

## Julie Thorpe

(CCR & School of Humanities and Languages, UWS)

### Date

Thursday September 15,  
2011

### Time

2pm - 4:30pm

### Venue

Building EB, level 2,  
room 21 (EB.2.21)  
Parramatta Campus  
([view map](#))

### Convenor

Greg Noble  
[g.noble@uws.edu.au](mailto:g.noble@uws.edu.au)

[Click here to RSVP](#)

### Exhibiting 'Refugeedom': The 1915 War Aid Exhibition in Vienna

Public exhibitions during the First World War served a similar purpose to the great world fairs in the decades before 1914, aiming to educate and entertain their publics. Between 1914 and 1918, more than 50 exhibitions appeared in Vienna, the capital of the Habsburg empire. The largest of these was the War Exhibition, which opened at Prater Park in July 1916 and had been seen by over a million within a year. Victims of war - the wounded, orphans and widows - featured in many of these exhibitions. However, refugees from the Russian and Italian fronts - the empire's homeless citizens - also became a spectacle in the Kriegshilfeausstellung (War Aid Exhibition) at the end of 1915. This Exhibition, sponsored by the Austrian Ministry of the Interior, showcased the contributions of government, business, labour, charitable organizations and individuals to the refugee relief work during the war. Its goals were to highlight the generosity of the state, public and private aid to refugees, and to promote the official line that unity in diversity bound together the emperor's subjects. The Interior Ministry was keen to attract domestic interest in the exhibition, but organizers planned to tour the exhibition in American cities in the hope that refugee organizations there might provide relief. This paper aims to reconstruct the exhibition from its inception, planning, opening and public reception. The re-exhibition of this event will shed light on the displacement of a civilian population in wartime, and on ways of telling histories of war.

**Julie Thorpe** received her PhD in History from the University of Adelaide in 2007 and from 2007-2009 held visiting research and teaching positions at the Australian National University and University of Konstanz, Germany. Her research interests include: modern European history; political culture in Eastern and Central Europe; transnational history; social and cultural history of war, dictatorship, and religion. Her first book, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State, 1933-38*, will be published by Manchester University Press in 2011. In 2010, Julie was awarded an ARC Postdoctoral Fellowship Discovery Grant for a study of World War One refugees in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the role of the international community in responding to the empire's displaced populations. She also has an interest in Catholic pilgrimage in Central Europe in the twentieth century.

## Mridula Chakraborty

(Writing and Society Research Group, UWS)

### On Standing to Attention for the National Anthem: Some Thoughts on Continuing Nationalisms

This paper is a meditation upon forms of continuing nationalisms that function in post-colonial countries as well as the contemporary lives they acquire, especially at moments of nationalist resurgence. I take as my particular example, India's national anthem, *Jana Gana Mana*, the lyrics for which were penned circa 1911 by the first non-Western Nobel Laureate for literature, Rabindranath Tagore. Written in highly Sanskritized (Sadhu-bhasha) Bengali, the first of five stanzas of a Brahmo hymn, *Jana Gana Mana* has had its fair share of controversy from the moment it was first sung at the Calcutta Session of the Indian National Congress on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1911 to when it was settled upon as the newly-independent nation's anthem at the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1947 in New York. A 'compromise' choice at the moment of Indian Independence, which was also the moment of the subcontinent's Partition into India and Pakistan, this song has seen its "universal spirit" both harnessed by the "armory of the nation-state" and deployed to "educate" the multitudinous masses of the world's largest democracy. This paper traces some of the ways in which this unlikely anthem continues to, repeatedly and affectively, interpellate the Indian citizen within the ambit of an aspirational and wildly ambitious democracy. It also offers a literary understanding of the song on the occasion of Tagore's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the celebration of which has become a timely reminder of his extraordinary legacy, where internationalism always trumps nationalism and where 'the nation' cannot be constrained by the ideological dangers of nationalism.

**Mridula Nath Chakraborty** is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Writing and Society Research Group at the University of Western Sydney. Her doctoral work is an intellectual history of Anglo-North American postcolonial feminists. She has published on postcolonial and diasporic literature and cinema. She is currently editing a collection of essays on *Being Bengali: At home and in the world* and also following the lentil trail, a culinary sociology of red lentils.



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