

CENTRE FOR CULTURE, IDENTITY AND EDUCATION (CCIE) presents

Visceral Cosmopolitanism:

From Alterity to Mere Difference

Mica Nava will discuss some of the conceptual and historical issues raised in her book, *Visceral Cosmopolitanism: Gender, Culture and the Normalisation of Difference*. This focuses mainly on the UK twentieth-century metropolitan experience and, as the title suggests, in contrast to most theoretical work on cosmopolitanism, is concerned not with universal rights or the 'intellectual and aesthetic openness' and 'detachment' of the global traveller, but with cosmopolitanism as a structure of feeling and a transgenerational habitus – as an empathetic, inclusive and sometimes eroticised range of feelings and attitudes towards others, otherness and the foreign – which finds expression in vernacular and domestic forms as well as in commerce, social science and the arts. The talk will track changes in this cosmopolitan mood from a counterculture of modernity a century ago to part of ordinary quotidian life today – hence the shift from alterity to mere difference. In doing so, it will draw attention to the crucial part played by women in the historical formation of the present. Similarly it will highlight the unexpected influence of twentieth-century British class formation on the relative diminution in the significance of epidermal difference in contemporary urban culture. All these factors are relevant for our understanding of anti-racism and cosmopolitanism in the context of major UK cities today. On the whole this type of approach has been absent from critical and historical work on the topic.

a place of mind



Co-sponsors: Centre for Cross-Faculty Inquiry in Education (CCFI) and the Centre for the Study of the Internationalization of Curriculum Studies (CSICS)

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Mica Nava's publications include *Changing Cultures: Feminism, Youth and Consumerism* (Sage 1992); *Modern Times: Reflections on a Century of English Modernity* (Routledge 1996); *Buy This Book: Studies in Advertising and Consumption* (Routledge 1997) and *Visceral Cosmopolitanism: Gender, Culture and the Normalisation of Difference* (Berg 2007). She is currently working on the impact of European thinking on race relations research in Britain during the 1950s and 1960s.

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