Workshop arranged by the Academy of Finland-project *Asymmetries in European Cultural Space* (University of Helsinki)

23-24.10.2014, Unioninkatu 38A, room A132 (Thursday 1415-1830, Friday 0900-1230)

**Intellectuals, universalisms and the logics of universalization**

This workshop addresses the topic of universalism(s) from the perspective of the peripheries.

It is often argued that intellectuals in geo-cultural centers are more prone than those from the peripheries to think that their debates and concepts are universal. This is not necessarily a matter of blind ethnocentrism, but rather a question of logics and values formed through practice and routine. In some cultures, local debates simply stand a greater chance of being universalized, thereby reducing the need to adjust to other particularisms.

By contrast, intellectuals in the peripheries are destined into a condition of constant adjustment to the categories and definitions of the centers. Of course, this does not mean that the intellectuals of the peripheries are passive receivers. Contrary, intellectuals from the peripheries tend to embrace a constructivist outlook, which sometimes translates into a mediating role in the international intellectual community, navigating between and adapting to rivaling universalisms. Indeed, perhaps it is only in the peripheries that that universalism is acknowledged as a plural? It has been argued that the peripheries in being “translation cultures” are more immune to universalistic outlooks (Henrik Stenius).

The “critical potential” of the mediating role of the peripheries lies in highlighting the historical particularities that have been lost out of sight in the de-historicizing process that accompanies the international circulation of philosophical and social ideas. But at the same time, when looking at how conceptual universalization actually happens, it can be argued that the roles are reversed. Here, the peripheries play a key role in appropriating concepts from particular debates in the core as if they were universally valid. Thus, universalization is something that actually takes place in the peripheries (Christopher L. Hill).

This workshop will address the role of the peripheries from the point of view of both of these dimensions: on the one hand we examine the peripheries as a source of de-universalizing historical perspectivism, and on the other hand we discuss the peripheries and their role in the logic of conceptual universalization.

The purpose of the workshop is to explore different approaches to the study of universalism and universalization.

The workshop is free and open for all.

**Programme**

*Thursday*

1415-1430 Welcome and introduction, Stefan Nygård (University of Helsinki)

1430-1500 Christopher Hill (University of Michigan/Freie Universität, Berlin):

*Universalisation on the Periphery: Process and Product*

1500-1530 Comments by Henrik Stenius (University of Helsinki) + discussion

coffee

1600-1630 Martti Koskenniemi (University of Helsinki)

*Oceanic Feelings: International Lawyers between the nation and the World*

1630-1700 Martina Reuter (University of Jyväskylä):

*Marginal women? Relocating women in the history of philosophy*

pause

1715-1745 Emila Palonen (University of Helsinki):

*Hungarian intellectuals: universalizing the particular*

1745-1815 Johan Strang (University of Helsinki):

*Peripheral eclecticism and Swedish universalism*

***Friday***

0900-0930 Jyrki Nummi (University of Helsinki)

*Li Po and Finnish Poetry: The Problem of Inter-Peripheral Relations*

0930-1000 Agneta Rahikainen (Swedish Literature Society, Helsinki):

*The Centre and the Peripheral – Bio(mytho)graphical interpretations of the avant-garde poet Edith Södergran's poetic landscape and cultural identity*

1000-1030 Marja Jalava (University of Helsinki):

*Universalism and Particularism in the Interwar Norwegian Social History*

coffee

1100-1130 Alex Drace-Francis (University of Amsterdam):

*Universalism and regionalism in European literary history*

1130-1200 Lauri Tähtinen (Brown University/University of Helsinki):

*Brazil from Scholastic Millenarianism into the Lusotropical Future*

1200-1230 Concluding discussion