Professor Tony Bennett at CCR

Tony Bennett joined CCR as Research Professor in Social and Cultural Theory in October 2009. Tony is no stranger to the challenge of conducting cultural research in Australia having played key roles in developing first the Institute for Cultural Policy Studies at Griffith University and, later, as the Director of the Key Centre for Cultural Media Policy across Griffith, the University of Queensland and QUT. He spent the last 5 years of his appointment as Professor of Sociology at the Open University as one of the founding Directors of the ESRC’s Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change.

RC: Can you tell us first what attracted you to CCR?
TB: I have had a long association with the Centre from its earliest days, back when it was the Research Centre for Inter-Communal Studies, and have always admired its work and the way in which it has been conducted. It is a Centre with a strong and deserved reputation for a high level of collegiality, a very necessary quality for a Centre committed to delivering high quality interdisciplinary research. It is also, and this is much less common, strongly supported at the University level. The opportunity to contribute to developing a vision for a long-term program of cultural research, working with great people and with a clear commitment of University support for future growth proved irresistible! On top of that, the issues that have now to be met in working with, through, and sometimes against the concept of culture increasingly posed new and unparalleled challenges.

RC: In what ways?
TB: Most of the traditions that I was first schooled in – let’s say, roughly, the British tradition of cultural studies and the post-Durkheimian tendencies in cultural sociology – assumed that there were reasonably clear dividing lines between culture and society, and that both of these are sharply distinct from another thing called nature. None of these assumptions holds any more. The object turn in social and cultural theory; the development of post-humanist perspectives; the ‘material turn’: these and a whole host of related developments call for a serious reconsideration of how we should now think about the relationships between culture and the social, culture and the economy, and our entanglements with material and natural phenomena and processes.

RC: Are these the questions you plan to explore in your research at CCR?
TB: They are questions that are now emerging within and across many of CCR’s Research Themes so, fortunately, I shan’t be working on them on my own. However, I have mapped out a few projects through which I plan to engage with particular aspect of these questions in ways which both emerge out of, but also seek to mark departures from, some of my earlier work.

RC: Can you give us a couple of examples?
TB: I am still interested in the analysis of museums as, for me, sites which condense a set of practices which bring together questions concerning the relations between knowledge and power, the distinctive logics of cultural institutions, and the organisation of the social.

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Dr Tim Winter and Dr Sonja van Wichelen join the CCR team

Dr Tim Winter joined CCR as a Senior Research Fellow at the end of last year. A sociologist by training, he has previously held positions at the University of Sydney and the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. Tim’s research interests centre on the political economies of ‘heritage’ and tourism and the social and cultural aspects of sustainability. Much of his work focuses on the developing economies of Asia, with projects currently being pursued in Sri Lanka, Kashmir, Cambodia, Malaysia and Thailand. Adopting a cross-disciplinary approach, he addresses questions of modernity, the geo-politics of culture and cultural aid, nationalism, postcoloniality and ‘sustainable development’.

He is currently leading the ARC funded project Cultural Heritage in Conflict Transformation Societies. This multi-country study considers the degree to which cultural heritage programmes successfully contribute to, or inhibit, broader processes of conflict transformation and post-conflict recovery, paying particular attention to the role played by cultural sector institutions, both domestic and international. His other key project is SOCoolH (Sustaining Our Cool Living Heritage). With around 50% of the world’s carbon emissions currently coming from buildings, SOCoolH focuses on in the vast amounts of energy now being used to chill interior spaces across the Asia Pacific region.

Dr Sonja van Wichelen is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Cultural Research. She received her PhD in Social Sciences at the University of Amsterdam and held positions in the Center for Cultural Sociology at Yale University and in the Pembroke Center at Brown University. Her books include Religion, Gender and Politics in Indonesia: Disputing the Muslim Body (Routledge, 2010) and Commitment and Complicity in Cultural Theory and Practice (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, co-edited with B.O. Firat and S. De Mijl). Her interests include science and technology studies, cultural economy and globalization, feminist and postcolonial theory, anthropology of law, religion and the body politic. Her research projects broadly engage with cultural politics and moral economies in the age of globalization and its effects on our understanding of citizenship. In her previous project she examined these themes through the study of public debates on Islam and gender in contemporary Indonesia. Her current project looks at transnational adoption and focuses on changing Western paradigms of the child-citizen in science, humanitarianism and the market economy. Together with Marc de Leeuw she also writes on multiculturalism and immigration in postcolonial Europe.

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However, I am now much more interested in approaching these questions – still framed in a relationship to the concerns of governmentality theory – in ways which locate the practices of museums at the intersections of complex flows of things, persons, techniques and technologies. Actor-network-theory and assemblage theory prove very helpful here. So I have been drawing on these in recent work I have done on the relationships between anthropological fieldwork, museums and practices of colonial governance in the early twentieth century.

RC: Do you plan to take this further?

TB: I very much hope so. Indeed, I have worked with two CCR colleagues – Fiona Cameron and Ben Dibley – who share these interests, and with researchers in France, the USA, New Zealand and the UK to develop an application to the ARC for funding to support a broad-ranging international inquiry into these questions. (Note: Recent ARC Discovery successes included Tony Bennett and Fiona Cameron (with Rodney Harrison, Conal McCarthy, Nelia Dia and Ira Janssens) – Museum, Field, Metropolis, Colony: Practices of Social Governance AUD 237,000 over 3 years).

TB: I have returned to a topic I spent quite a lot of time on in earlier work: that of the aesthetic and its role in the development of a very specific kind of authority. I spent a lot of time in Britain re-engaging with the work of Bourdieu in the context of a national survey of cultural tastes similar to the one I worked on in Australia with Mike Emmison and John Frow. As well as the empirical work this involved, I got interested in the relations between Bourdieu’s ‘take’ on Kant, Jacques Rancière’s criticisms of Bourdieu, and Foucault’s account of an aesthetics of existence as all involving what I think are quite odd, but powerful, claims to a distinctive kind of cultural authority. I suppose that what I am interested in is a genealogy of the aesthetic which, while not disposing of this authority, will raise some awkward questions for it.

RC: Do these concerns connect with your interest in the habit?

TB: Yes, indeed. I’m very interested in the role that the concept of habit has played at different moments in the history of Western social, political, and cultural thought as something that is to be acted on – either to weaken or strengthen its force – as a means of shaping conduct in governmental projects of one kind or another. It is, then, very much tied up with the production and exercise of specific kinds of authority. And Western aesthetic thought, particularly after Kant, has usually represented the aesthetic as the embodiment of a distinctive kind of human freedom which stands opposed to the tyranny of habit.

RC: You mentioned earlier your involvement in two projects on cultural tastes, one in Australia and one in Britain. Do you plan more work in this area?

TB: I’m not sure whether I shall be doing new empirical work, although this is something that a few of us in CCR are discussing without it being clear yet what form it might take. However, I am working with the teams for both of these projects and with French statisticians to subject the findings of both projects to a comparative multiple correspondence analysis. I don’t know what results this will generate yet, but it should offer some helpful insights into the similarities and differences between the roles that cultural practices play in processes of class formation in the Australia and Britain.

RC: Sounds like enough to be getting on with.

TB: You should tell that to the Director!

Grant Successes

Congratulations to CCR members Professor Kay Anderson, Professor Tony Bennett and Dr Fiona Cameron on their ARC Discovery successes. These new Discovery grants will commence in 2011 and are funded for three years. The projects are:

**Decolonising the Human: Towards a Postcolonial Ecology**

*Kay Anderson*

So you think you’re human? This project interrogates the idea of mind as it has come to shape contemporary ideas about what it means to be human. Focusing on the notorious head-measuring practices of colonial times, it provokes a postcolonial rethinking of our most cherished marker of distinction from other life-forms. Unlike the majority of arguments for a greener form of human culture which are overtly environmental in theorisation and tone, the project pursues its own case for a more sustainable relationship to this continent’s environment.

**Museum, Field, Metropolis, Colony: Practices of Social Governance**

*Tony Bennett and Fiona Cameron* (this grant is also partnered with Rodney Harrison, Conal McCarthy, Nelia Dia and Ira Jacknis)

The project studies early twentieth-century Australian museums comparatively by considering parallel developments in Europe, North America, and New Zealand. Examining the relations between anthropological collections and social governance in colonial and metropolitan settings, it highlights the roles of museums in culturally diverse societies.

**Rethinking Multiculturalism/Reassessing Multicultural Education**

*ARC Linkage. Megan Watkins (CCR), Greg Noble (CCR), Kevin Dunn (UWS) with the NSW Department of Education and Training.*

The project aims to shed light on the challenges posed by increasing cultural complexity in schools and communities. It will examine approaches to Multiculturalism in NSW government schools in urban and rural areas and how these link to the role of education in promoting social inclusion.

**Cooperative Research Centre for CCR**

The CRC program funds world-class collaborative research and innovation and through the College of Arts, UWS will lead two Programs in the CRC for Young People, Technology and Wellbeing. The CRC will promote mental health and wellbeing through three complementary research programs uniting the humanities and social sciences with expertise in cyber safety; use of technologies for mental health promotion, prevention, early intervention and treatment; cultural research; e-research; youth culture; and innovation in research methodologies. The CRC will develop tech-savvy tools to support the wellbeing of our young Australians.

Program 2: Connected and Creative – technology as an enabler for young people who are vulnerable – is led by Dr Amanda Third, School of Humanities and Languages/Centre for Cultural Research. Professor Bob Hodge, CCR, is the UWS representative on the CRC’s Scientific Leadership Council.

**Habit, Governance and the Social Workshop group**

CCR hosted a two-day workshop on ‘Habit, Governance, and the Social’ over 5-6 August 2010. The workshop was organised in collaboration with the UK’s Economic and Social Research Council’s Centre for Research on Socio-cultural Change at the Open University and the Institute for the History of the Production of Knowledge at New York University. The workshop was concerned with the role that habit has played as a mechanism for bringing about social change by changing how individuals and social groups behave. A number of developments have placed habit at the centre of debates addressing these questions. A concern with habit, however, has a much longer history. Philosophers in the British empirical tradition – David Hume and John Locke, for example – had a lot to say about habit. So did Immanuel Kant in his negative account of habit as animal-like, unthinking routine conduct that served as a counterfoil to the role of culture in producing human freedom.

Post-Darwinian developments in the life sciences led to a range of new accounts of habit as mechanism of learning via repetition that was rooted the brain or nervous system. These determinist accounts were both built on and countered by thinkers like Henri Bergson and the American pragmatist John Dewey who, in their different ways, offered a more positive account of habit as a mechanism which helped to develop the capacity for individuals to be free and creative. At roughly the same time, habit became an important topic in the early development of sociology. It played an important part in Emile Durkheim’s account of the merits of habit in the development of the child’s moral capacities. However, it fell out of favour as a topic in sociology when, in the early twentieth century, the concept was reinterpreted under the influence of the reductive formulations of behaviourist psychology. Over the last ten years or so, however, the topic of habit has acquired a new significance in contemporary social, political, cultural and philosophical thought. There have been a number of reasons for this. Critical work on the liberal political tradition has identified how habit has been used as a coercive mechanism for governing colonised peoples, children, and the members of subordinate classes.

Habit has also assumed a renewed significance in contemporary debates about pedagogy, drawing on Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of habitus. Gilles Deleuze accords habit a key role in his account of the processes of becoming while Bruno Latour’s work has prompted a revival of interest in the work of Gabriel Tarde, particularly his account of the roles of suggestion, imitation, habit and repetition in the dynamics of social life. There has also been a renewed interest in the work of Dewey and the pragmatists prompted by contemporary problems of government in which questions concerning the regulation of habits loom large: in connection with the disposal of waste, for example, the environmental threats posed by global warming. These, then, are the topics that the workshop addressed. Questions concerning the role of habit in early forms of modern liberal government were engaged with by Mary Poovey from NYU and Francis Dodsworth from the Open University. Clare Carlisle from the University of Liverpool and Simon Lumsden from UNSW presented papers addressing different aspects of the ways in which habit has functioned as a mechanism for shaping life in Western philosophical and theological traditions. CCR’s Megan Watkins, Nick Crossley from the University of Manchester, and Ghassan Hage from the University of Melbourne were concerned with the limits and possibilities of Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, while Shannon Sullivan from the University of Pennsylvania and CCR’s Greg Noble were concerned with the habits of racialised and cosmopolitan forms of conduct respectively. Barry Hindess from ANU and CCR’s Tony Bennett probed the uses of habit in practices of colonial governance. The final panel consisted in presentations from Elizabeth Grosz from Rutgers, Melanie White from UNSW and Lisa Blackman from Goldsmiths College, the University of London, addressing different aspects of the role of habit in the work of Henri Bergson, Gabriel Tarde, Emile and early twentieth-century social psychology. A proposal is under development to publish a selection of the papers in a special issue of the journal *Body & Society*. Submitted by Professor Tony Bennett.
Shanghai Expo: the world in a city

In late June a team of nine researchers travelled to China for a group fieldwork venture at the Shanghai Expo. In total 12 members of CCR are involved in the project, examining this huge event from a range of angles. The Expo provides an intriguing point of focus for addressing questions of urban sustainability, a rising China, the cultural politics of nations, civic governance, as well as the possibilities and limitations of international, cross-cultural forums for solving planetary challenges. The expo was the largest world fair ever to be held, attracting a staggering 450,000 people per day. With temperatures hovering around 37°C, fieldwork was intense and sweaty. We were not a pleasant group to meet on the underground. But a team of three, Sally and Rob Leggo, and Juan Salazar persevered to capture more than 25 hours of video footage, for their mini-doc series on the Expo. The rest of us were running round frantically snapping pictures of text, jumping queues, stamping passports, making notes and sharing observations.

In bringing together a like-minded group of CCR researchers, the project has several interconnecting elements. An edited collection is now at the proposal stage, and video-documentaries, photographic essays, and a public event are all in the works.

On Friday 29th October 2010, a workshop was held in CCR, which brought together everyone working on the project for a day of presentations. The day provided an excellent opportunity for discussions to be continued and critiqued, and was a significant step forward in the production of an edited volume. Juan Salazar also presented draft versions of his video montages. Publishers for the volume are now being contacted. Submitted by Dr Tim Winter

Metaphors, Models and Financial Crises

As we struggle to come terms with the financial crisis that has wracked the global economy since 2007 and, in the process made millions homeless, unemployed or destitute, scholars from across the social sciences and humanities have drawn on their different toolkits to throw what light they can on these events. On 4 August, in a public lecture hosted by the Art Gallery of New South Wales and organised by CCR and UWS’s Writing and Society Program, Professor Mary Poovey, the Director of the Institute for the History of the Production of Knowledge at New York University, presented a unique insight into our current difficulties by placing them in a longer history of liberal economic, social and social thought.

In speaking to her title, Stories We Tell about Financial Markets: From Victorian Metaphors to Modern Financial Models, Professor Poovey told a full house packed into the Gallery’s Centenary Auditorium that there are two kinds of stories that liberalism has told about the operation of markets. But they are stories that pull in different directions. One asserts that, no matter what individuals do, the financial market as a whole will achieve equilibrium; the other assumes that individuals have agency and can operate freely within complex systems, including the market. In nineteenth-century political economy, Poovey argued, the relations between these were conceptualized loosely in terms of an organic metaphor of the ‘social body’ which mediated the relations between individuals and the larger wholes of which they formed a part. In the twentieth century, and particularly over the period since the 1939-1945 war, various forms of financial modeling have taken on this role. They have done so, however, with the significant difference that such models have shaped the methods financiers and governments have used to simulate the economy by affecting how financial markets work. In the autumn of 2007, because such models had taken on a life of their own—and because they diverged so widely from what they claimed to represent—the world was pushed to the brink of financial ruin. By placing models use for the portfolio management of derivatives in a longer historical perspective, Professor Poovey showed how the sub-prime mortgage crisis had it roots in a much broader range of financial instruments and modeling techniques which, if not addressed through root-and-branch reforms, will, she argued, continue to engender major financial crises.

Submitted by Professor Tony Bennett

The Inaugural Fay Gale Lecture

Professor Kay Anderson Delivering the Inaugural Fay Gale Lecture - March 10, 2010

On 10 March 2010, Professor Kay Anderson presented the Fay Gale Lecture sponsored by the Academy of the Social Sciences in honour of its former president, Professor Gale, who passed away in 2008. As a teacher and supervisor of Kay at Adelaide University, as well as co-author of Inventing Places (1992) and mentor, it was very fitting that Kay present this inaugural lecture. In front of a well-attended audience, proceedings were opened by the Vice Chancellor, Professor Janice Reid, who spoke of Kay’s pioneering influence as a female university administrator and advocate of indigenous and women’s affairs. After being introduced by Professor Kathie Gibson of the Centre for Citizenship and Public Policy, UWS, Kay presented her paper, A Provocation from the Periphery: Rethinking ‘The Human’ in Memory of Fay Gale, AO. The talk wove together a tribute to Fay, while simultaneously offering an overview of Kay’s current research focus and Fay’s enduring influence on her work. In the following months Kay also presented the lecture at The University of Adelaide and The Australian Centre for Cultural Environmental Research at The University of Wollongong.

Maurizio Lazzarato and Angela Melitopoulos - Workshop & Dialogue

In early July 2010 CCR, Artspace and the Centre for Contemporary Art and Politics (UNSW) were pleased to host activities with Maurizio Lazzarato, a sociologist and philosopher who lives and works in Paris, and Angela Melitopoulos, a time-based artist whose work focuses on duration and mnemonic micro-processes in documentation.

Her work has been shown in many international video and film festivals, exhibitions and museums. Included was a workshop (Assemblages: On Subjectivity and Animism) which explored the forms of collective expression and political experimentation possible in a capitalist world whose primary production is that of subjectivity. Assemblages was a three channel video installation about Felix Guattari. Participants viewed key sections of the production and examined the pros and cons of approaching an assemblage that places humans in relation with concepts of animals, machines and other things.

(Left) Shanghai Expo. (Above) Attendees at CCR’s Expo Workshop held 29th October 2010

Professor Mary Poovey
The Art of Engagement Symposium

Researchers Elaine Lally, Ien Ang and Kay Anderson from the Centre for Cultural Research at the University of Western Sydney received funding from the Australian Research Council’s Linkage Projects scheme in 2006 to conduct research on the C3West initiative. The Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Casula Powerhouse and Penrith Performing and Visual Arts are partners in the Linkage grant and, with Campbelltown Arts Centre, the organisations behind C3West. C3West is a long term partnership which has explored and delivered a range of projects in Western Sydney and Goulburn for artists to extend their practice beyond the gallery. Each C3West project is developed through a unique collaborative process, bringing together businesses, artists, and communities.

The Art of Engagement Symposium, one of the outcomes of the ARC project, was held on 21 October 2009. Over 100 individuals from Australian universities, art colleges, councils, galleries, and community organisations gathered in the Harbour Terrace room on the sixth floor of the MCA. The event was convened by CCR, with assistance from the MCA and C3West. The symposium took C3West as the starting point for a dialogue about contemporary art and its new modes of engagement, considering other kinds of innovative partnerships between contemporary artists, communities and corporate organisations as well.

Keynote speakers included Sylvie Blocher from the collaborative art and social action group Campement Urbain, who has worked with Penrith Panthers as part of C3West; Michael Knichman, the Executive Director of the US / Mexico collaborative art project inSite; and Karin Becker, Professor of Media and Communication Studies at Stockholm University.

In other sessions, The Work of Engagement panel explored C3West through the perspective of a C3West artist, cultural partner, corporate partner and a council director. The panel Implications and Prospects situated C3West in a wider context, with representatives from academia, the cultural sector and the Australia Council offering their reflections at the conclusion of proceedings. Elaine Lally, formerly Assistant Director of CCR but now Associate Professor in Creative Practices at the University of Technology, Sydney, presented on behalf of the Art of Engagement team, which also includes Research Associate Phillip Mar and Research Assistant Michelle Kelly.

In his presentation, the Australia Council’s Director of Community Partnerships, Frank Panucci, suggested the importance of the research team’s function “to understand what competencies and skills and experience … individual players have brought to bear on [each] particular project.”

The Art of Engagement Symposium was an important realisation of the necessary role that research plays in documenting and critically reflecting on experimental cultural projects such as C3West. The event was a great success, with much positive feedback reported by C3West cultural partners, and attendees describing the day as “enormously interesting,” “inspiring,” and “one of the best symposiums I have ever been to.”

The Art of Engagement, an edited collection which discusses the C3West initiative in the context of engaged contemporary art practice, is scheduled for publication by UWA Publishing in 2011.

Further information on C3West is available at http://www.c3west.com.au. Submitted by Michelle Kelly

CCR’s Expo Day

On Friday 13th August 2010 CCR held its latest edition of the CCR Expo day. With 17 sessions held on the day and approximately forty people coming and going it was an exciting day. Thanks to all those who presented, the sessions were interesting and thought-provoking with several presentations this year by HDRs which allowed others in the Centre to hear about their topics and progress. As always, the fun element to the day was enjoyed by all, especially the challenges of the ‘Know your neighbour’ competition.

A Discussion of Material Powers

In early March 2010, a workshop on Material Powers was held at CCR and was led by CCR’s Professor Tony Bennett and visiting Professor Patrick Joyce (Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Manchester in the UK, as well as being a Visiting Professor at LSE in the UK). The workshop explored new understandings of how power is made up and exercised by examining the role material infrastructures play in; processes through which conduct is shaped and governed; the organisation of state power; and the role of material cultural practices in the organisation of colonial forms of governance.

Indian Students, Global Mobilities and Intercultural Relations

On 17th September 2009 CCR organised a forum on the UWS Parramatta Campus that focused on the wider contextual dynamics that influence the presence of Indian students in Australia. Changing patterns of Indian skilled migration in the global and national contexts was discussed. Relations between international students and established ethnic communities in Western Sydney were also considered. Speakers included Professor Ien Ang (Distinguished Professor, CCR ); Dr Parvati Raghuram (School of Social Sciences and Open Space Research Group, Open University UK) and Dr Selvaraj Velayutham (Centre for Research on Social Inclusion, Macquarie University and CCR PhD graduate). Associate Professor Brett Neilson, Director of CCR published a paper related to these issues in the journal Subjectivity (2009) 29, 425-444 titled “The world seen from a taxi: Students-migrants-workers in the global multiplication of labour”.

For details see http://www.palgrave-journals.com/sub/journal/v29/n1/abs/sub200923a.html
Workshop Asks: Are We All Cultural Workers Now?

Recent debates have identified precarious labour as a key feature of contemporary capitalism. Precarity has had a corrosive effect on vocational identities and aspirations, but its effects have extended well beyond working lives to disrupt familial and friendship bonds. Social movements have emerged to contest insecurities around labour and livelihood, and the notion of precarity has emerged as a key analytical concept for social and cultural theory.

Organised by Associate Professor Brett Neilson and Professor David Rowe, the workshop, Are We All Cultural Workers Now? Getting By in Precarious Times, brought together a range of contributors including labour activists, cultural workers and academic researchers from various fields (such as law, cultural and urban studies) to interrogate the changing relations between labour and culture. This workshop included, but moved beyond, the focus on cultural labour to embrace other fields – from service employment through to high-end work in the financial sector. Precarity allows capital to colonise the domestic and personal spheres, to conscript affective and creative practices, and to blur the boundaries between productive and reproductive labour, life and work. Exploring these and other issues, the workshop asked how and why precarity has emerged as a concept that is vital to understanding contemporary culture.

Transnational Professionals – between London and Sydney

CCR’s Associate Professor Greg Noble is working with colleagues in the UK on a proposed study of professionals in Sydney and London. The study will entail two funding proposals, one based in London submitted to the UK Economic and Social Research Council and the other based in Sydney submitted to the Australian Research Council in 2011. Colleagues are Professor John Eade (Universities of Surrey and Roehampton) and Alan Latham (University College London). The project will last 24 months and will involve both an analysis of quantitative data and semi-structured, face-to-face interviews. The intention is to interview 60 respondents in both cities, who will be contacted through the companies they work for. The companies will be selected from the following sectors – finance, law, engineering, mineral extraction, information technology, media and the cultural industry, tourism and hospitality. It may be possible in some cases to interview people who started in one city but ended up in the other city during the project, and others who have other patterns of professional mobility. The project brings together several key areas: burgeoning interests in transnationalism and patterns of global mobility, formations of diasporic, expat and professional or work-based communities, experiences of mobility, settlement, integration and exclusion.

Submitted by Associate Professor Greg Noble

Research Impact

Megan Watkins and Greg Noble were invited to present an account of their research findings from the ARC Linkage Project, Discipline and Diversity: Cultural Practices and Dispositions to Learning at the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) Culture Language and Learning Forum on October 27, 2010. The presentation, accompanied by one other from the Manager of the DET Data Analysis and Collection Unit, provided a qualitative perspective on the differential performance of LBOTE students in NSW. The Forum was attended by Michael Coutts-Trotter, the Director General of DET, plus a number of representatives from National and State education and associated agencies, such as the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, NSW Board of Studies, NSW Treasury Department, Ministry of Education.

Critical accounts of regionalism always seem to end up as debates about modernity. Defined sometimes in terms of time and at others in terms of social or political form, modernity is perhaps too general a concept. Without doubt it has enabling effects which move the discussion of regionalism beyond the polarising bind of universalism and particularism. Yet it can also inhibit discussion by swinging the debate away from historical detail and toward schematic simplifications of interactions between civilizations or cultures. It is by now widely recognised that modernity is a global phenomenon and not merely the result of the upheavals, industrialisation, revolutions and enlightenments that began to occur in Europe over five centuries ago. At the very least there is acceptance that modernity must reckon with the history of European colonialism and that the two way traffic between metropolis and colony was central to its emergence. More forcefully than this, the thesis of alternative or multiple modernities posits a plurality of modernities throughout the world. Each arises under different circumstances and interacts with the others, but nonetheless displays its own internal contradictions... A copy of this paper What’s Wrong with the Alternative Modernities Thesis be accessed at http://transitlabour.asia/blogs/whats-wrong-alternative-modernities

Visit the project web site at: http://transitlabour.asia/about/.

Precarious Citizenship: Workshop for a Comparative Media Ethnography

This invitation-only workshop was funded by Royal Holloway, University of London, and was in association with the ESRC Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change (CRESC) and the Centre for Cultural Research (CCR). The purpose was to share and analyse data, to generate a comparative understanding of experiences of citizenship among audiences/citizens in the UK and Australia in a post-9/11 context of a retreat of multiculturalism. Attendees included researchers from Royal Holloway – University of London, CCR, UTS, Swinburne Institute for Social Research, Swinburne University of Technology, University of Melbourne in addition to SBS and Entertainment Insights.

CCR’s Director Brett Neilson presents at the Flying University of the Transnational Humanities Research Centre for Comparative History and Culture at Hanyang University in June 2010

Are We All Cultural Workers Now? Workshop

Precarious Citizenship Media Workshop Group – 30 Nov and December 1, 2009 - held at the Female Orphan School Gallery, UWS, Parramatta.
HDR Student Highlights

CCR Hosts Postgraduate and ECR Next Generation Conference in Cultural Research

This two day conference was held on 20th and 21st of September 2010. Attendees were made up of a dynamic group of around fifty postgraduate and early career researchers from across Australia and New Zealand. Titled, The Next Generation of Cultural Research Conference, the conference presentations covered broad-ranging topics but all shared a common theme: exploring what it means to be a cultural researcher, and looking at how people from different academic backgrounds see the nature and challenges of conducting cultural research in the 21st century.

The first morning had a keynote address from CCR Professor, Tony Bennett (who presented a paper on The shuffle of things and the distribution of agency. This was followed by a full day of presentations by postgraduate and early career researcher participants – four parallel panels ran in each time slot allowing a wide range of topics to be covered.

On the second morning, a dynamic workshop was held exploring how cultural researchers can generate genuine solutions to social and cultural problems through forging accessible, transparent and practicable forms of cultural understanding. The conference was supported by the Cultural Studies Association of Australasia (CSAA), Centre for Cultural Research (CCR), University of Western Sydney (UWS), Cultural Research Network (CRN) and the ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Innovation and Industries.

CCR HDRs Attend the Flying University of Transnational Humanities in South Korea

Jacqui Willis, Bettina Rösler and Kearrin Sims attended the Flying University of Transnational Humanities in Seoul (June 11-16, 2010). The Flying University of Transnational Humanities (FUTH) is an annual summer school and year-round online forum for researchers and graduate student participants – four parallel panels ran in each time slot allowing a wide range of topics to be covered.

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HDRs at Crossroads Hong Kong

Pariece Nelligan and Louise Ryan attended and presented at the 8th Crossroads in Cultural Studies Conference in Hong Kong (June 17-21, 2010). Hosted by Lingnan University and organized by its Department of Cultural Studies and Kwan Fong Cultural Research and Development Programme, this is the first Crossroads Conference to be held in East Asia. Started in 1996 in Tampere, Finland, the Crossroads Conferences were to fill what was felt to be a gap in the international cultural studies community. Since then it has become one of the most important international conferences in cultural studies. Scholars from all five continents get together to exchange their insights as well as get in touch with different cultures. Pariece’s paper was titled *Works of Art: Narratives of Aspiration and the Identity Formation of Creative Workers*, while Louise presented *Building Bridges: The Arts of Islam Exhibition, Nasser Khalili Collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia, 2007*.

HDR Workshops Continue at CCR

CCR continues to develop its HDR program. In 2010, a series of HDR Workshops based around particular CCR research themes were introduced for HDR candidates. These Workshops provide HDR candidates with a grounding in different facets of cultural research and have been set up to complement existing Postgraduate Study Days. Organised by CCR HDR Coordinator, Dr Megan Watkins in conjunction with senior CCR researchers, these Postgraduate Study Days and Workshops are aimed at providing HDR candidates with different forms of research training and guidance. Different components of the Study Days include:

- A session where an invited academic speaks on different facets of the HDR experience, such as, ‘writing for publication’ or ‘integrating theory’.
- Postgraduate Stepping Stone Seminars, where HDR candidates present a 20-30 minute paper on their in-progress work as part of their preparation for a formal seminar, Confirmation of Candidature or conference. The Stepping Stone seminars thus offer a semi-formal setting in which HDR candidates can practise their presentations, and receive valuable feedback, prior to the formal event.
- A mentoring session with a senior CCR academic. These mentoring sessions are ‘one on one’ with academics outside a student’s supervisory panel and offer an opportunity to discuss other issues being experienced during a candidature such as ‘work/life balance’ and ‘life after the thesis’.

Where possible, the Postgraduate Study Days and Workshops have been scheduled to coincide with CCR Seminars so that candidates are able to make best use of coming out to the CCR, as well as making the day as informative and as stimulating as possible.

CCR Postgrad Achievements and Presentations

Willem Paling, a PhD candidate who recently transferred to CCR, has completed an intense and productive fieldwork trip in Phnom Penh. Willem is conducting research on the modernisation and development of Phnom Penh over the last decade, a period in which the rate of Cambodia’s economic growth was second-only to China within Asia. Willem has spent 2 months in Phnom Penh gathering data for his PhD by way of interviews, photography and ‘friending’ Phnom Penh’s more tech-savvy residents on FaceBook. Most notably, he was recently able to ‘friend’ Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, who has recently strengthened his internet presence and established accounts on Facebook and Twitter.

Alejandra Canales, a DCA candidate working on a documentary film about water, has published a previous work in the 4th issue of the online publication Extensions from York University: http://www.yorku.ca/extension/issue4/works/alejandracanales/alejandracanales.php

In the near future Alejandra will launch the online platform of the project called http://www.solildiquidgash2o.net.au/

Phillip Wadds has presented at The Australian and New Zealand Critical Criminology Conference at Sydney University which was held on 1-2 July 2010. His paper was titled: Securing Nightlife: Press depictions of public and private police in the night-time economy. He has also just submitted this paper for the refereed conference proceedings – outcome pending. He then went overseas to present at The British Society of Criminology conference that was held at Leicester University in the UK on 10-14 July.

Louise Ryan, presented at the Crossroads Conference in June in Hong Kong and at The Arts in Society Conference in July at Sydney University and is publishing a paper in the Arts in Society Journal in their next issue. She also presented at the Next Generation of Cultural Research conference in September.


Deborah Ruiz Wall had a publication in Platform JMC: “Development, Cultural Maintenance and Traditional Owners: The LNG Development Proposal at James Price Point in the Kimberley”.

Welcome to our new HDR Liaison Officers – Bettina Rösler and Louise Ryan

In late 2010 Bettina Rösler and Louise Ryan came on board as postgraduate liaison officers for the CCR. They will be working together over the coming months to ensure an engaging program is in place for our HDR students in 2011.
Recent Graduates

Dr Justine Humphry graduated in April. Her thesis is titled *I, Office: Configuring Person and Place in Everyday Office Computing*.

Dr Sarah James graduated in April. Her thesis is titled *Re-Visioning Sydney from the Fringe: Productive Diversities for a 21st Century City*.

Dr Reena Dobson graduated in September. Her thesis is titled "The most Cosmopolitan Island under the Sun"? Negotiating Ethnicity and Nationhood in Everyday Mauritius.

Dr Mat Wolnicki graduated in April. His thesis is titled *Improving the Contribution of Protected Areas to Quality of Life in Rural and Regional Communities*.

Dr Jioji Ravulo graduated in September. His thesis is titled *The Development of Anti-Social Behaviour in Pacific Youth*. Jioji Ravulo was the first CCR Student to graduate with a Doctor of Cultural Research (DCR). The DCR provides extended and advanced training in professional fields where projects and investigations are more applied in nature and more obviously oriented to professional practice. It is designed to equip candidates to be critical consumers of research in a professional setting.

Postgraduate Profiles

Louise Ryan's research explores the complexities of promoting cross-cultural understanding in a display of Islamic artefacts in Sydney in 2007, highlighting the intensity and prevalence of Islamophobia in Australia which racializes Western Muslims and reinforces the East/West divide affecting notions of nation, Islamic identity and citizenship.

David Spillman’s DCR research is tentatively titled “Exploring transformative possibilities in the intercultural spaces of Indigenous education”. Dave is interested in exploring the limiting effect of dominant discourses in Indigenous education and the transformative potential of a particular approach to collaborative and cultural competence and of creating “third spaces of not-knowing” in intercultural work.

Kearrin Sims’ PhD project title is Beyond the nation-state: Development, Regionalism and ethnicity in the Lao Peoples Democratic Republic, Laos’ position as a landlocked country has played a significant role in making it both the poorest and most ethnically diverse country in mainland Southeast Asia. Kearrin is interested in exploring development, modernity, regionalism and globalisation in the Lao PDR.

Bettina Rosler is looking at Asialink’s artist residency program and how exchange programs might be used as instruments of cultural diplomacy, exploring their potential for creating intercultural dialogue and notions of cultural translation. She started her PhD at CCR in March 2010 and the working title of her thesis is "Australia’s Cultural Diplomacy in Asia in the form of Government-funded Artist Exchanges – The Case of Asialink’s Arts Residency Program".
New Books by CCR Members


Willard McCarty and Digital Cultural Research at CCR

Professor Willard McCarty arrived mid-winter from mid-summery England to begin his first three-month academic sojourn at CCR in digital cultural research. His migratory pattern doesn’t promise Professor Meaghan Morris’s “almost endless summer” (Research.Culture 4) but, he thinks it a pleasant change from the London terraced living that is every bit as colourful, though not as well scripted, as East Enders would suggest. The U.K. (where he has been since 1996) is his third country of residence after twenty years spent in Toronto, Canada, and all the years before that in the United States.

This is not Professor McCarty’s first time in Australia. He has lectured in Melbourne, Sydney and Newcastle on several occasions since 2001 and travelled extensively in the outback, whose flora, fauna and terra he finds endlessly fascinating – “magical”, he says. Now he welcomes the chance to live as an ordinary Sydneysider, commuter, ferry-rider, shopper, apartment dweller and wanderer in the Botanical Gardens.

At CCR Professor McCarty’s project is to foster digital cultural research, which he takes to mean both the digitally aided study of cultural phenomena and the study of digital cultures. He thinks that the potential which these tools and methods bring to the work of CCR is enormous, especially as researchers get involved with crafting digital objects themselves and thinking with (or even within) the medium.

But many years of exposure to the hype which afflicts computing and hides its history has made him critical and cautious. Thus his distinction between two kinds of digital product: the “knowledge jukebox”, which gives answers to queries, and the immersive environment, which provides new means of exploring, constructing and engaging with the world imaginatively. He wants end-users to become end-makers.

Professor McCarty admits that most of the time he is thinking in the future tense, that ideas of what can be grip him more than the things we have. He is fond of citing the late historian of science, Michael S. Mahoney’s observation, that we should think and speak of computing(s), one and many, since the design on which our machinery is based is an indefinitely extensible scheme for as many computings as we are capable of imagining. This is why, he argues, it is so important for cultural researchers to be involved, again not as end-users of something produced for us but as end-makers, or co-makers of new computings. The problem which preoccupies him most of all is how to foster this imaginative making.

Most people are interested in digital tools and methods instrumentally, as means of getting something done which lies, at least in the beginning, outside the digital realm. Professor McCarty, who holds similar interests, asks only that before you pick up the tool you consider quite carefully what sort of a tool it is – in many respects like none other we have ever had.

Professor McCarty’s current research seems far away from the concerns of cultural research, but it is, he says, quite closely related. He is writing a history of literary computing from its beginnings in the late 1940s to the onset of the Web. This history is centred on the question of why (as practitioners habitually complained, and still complain) mainstream literary scholarship remained largely unaffected by their work despite the clear promise of great benefits for scholarship. Historically digital tools and methods were hugely successful elsewhere, and even in those areas which provoked the greatest scepticism, such as artificial intelligence, researchers did not lose faith. From the late 1950s groups of artists and engineers picked up and worked with the new technology enthusiastically, even though it was far less friendly or capable than what we now enjoy.

He asks, what would literary practitioners have known about successes in the sciences and arts, e.g. from the popular press, neighbours, colleagues? Why did they not investigate? Asking such questions has driven him to enlarge the scope of his enquiry to include the social as well as theoretical and technological contexts in which literary practitioners were then working. Hence, his has become a cultural history. It is a Foucauldian “history of the present” in that its purpose is to help discern the most promising way ahead. And in this way ahead, he says, literary computing shares much common ground with digital cultural research.

Professor McCarty’s recently released volume on digital research

For more about Professor McCarty’s research, see http://uws.edu.au/CCR/people/researchers
Call for Papers

A good deal of economic, social, cultural and political analysis in the antipodes has drawn on and engaged critically with the work of Pierre Bourdieu in order to adapt it to the particularities of Australian and New Zealand histories and conditions. There have been significant applications of Bourdieu’s field theory to the organisation of antipodean literary, musical, sports and media fields. The research that informed Distinction has been replicated in a national study of the relations between the practices of cultural consumption and cultural capital in contemporary Australia. Bourdieu’s general categories have been revised and extended to address the cultural capital holdings of different ethnic groups in relation to the governmental spaces of Australia and New Zealand, and to a range of multicultural practices and programs in the two countries. Bourdieu’s work on the logic of art fields has informed analyses of the place of Aboriginal and Maori art within the Australian and New Zealand art fields. Significant contributions have also been made to the operations of cultural capital in the relations between schools, universities and the occupational class structures of the two countries.

To date, however, no attempt has been made to draw these different strands of inquiry together to identify the specific qualities of antipodean economic, social, cultural and political fields or the respects in which analysis of these requires significant revisions of Bourdieu’s central theories and concepts. This conference will address the deficit by considering the specific theoretical and empirical considerations that have to be taken into account in order to apply, critique, and revise Bourdieu’s perspectives in the southern hemisphere.

Keynote Speakers

Jane Kenway, Professor of Education, Monash University
High status schools, trans-national capitals and global elite formations

Conal McCarthy, Museum and Heritage Studies, Victoria University of Wellington
The rules of (Māori) art: Museums, visitors and indigenous culture in the field of New Zealand art

Fred Myers, Silver Professor of Anthropology, New York University
Flows of Culture, National Value, and Distinction: Papunya Tula Art in America

Paper and Panel Proposals

Proposals for papers and panels addressing the application of Bourdieusian concepts and categories to any aspect of the economic, socio-cultural and political fields of Australia and New Zealand are invited. Themes of specific interest include: Cultural capital and social divisions in postcolonial contexts; Cultural fields and colonial histories; The dynamics of postcolonial fields; Culture, nation, and ethnicity; Capital, field, habitus: applications and revisions; National fields in transnational perspectives.

• Individual paper proposals (200 words)
• Panel proposals (200 words each)

All proposals should be sent to Reena Dobson — r.dobson@uws.edu.au by 28 February 2011.

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This conference is jointly organised by the Centre for Cultural Research (CCR) at the University of Western Sydney, the School of Culture and Communication and the Department of Anthropology, the University of Melbourne.
The humanities and social sciences today struggle to come to terms with the explosion of knowledge in increasingly complex, diverse and networked societies. Which forms of knowledge work best for managing, challenging or engaging with rapid social change? Do new kinds of information play an increasing role in economic and social management? Do these changes raise questions about what ‘knowledge’ is, or is to become? What are the new rules for engagement between academic and other knowledge practices and institutions?

This conference will bring together theorists and practitioners from a range of backgrounds and knowledge institutions to debate these questions in relation to the following themes:

**Shifting knowledge maps.** Discipline boundaries are increasingly permeable within the humanities and social sciences and across these and the natural and physical sciences. Yet it often proves difficult to connect these new knowledge maps both within academia and across sectors (university/government; public/private; NGO/university/government, etc.). Knowledge engagement is more problematic, just as it is becoming more important and desirable. How are these problems best addressed?

**Knowledge and globalisation.** Processes of globalisation undermine the relevance of purely national knowledge frameworks, while the hegemony of Western knowledge systems is challenged on many fronts: the increasing influence of Asia; the resurgent interest in indigenous and community knowledges; and the competing perspectives of multiple modernities. How can the relations between these multiple knowledge practices best be engaged with?

**A (Post)humanities?** The nature/culture dualism is under challenge from a diverse range of knowledges (ecological, post-rational, feminist, animal studies, etc.). These interventions engage the global predicament presented by climate change, blurring the boundaries between natural and social environments, while medical and nano technologies radically restructure our sense of the boundaries and constituents of personhood. How can we now best understand our entanglements with the more-than-human?

**Digital knowledge practices.** New electronic and digital technologies are rapidly changing the mechanisms and speeds of knowledge flows with profound consequences for intellectual property and the practices of knowledge institutions, while also enabling new ways of knowing that significantly challenge older relations of knowledge production. How can our practices respond to these new knowledge possibilities?

**Knowledge and governance.** New kinds of data – quantitative and qualitative – and methods and techniques of visualisation play an increasingly important role in economic and social management, while science/arts divisions are undermined by new kinds of art/science practice. Knowledge institutions and technologies play new roles in processes of social and cultural change; e.g. archives, museums, science centres, statistical and other data banks. In what ways do these new knowledge practices actively intervene and shape social life?

**Keynote Speakers**

Dawn Casey, Director, Powerhouse Museum; Chair, Indigenous Business Australia.
Museums, Conflicting Cultures and the Politics of Knowing.

Dipesh Chakrabarty, Lawrence A. Kimpton Distinguished Service Professor of History, South Asian Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago.
The Human after Climate Change.

Penny Harvey, Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Manchester; a Director in the ESRC Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change,
Surface Dramas, Knowledge Gaps and Scalar Shifts: Infrastructural Engineering in Sacred Spaces.

Bruno Latour, Scientific Director, Professor and Vice President for Research, Sciences-Po.
Social Theory, Tarde, and the Web [via videolink].

Nikolas Rose, James Martin White Professor of Sociology, London School of Economics; Director, BIOS Centre for the Study of Bioscience, Biomedicine, Biotechnology and Society.
The Human Sciences in the Century of Biology.

**Paper and Panel Proposals**

Paper and panel proposals addressing the conference themes are invited. Proposals spanning one or more themes are especially welcome.

- Individual paper proposals (200-300 words)
- Panel proposals (200 words for the panel concept and 200-300 words on each panel paper)

Please submit your abstract at the following URL: https://www.conferenceonline.com/index.cfm?page=booking&object=abstract&forceHB=1&id=203

The deadline for abstract submissions is 31 May 2011.

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