

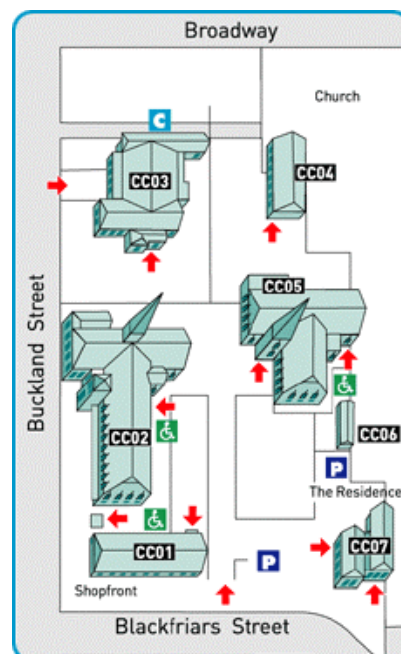


Institute for International Studies

Comparative perspectives on Cosmopolitanism and Theories of Belonging: Asia, Australia and the EU

Centre for Research in Social and Cultural Change in China and The Eurovisions Research Group

December 8 2006, Blackfriars Building **CC05**, ground floor seminar room.



This symposium arises from the ARC International Linkage project LX0668574

Synopsis, program and abstracts

The project is conducted in collaboration with the Social Policy Research Centre, at Middlesex University, London.

In September this year a workshop entitled 'Politics of Strangers and Neighbours: accounts of grounded cosmopolitanisms' was held at Middlesex University. This was the first of a series of meetings designed to build collaborative and interdisciplinary perspectives on the nature and status of cosmopolitanism in global cities. The focus in September was on the ways in which new migrants are understood as constitutive or other to the spaces of residency and publicness in London, Chengdu, and in the China towns of the world. This second workshop focuses on cosmopolitanism as a mutable theoretical construct, one which both feeds the image management of branded urban space, whilst also challenging aspects of multicultural policy in its various configurations. The workshop develops thematics of new class order and the lived hierarchies of urban belonging, which arose in the earlier meetings and is under scrutiny in related ARC funded research projects at UTS. The workshop is an invitation only event, which aims to bring together theorists of society and culture, who can speak to these themes as they are manifest in different regional locations and with very diverse contingencies in play.

Program

9.30am: Welcome and Introduction – Stephanie Hemelryk Donald (UTS)

9.45 – 10.45am: Session 1 (Chair: Murray Pratt)

- Eleanore Kofman (Middlesex): 'Multiculturalism and Cosmopolitanism: Configurations of Diversity in British Cities'
- James Goodman (UTS): 'Humanitarian assistance: cosmopolitanism?'

10.45 – 11.15am: Break

11.15am – 12.45pm: Session 2 (Chair: Anders Bjorkvall)

- Ilaria Vanni Accarigi (UTS): 'Cosmopolitan Suburbia'
- Julie Lim (UTS): 'Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism: the case in Shanghai'
- Yi Zheng (UTS): 'Provincial Cosmopolitanism?'

12.45 -1.30pm: Lunch Break

1.30 – 2.30pm: Session 3 (Chair: Ilaria Vanni)

- David Goodman (UTS): 'China: the local, the translocal, and the construction of place'
- Sandro Mezzadra, (University of Bologna/UWS): "In Search of the World. W.E.B. Du Bois's Contribution to a Theory of "Cosmopolitanism from Below""

2.30-3.30: Session 4 (Chair: Tony Mitchell)

- Murray Pratt (UTS): 'Dead for Nothing: Community, Creolization and Transcosmopolitanism in France'
- Tara Forrest (UTS): 'Protesting Haider's Austria'.

3.30 – 4pm: Break

4 – 5pm: Session 6 (Chair: Stephanie Hemelryk Donald)

- Tony Mitchell (UTS): 'Cosmopolitanism and Citizenship in Second Generation Migrant Expression in Australian Hip hop'
- Tina Schilbach (UTS): 'Cosmopolitanism and the post-Communist city: making class (in-) visible in Shanghai'

Wrap-up and close

James Donald, UNSW

Title: 'Cosmopolitanism, Multiculturalism and the Recalcitrance of the National'

Abstract: I recently took part in a conference in England on multiculturalism, ethnicity and diversity. As I read my paper on cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism, I could see the eyes of the man from the local anti-

discrimination unit glazing over. This was in part an antipathy to academic discourse, or mine anyway, but it also represented a real difference of understanding. Multiculturalism, he asserted in a later session, is simply a code word for anti-racist policy making. I heard a spontaneous intake of breath from several Australians who were about to explain that here it's not, before we collectively decided to hold our peace. If multiculturalism has quite different policy connotations in the UK and Australia, however, might it be possible to identify different orientations towards the cosmopolitan in different places and contexts? And what would that mean for an inherently universalist concept?

Tara Forrest, UTS

Title: 'Protesting Haider's Austria'

Abstract: This paper focuses on *Bitte liebt Österreich* (Please love Austria) – a week-long performance/media event staged in Vienna in 2000 by German artist Christoph Schlingensief in an attempt to mobilize public debate about the xenophobic, anti-immigration policies of the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ). Inspired by the format of *Big Brother*, Schlingensief installed a large shipping container in the centre of Vienna that served as a temporary dwelling for “asylum seekers” from countries such as China, Iraq, Zimbabwe and Iran - the everyday activities of whom were broadcast live on the internet at webfreetv.com where viewers were encouraged to vote out their least favourite housemate. As the event unfolded, both the evictions and the large “*Ausländer Raus* (Foreigners Out)” sign installed on top of the container generated much public outcry and debate in the Austrian media. Drawing on these debates, this paper will not only provide an analysis of this complex media/performance event, it will also shed light on the conditions that enabled Schlingensief to bring about, what Thomas Mießgang has described as, a “total mobilisation of the Austrian public sphere”.

David S G Goodman, UTS

Title: 'China: the local, the translocal, and the construction of place'

Abstract: Until the early 1990s modern Chinese nationalism only permitted the individual to belong to a single, increasingly homogenous China. This approach to a China of core and periphery only remained viable given the extremely low level of social and economic integration within the People's Republic. As there was remarkably little inter-communication, radically different parts of the country could readily convince themselves of homogeneity. Economic reform and social change have created more complex theories of belonging that as they emphasize local heterogeneity also strengthen Chinese nationalism. In particular, the emergence of a translocal imagination in regions of economic activity and within the boundaries of the party-state has emphasized multiple scales of belonging in a process not dissimilar to that which attended the emergence of modern nationalism in Europe during the 19th Century.

James Goodman, UTS

Title: 'Humanitarian assistance: cosmopolitanism?'

Abstract: Human disasters can generate a heart-felt desire to assist - a trans-local humanitarian impulse. This kind of solidarity stands at the heart of cosmopolitanism, where loyalty to humanity trumps parochialism. Indeed, affective solidarity in the face of human suffering is perhaps the clearest and strongest expression of everyday grass-roots cosmopolitanism. Reflecting its power, humanitarianism has been increasingly bound into international politics. In some respects, hegemonic states and international organisations have adapted to the growing exposure, awareness and responsiveness to human suffering. In other respects popular humanitarianism has been harnessed to imperial projects, as a new 'responsibility to intervene'. These issues are explored drawing illustrations from current Australian government humanitarian interventions in East Timor, the Solomons, Papua New Guinea and Aceh.

Eleanore Kofman, Middlesex University

Title: 'Multiculturalism and Cosmopolitanism: Configurations of Diversity in British Cities'

Abstract: The recent and rapid succession of different forms of immigration (asylum seekers, sectoral schemes, migrant workers from the old EU and the new accession countries, skilled migrants, students) has culturally and socially transformed many British cities beyond London. This new diversity, or super-diversity (Vertovec 2006), has been seen by some commentators, and especially those critical of multiculturalism, as a threat to social cohesion and sense of belonging which needs to be reinforced by an affirmation of core British values. This paper examines the reconfiguration of the traditional post-colonial of immigration and ethnic minority paradigm and the shift towards concepts of diversity and cosmopolitanism in representing the relationship between strangers and neighbours in the new urban landscapes.

Julie Lim, UTS

Title: 'Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism: the case in Shanghai'

Abstract: An aspiring international city, Shanghai has a history of being one of the most culturally diverse and attractive cities for tourism, business and employment in China. With a widening representation of foreign businesses and organisations, and a vision to be an international competitor, the city is fast becoming a provider of a range of services, aimed at both local and foreign customers. Through analyses of the theories of cosmopolitanism, in particular the idea of actually existing cosmopolitanism, and investigation into

the experiences of locals and foreign guests in service encounters, this study aims to explore the degrees to which overseas Chinese have a sense of Chinese identity and belonging in this modern Chinese city.

Sandro Mezzadra, University of Bologna/University of Western Sydney

Title: 'In Search of the World. W.E.B. Du Bois's Contribution to a Theory of "Cosmopolitanism from Below"'

Abstract:

The presentation will start by a brief review of some of the issues at stake in the contemporary discussion on cosmopolitanism. The distinction between a cosmopolitanism "from above" and a cosmopolitanism "from below", that has been recently proposed among others by Stuart Hall, will be examined from the point of the different images of the *cosmos*, of the world, that are implicit in different forms of cosmopolitanism. The paper argues that one of the main questions to be addressed in order to rethink cosmopolitanism is precisely the modality of imagining the "world" that underlies it. This question has of course a history that it is worth examining in order to build up a kind of archive on which contemporary theoretical and political practices can rely. The presentation will focus on the way then question was developed with reference to African-American and anti-colonial struggles by W.E.B. Du Bois. The evolution of Du Bois's thought and its spatial "coordinates" will be analyzed from the point of view of the dialectic between the experience of the *loss of a world* that characterized African-American and colonial experience of modernity on the one hand, and the necessity to *reinvent the world* in which Du Bois himself eventually saw the very condition of effectivity of African-American and anti-colonial struggles.

Tony Mitchell, UTS

Title: 'Cosmopolitanism and Citizenship in Second Generation Migrant Expression in Australian Hip hop'

Abstract: This paper examines second-generation non-Anglo migrant expressions of rhetorical homeland connections and Australian citizenship through the performative medium of Australian hip hop. In global terms, the four elements of hip hop (MCing, DJing, breakdance and graffiti) have frequently been used by practitioners from migrant backgrounds as a conduit to access traditional aspects of their own homeland cultures which are combined with breakbeats and samples to construct a syncretised musical form of Australian indigenisation. The most cogent example of this in Australia is MC Trey, who has compared the four elements of hip hop with four parallel aspects of her Fijian cultural heritage: public speaking around the kava bowl (MCing), the lali drum (DJing), the ceremonial meke story-performance dances (breakdancing) and the patterns of tapa or masi cloth (graffiti), while claiming hip hop as a form of multicultural Australian citizenship through the

rhetorical trope of the 'hip hop nation'. Similarly, MC Hau of Koolism incorporates aspects of his Tongan heritage in attaching himself to a Polynesian Australasian and Pacific Island hip hop diaspora. This paper also examines the output of Maya Jupiter, who draws on her Mexican background, sometimes rapping in Spanish, and combines hip hop with salsa. Other artists considered are Sleek the Elite's and NOMISE's expressions of Lebanese and Arab-Australian identities, Curseovdialect's multiethnic hybrid polyphony, and Tanzanian-Australian MC Mr Zux, who raps in both Swahili and English. While Aboriginal MCs have used indigenous languages such as Arrernte, Pitjijinjara and Gamilaraay, Morganics' track 'Multilingual MC', which contains snippets from 25 different languages, is a synthetic example of cosmopolitanism which epitomises the multicultural dimensions of Australian hip hop which tap into cultural diasporas which are both local and global.

Murray Pratt, UTS

Title: 'Dead for Nothing: Community, Creolization and Transcosmopolitanism in France'

Abstract: On the morning of 30 October 2005, two days after the electrocution of Ziad Benn and Banou Traoré at an electricity sub-station in Clichy-sous-Bois, a small peaceful protest in the suburb took place with mourners wearing t-shirts proclaiming that the youths were 'mort pour rien', or dead for nothing. The ensuing riots became headline news across the global mediascape, with the initial incident eclipsed by commentaries on France's policy of integration, its economic and social situation, and – most often – how the varying stances on these issues held by its Presidential hopefuls affected their chances of election in 2007. For the protestors, the issue was different. The slogan they used, implying both that the youths had committed no crime to warrant death, and at the same time presciently expressing concern that their deaths would be erased from the ensuing narrative, points to the social, affective and psychic stakes of nationalized French discourse about belonging, community and the country's ongoing attempt to brand its politics of citizenship as 'exceptional' on the European and world stage.

This paper offers an initial survey of a purposefully diverse corpus of contemporary social and cultural texts and events that each position France within global contexts (Politicians' blogs, Houellebecq's novels, Mediatized and cultural representations of immigration and integration, Cultural activism such as the Yamakazi movement, the marketing of New Caledonia), interrogating each for the models of community, creolization, and cosmopolitanism that subtend their discursive field. Taking as its theoretical starting point Paulina Tambakaki's 2006 essay 'Global Community, Global Citizenship?' and its contextualization of Held's 'global citizenship' alongside Mouffe's call for plural fields of public participation, this paper also considers Fassin's assertion that current national debates must be nuanced with reference to gender and sexuality, and Nancy's conceptualization of the 'community' as a 'being-together' that unworks exclusionary myths of unity. In

so doing, the aim is to counter libidinal investment in nationally branded belonging by envisaging forms of living with difference (and not just diversity), being plural, and healing social fracture in societies with specific and intersecting global references.

Tina Schilbach, UTS

Title: 'Cosmopolitanism and the post-Communist city: making class (in-)visible in Shanghai'

Abstract: In this presentation I will outline some thoughts about the idea of cosmopolitanism in the post-communist urban space of developmental China. Drawing from the research questions in my current PhD project – which studies the discursive constructions of a “middle-class” political identity in Shanghai – I will focus my discussion upon a critical evaluation of how cosmopolitanism and urban class narratives are connected in the transforming “socialist market economy”. The “rediscovery” of class in China has been accompanied by strong domestic political and academic interest in the “new Chinese middle class” and its meaning for Chinese state-society relations. Much of this has been part of a more general, official pondering about the making of societal identity in China today and the social engineering this will have to entail. Urban space, with the strong political symbolism attached to, has become one of the privileged sites of these discursive endeavours. It therefore makes sense to posit the Chinese middle class discussion as an important link between the political construction of the city and the cultural governance of Chinese “society-making”. Given the elusive nature of “middle class”, the concept seems to lend itself comfortably to post-Maoist politics of projecting into cities an extraordinarily ambitious assemblage of social metaphor and political morality. Instead of taking these spatial politics as simply reflecting or privileging “the winners” of transformation, the essentialised association of middle class and urban space actually constructs new spatial and class-based identities, and affects ethical perceptions of social inequality and political stability. It is in the realm of aesthetics, the visual and normative space in which we are most likely to find the middle class in China. Conceptualising Shanghai in terms of cosmopolitanism can therefore help us evaluate how such spatial imaginaries greatly enhance the visibility of a depoliticised, upwardly-mobile and urban version of a Chinese society within the developmental state. At the same time, the concept of cosmopolitanism can also expose the rather fragile undertaking in identity politics at issue here, inviting critical readings, which study possible alternative experiences of a “show-case” Shanghai and bring out into the open also those marginalised and excluded in the process of transformation.

Ilaria Vanni Accarigi, UTS

Title: 'Cosmopolitan Suburbia'

Abstract: The paper is set in Western Sydney. The region is seen through the lenses of projects produced in the last few years by the community,

cultural, information and new media organization Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE). It explores two interlocked discursive formations. The first one is about Australian definitions of multiculturalism and cultural diversity in government policies. The second one comprises cultural and creative practices that either confirm or undermine these policies.

It is customary to imagine the Australian suburban sprawl as a space of almost uninterrupted sameness, its geographical monotony matched and reproduced in a set of communal aspirations. Suburbia harbors also recent myths of Australian identity and values built on an Anglo-Celtic blueprint and a politics of nostalgia for a whiter Australia. This master narrative finds its double in current multicultural policies, which embrace diversity as a productive, economically viable force. In this second narrative suburbia becomes a site of containment of difference.

The two discourses are complementary, and together contribute to build dominant definitions of multiculturalism both as something that weakens national values, and as something that through careful management can add to national wealth. In both cases Australian multiculturalism is equated to the existence in the same national space of diverse and distinct cultures, safely kept separated. Government policies, internal community dynamics and cultural practices contribute to produce multicultural suburban enclaves. Recently, as new migrant communities arrive and encounter second and third generations, the (multi)cultural and social borders of these enclaves fray and difference spills out. The hypothesis of this paper is that in these emerging contact zones an Australian variation of cosmopolitanization is born. This hypothesis will be illustrated with specific examples drawn from ICE's latest projects.

Yi Zheng, UTS

Title: 'Provincial Cosmopolitanism?'

Abstract: The presentation will look at the location of cosmopolitanism, as "ideal and adventure" (Appiah) as well as romance. It will explore what it means to think about the presence of the world in a provincial place. By positing together two mutually exclusive conceptualisations of the world and way of life, it will probe into questions such as the locale of cosmopolitan urbanity, the possibility of a peripheral cosmopolitanism, of cosmopolitanism as urban tradition, and suggest that rather than contrasting principles, the provincial and the cosmopolitan are mutually constitutive.