination (teleology) bars their way from self-created freedom. Both logically and (onto)logically, the empty freedom of social contingency became the condition of those other freedoms, as much as the condition of self-created slavery." 


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**EMPTY FREEDOM (HELLER)**

- Ágnes Heller
  - born 12 May 1929
  - Budapest
  - Hungarian
  - philosopher

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BLASÉ ATTITUDE (SIMMEL)

○ “The blasé attitude is the generalized attitude of the absolute stranger, once we are all absolute strangers, that is contingent, and only interacts in highly mediated and distanced ways. The mutual indifference of interactions between strangers, interactions once located in the city but now more generalized, is an indifferent mutuality between absolute strangers, who each from his/her own perspective constructs the other as an absolute stranger to him/herself.”

(Rundell 2004: 88)

SUMMARY

○ Differentiation between stranger and outsider, conditional and absolute stranger
○ World of open possibilities ➞ empty freedom
  ▪ Membership to family, community and status groups replaced by functional criteria, democratizing horizons
○ Blasé attitude: we are all absolute strangers and consider the others to be strangers to us
2. Citizenship and the Closure of Nation-States (p. 89-93)

- 4 types of citizenship
  - National-juridical citizenship
  - Political-public citizenship
  - Economic-social citizenship
  - Cosmopolitan citizenship

  “Outsiders are those absolute strangers without legal entitlement to either arrive or settle within a given territory.” (p. 92)

- 2 types of multiculturalism
  - Laissez-faire (USA)
  - Multicultural corporatism (Canada, Sweden, Australia)

Discussion

- Can you think of an example for the two different approaches of multiculturalism?
  - Laissez-faire (market driven)
  - Multicultural corporatism (government driven)

- Which one of these approaches is conducted in your home country?
3. The cosmopolitan imaginary of an open citizenship form (p. 93-97)

- Cosmopolitan Hospitality
- Kant: Categorical Imperative

In context of war hospitality towards outsiders is an universal right of humanity

- Kants preferred model of interstate relations emerges today in supranational Organizations UN, EU, which provide basis for cosmopolitan, democratic community → public spheres where dissenting voices, also of outsiders are heard

- Derrida: two modes of hospitality
  - Conditional hospitality
  - Unconditional hospitality

Kant: Categorical Imperative

- “Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.”

- “Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never merely as a means to an end, but always at the same time as an end.”

- “Therefore, every rational being must so act as if he were through his maxim always a legislating member in the universal kingdom of ends.”

Immanuel Kant, Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals
CONCLUSION

- In context of cosmopolitan attitude:
  “The outsider is only an absolute stranger, with the possibility that the multidimensionality of the empty freedom of modernity becomes open to him or her, including all of its choices and cultural projects, whether they be functional and national, democratic or redemptive.” (Rundell 2004: 97)

COSMOPOLITAN HOSPITALITY

“The cosmopolitan perspective outlined here is one of the many attitudes of modernity, in which the gestural dimension of unconditional hospitality comes from a capacity to recognize the other qua other as absolute stranger and not merely as an outsider“ (Rundell 2004: 97)
DISCUSSION

What do you think influences the capacity to recognize the other qua other as absolute stranger and not merely as an outsider?