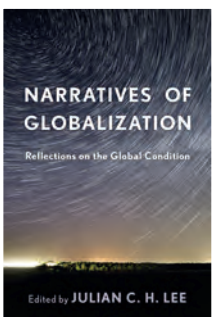


# An interview with Julian CH Lee

Julian CH Lee, Senior Lecturer in Global Studies at RMIT University, speaks to Christina Plant about his new edited volume *Narratives of Globalization: Reflections on the Global Human Condition*.



Reviewed title:  
*Narratives of Globalization: Reflections on the Global Human Condition*, Rowman and Littlefield International, ISBN 9781783484423 (hardback)

At the same time, each chapter seeks to take a key concept in the study of globalization, including human rights, diversity and transculturation, and to critically explore it through the authors' narratives. A core objective of the writing was that it must be both accessible and academically rigorous, which are characteristics which I feel are too often ignored in academic writing.

**Why was the 'first person' narrative approach important to you?**

There are a number of reasons why I felt it was important. One reason is that I believe it is possible to write in a way that is both relevant to established scholars and also approachable by non-scholars, including first year university students. Being able to engage with wider audiences beyond academia is not only a nice side-project, but might even be considered a scholarly duty. It helps to make the relevance of our research clear, which is something that social scientists could do more of.

Furthermore, I think this approach of exploring key ideas through personal experiences also presents readers,

Above:  
Angry Birds at the BERSIH protest in 2012 in Kuala Lumpur. (Photo by Julian CH Lee)

especially students, with a model of how they can connect their lives with larger phenomena, whether it be neoliberalism, global migration or international security. Writing that is abstracted and inaccessible can readily alienate people and make it difficult for people to connect the dots between their own worlds and the things that scholars say are important.

**A notable feature of *Narratives of Globalization* is that Asia features prominently in many of the chapters. What does the prominence of Asia in the book say about the place of Asia in the processes of globalization?**

There are a few reasons for Asia's prominence in the book. One is that Asia is widely regarded as being on the ascent, whether economically or politically. One can see this in suggestions that this century is the 'Asian Century'.

A second reason is that Asia, as a global hub of exchange in goods, ideas, culture and people, throws up so many case studies that are ideal for exploring themes in the study of globalization. We can take as an example what is often said to be the world's best airport, Changi in Singapore. Chris Hudson uses Changi to question the notion that airports are bland nodes of global transit and are therefore 'non-places' – devoid of a sense of belonging and place. Through her descriptions and photos, we can see how Singaporeans have brought Changi's Terminal 3 into the ambit of their lives and it is very much a place with meaning for them.

**I found Rebekah Farrell's chapter 'On a Global Moral Economy' particularly thought provoking. Could you speak a little about her chapter?**

Rebekah Farrell's chapter is an important one because she wrestles with issues relating to privilege and power in the context of a rural village in Thailand. This village is in need of assistance in dealing with socio-economic transformations that are impacting its ability to be sustainable. Young people have been leaving for urban centres, endangering both the economic viability of the society and its cultural continuity. How Farrell and her youth-led organization sought to thoughtfully enable villagers to protect the integrity of their village is a touching example of a respectful and helpful approach to development work in Asia.

**The book's authors are all associated with the Centre for Global Research at RMIT University. How has this influenced the resulting book?**

The atmosphere around the Centre for Global Research encourages creative ventures and critically reflexive practice and research. Therefore, this book brings those elements out and puts them on display, along with the great diversity of the research interests of the members which is evident in the diverse topics of the chapters. This book is in some ways a showcase for the Centre and the kinds of analysis it is capable of.

**Christina Plant is an intern at the Centre for Global Research (s3436027@student.rmit.edu.au).**

## Multicultural education in Indonesia

Diversity is the cornerstone of Indonesia's national identity; it is proclaimed in the country's motto, and celebrated on many occasions, from the obvious Youth Pledge Day to the unrelated Kartini Day. However, alarmingly, there have been few reflective discussions about what living in a plural society should entail. This book is relevant because it initiates this discussion by studying how education in Indonesia constructs or obstructs multicultural attitudes among its citizens, particularly with regard to cultural and religious diversity. Written by Raihani, currently a professor at the State Islamic University of Riau, this is a timely project.

Stefani Nugroho



Reviewed title: Raihani. 2014. *Creating Multicultural Citizens: A Portrayal of Contemporary Indonesian Education* London and New York: Routledge ISBN 9780415844147

THE BOOK OPENS with three chapters that are introductory in nature. The general introduction is followed by an overview of the various paradigms regarding multiculturalism. Raihani argues for critical multiculturalism that emphasizes the representation of minority narratives, and critical reflections on dominant discourses of the majority groups. The next chapter deals with the history of education in Indonesia, particularly the longstanding disparity between state schools and *madrasahs* (Islamic day schools). Under decentralization regulations, general schools are funded by the regional government. This is not the case for *madrasahs*, which remain under the national government and tend to be underfunded. The chapter also discusses other recent changes, like school-based management, school-based curriculum, teacher certification programs and the introduction of international standard schools. For readers who are familiar with paradigms of multiculturalism as well as the history of education in Indonesia, these chapters could be skimmed over.

The next eight chapters contain the crux of his research. In each of them, Raihani explores the extent to which multiculturalism is nurtured in a particular element of education. With the exception of an analysis of the Education Law in chapter four and the concluding last chapter, the six other chapters contain observations and interviews with the principals, teachers, and students of six secondary schools in Yogyakarta and Palangkaraya. The types of schools vary: three state-owned schools (one general, one vocational, and one *madrasah*), two private schools (one is owned by Muhammadiyah, a large Islamic organization, and one is a Catholic school),