

## Call for Papers:

### **Negative Cosmopolitanisms: Abjection, Power, and Biopolitics** **University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada, 11-13 October 2012**

Organizers: Terri Tomsy (University of Alberta), Eddy Kent (University of Alberta), Imre Szeman (University of Alberta)

#### Keynote Speakers:

Timothy Brennan (University of Minnesota)

Pheng Cheah (University of California, Berkeley)

Sneja Gunew (University of British Columbia)

Peter Nyers (McMaster University)

This interdisciplinary conference seeks to explore the array of *negative cosmopolitanisms* operating today—all those ways in which cosmopolitan subjects are still stigmatized, disempowered, excluded, and denied. Against the superficial liberal celebration of cosmopolitan diversity in the world today, negative cosmopolitanism instead reveals experiences of rupture, exile, oppression, and imperialism. The conference will bring researchers together to explore the histories and constitution of cosmopolitanism past and present, with the aim of better understanding the complex experience of power today.

Though cosmopolitanism is often thought of as a positive form of “world citizenship”, this conference is interested in the way cosmopolitanism can signify disenfranchisement. Globalization’s economic asymmetries and the biopolitical management of modern states create cosmopolitan abjections: in the circulation of outsourced prisoners, with the deportation of sick migrants, in the extraordinary rendition of enemy combatants, with the worldwide flows of migrant and trafficked workers, and so on. The conference will engage the invisible presence of this “negative cosmopolitanism” for the Western middle-class and its liberal pundits. It will open up considerations of negative cosmopolitanism, exploring ideas around an imperial cosmopolis, slum or ghetto cosmopolitanisms, finance capitalism, piracy as it pertains both to material and intellectual property, and so on.

Despite its long history, the status of the negative cosmopolitan assumes a new importance in the aftermath of globalization, not only within discourses about universal human rights but also in the infrastructures built to shuttle people, things, and ideas around the world. We therefore aim to understand the role of the nation-state in refuting or resolving this problematic subjectivity. But we must also account for the influence of internationalism, workers’ unions, women’s movements, NGOs, and religious organizations. Some of this theorizing is obviously not new, but it needs to be rearticulated in a context in which idealistic misconceptions of cosmopolitanism still dominate.

We invite theoretical and historical contributions to these and related topics. Themes you may wish to consider include (but are not limited to):

\*The history and/or representations of cosmopolitanism

\*Slum- or ghetto-based cosmopolitanisms

\*Imperial cosmopolitanism (e.g. the military complex, the War on Terror)

- \*Labor and Internationalism
- \*Community or the Commons
- \*Piracy
- \*Trafficking, dislocation, border-crossing
- \*State sovereignty/state vulnerability/ the penal state
- \*Communication and information technologies, new media
- \*Biopolitics
- \*Religious movements
- \*Feminism

Proposals shall consist of an abstract of 350-500 words and a one-page CV. Please send your applications to Dr. Terri Tomsy <tomsy@ualberta.ca> by 21 October 2011.