

SEMESTER 1 2006

Brewing Diversity... the Murdoch Way



MURDOCH GRADUAND@MOTOROLA

"I've never been in another country... never been the 'other'" **BREWING DIVERSITY... THE MURDOCH WAY**

"I am culturally 'blind'" **CULTURE MENTALITY IN ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY**

"Historically marginalised identities... form subcultures" **CRONULLA & AUSTRALIAN NATIONHOOD**

"Assistive Technology Connecting Culture & Technology" **TECHNOLOGY & DIVERSITY**



DIVERSITY ON CAMPUS

THE LINES WE DRAW

'Racism draws a line on a map'. This descriptive statement was made by 16 year old Marat, a Jewish, Russian, Australian. [Marat (2005) *Voices of Australia. The Human Rights Defender* 14 (3): 7] When I read these words I found myself thinking of all the places this aphorism could draw meaning: the journey lines of ships as they are drawn to show oceans crossed to "discover" other lands; ink lines made on paper to demark and divide groups, tribes, cultures, languages

and religions; towns and cities use these lines which eventually come to include and exclude by denoting boundaries, or creating areas which become known for their affluence or lack of the same.

Whenever we see these lines in whatever form they take, perhaps we should question their meaning to ensure that they are not there to exclude or separate where this produces inequity. The university

environment offers students the tools with which to interrogate the world around them ; the challenge for students is to know that these lines can so easily be drawn across our campuses and yet to also know that their removal can bring about a vibrant, interesting and creative learning environment.

Gerri Box
 Manager
 Equity, Health & Counselling



CLARIFICATION:

The Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, as mentioned in DM@M sem2, 2005 is as per United Nations definition (<http://cyberschoolbus.un.org/infonation/index.asp>). The **Republic of Macedonia** is an independent state on the Balkan peninsula in south-eastern Europe. Most countries recognise the Republic under its constitutional name for bilateral diplomatic relations. We thank the Murdoch student who requested us to clarify the naming of the nation. We further thank the student for mentioning Ilinden (2nd August), a day of national celebration in the Republic. Other students are welcome to mention days of celebration in their respective countries or cultures, as applicable.

JONATHAN WILSON:

Jonathan Wilson has made it! Jonathan, a Murdoch IT graduand has won a six-month internship at Motorola. He will complete a Structured Workplace Learning Placement in June 2006.

During his placement Jonathan will be part of a project developing embedded software for mobile phones. In addition to product code development, Jonathan is part of a team that is responsible for unit and feature testing on handsets. He will also participate in quality assurance activities - inspections, design reviews and configuration management.

Since Jonathon began his internship in December 2005, Motorola has found a challenging graduand who finishes his assignments quickly, and with a very high level of accuracy! "Jonathan is settling in quite well. When he has completed tasks ahead of time and we don't have any tasks available he has simply gone and researched Motorola phones or other useful project information using his own initiative", reports Dr

Stephen Beckwith, Project Manager at Motorola's Crawley office.

Motorola, through its incredibly proactive approach, has provided a very insightful and holistic workplace environment for Jonathan. The communications multinational has proved that it values each member of its staff by being attentive to specific skills, requirements and abilities.

At Murdoch Jonathan completed his degree majoring in Computer Science, giving him a very strong technical background with skills in several programming languages and internet computing. Peter Cole, the Head of School of IT has commended Jonathan's ability in providing concise and knowledgeable solutions to IT issues on advanced business data communication.

Student Equity, Access & Diversity has facilitated the internship in partnership with Motorola. Student Equity, Access & Diversity thanks the Careers Centre, the Division of Arts and the School of IT for assisting towards fruition of the placement of Jonathan.



Jonathan at his desk.
 From left: Supratik Mukherji, Equity & Diversity Officer, Murdoch University; Jonathan Wilson; Dr Stephen Beckwith, Project Manager, Global Software Group – Australia, Motorola Australia Pty Ltd; Gerri Box, Manager, Equity, Health & Counselling, Murdoch University. Photo by: Brian Richards, Murdoch University

Tea, coffee* ... and Diversity

Brewing Diversity ... the Murdoch way!

**Supratik Mukherji interviews four students of Murdoch --
Felicity, Sara, Stacey and Betty**

What's typical of Murdoch's cultural diversity or diversity in people?

(what is striking ... what makes you feel nice ... and what depresses you ... where do you find the role of culture in it?)

"Initially I was lost because of [English] language ... hard words ... people kind of assumed I knew [the language] ... Murdoch International helped me with my queries [like] getting a doctor/legal advice/health system/driver's licence ..."

"Coming to Perth from rural Australia was a big change ... country life was laid back -- no traffic lights, no fast food, [just] recently got a public cinema."

"I'm not good with computers/technology ... did my workload though ... haven't been interested [in tech/compu] ... others valued [it though] ... a microscopic culture [cultural difference], I guess."

"I wrote my essays as I would speak ... not academic language ... got help with that [improving writing skills]... now it's alright."

Consider the following situations.

What will you say, think or do in such instances?

1. Your close relative, may be one of your siblings, comes to you saying s/he has found out that s/he is homosexual and has decided to let others know about it.

"I would say 'Go for it'."

"Be whoever you choose to be as long as you are happy."

"Be yourself."

"Homophobia is very much present in Australia, particularly within males."

2. You come to know and see one day, that the student whom you collaborate with in your project, eats with his hands ... does not use cutlery.

"One of my flatmates did ... it's interesting, challenging ... like 'How do you do that!?'"

"In a Filipino auntie's house we used spoon as fork and fork as knife ... she used spoon and fork only as cutlery."

"In certain countries left hand is not used to touch things coz toilet paper isn't used ... throws me with hygiene."

"In western countries many people don't wash their hands after being in toilet ... [they] shouldn't do that."

"Large diversity of cuisine available nowadays [almost everywhere] ... [so,] using [your] hand is not all that strange!"

"Fast food is very hands on."

"Etiquette should be respected."

"Adapt to local situation/custom."

3. Someone with rather poor skills in English is probably going to join your team to complete a project.

"If there are three people [in a group, for example] good in English it's not a difficulty to adapt."

"Not too great a request to help [with English]."

"In Commerce, we can choose our groups ... people tend to stick to their own nationalities [though] ... you've your own Asian sort of groups ... us, Aussies. It's not racism ... probably they are international ... feel comfortable in their own groups. We don't mind making friends with everyone else, but no one else wants to make friends!"



"As a professor I would [encourage to] take someone in a group from other nationalities."

"Aussies kind of have the responsibility to make [the] effort to meet international students."

"Aussies shouldn't have to go to other people for friendship ... it's from both sides ... being an international student I've to make the effort ... I'm the one who has come here."

"This country is racist ... kind of funny ... almost like promoting multiculturalism but [still having] such race problems."

"Being born & grown in Australia I've never been in another country ... never been the 'other'."

"In Commerce there're lots of majors ... you stick to your small groups."

"In Media networking is needed ... strong focus to go out and meet people ... to diversify."

4. A person in a wheelchair enters your classroom as a tutor.

"Will not bother me one bit at all."

"Done a lot of work with people with physical/intellectual disability."

"Added display of sensitivity/attention can be more offensive/annoying ... extend common courtesy."

***(Juice and cookies as well!)**

Acknowledgements: Thank you Gerry Georgatos and Annette Hondros

Disclaimer: The discussion above is in the spirit of knowing various sensitivities and values. It does in no way attempt to influence anyone's sensitivities and values. The discussion does not engage in morality or judgement of cultures. It is an open forum of experiences and views. This is a prejudice-free page.

A R T I C L E S

CULTURE MENTALITY IN ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY

HOW DOES CULTURE FEATURE IN ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY?



Supratik Mukherji interviews Professor Goen Ho, Chair, Board of Management, Environmental Technology Centre

1. Where does cultural diversity fit into your area of specialisation/research?

I have never consciously thought of it. For example, in researching how to provide technological support to remote aboriginal communities we have to be aware of cultural factors in the design, planning and implementation for application. My team works internationally (currently in East Java, Indonesia). We recognise cultural factors in capacity building of our counterpart institution in E. Java. Application of science & technology in cultural context is not a conscious decision; these aspects are intertwined. At ETC we have adopted an approach, the Appropriate Technology Pathway through which we promote sustainable technology movement taking local social, political, economic and cultural factors into account.

Examples of cultural inappropriateness: Following the displacement of Aboriginal pastoral workers in the late 1960s, ablution facilities were hurriedly provided by the Commonwealth that did not account for

lack of exposure to technology in remote Aboriginal communities. The facilities were developed for caravan parks. Training on use of such facilities was not necessarily satisfactory. The ablution facilities were either not used or abused. The nearest plumber would be 400 km away. We learnt to consult people, see the relevance of technology in its social, geographical, financial and cultural context. The authorities in Manila manage waste by using huge compactors. Here, in Perth we compact and bury rubbish everyday; it is expensive to segregate recyclables manually. But, in Manila there are people whose livelihood is to segregate plastic/bottle/can, etc. for recycling. The authorities can provide facilities to these people by protecting them from hazards ... improve their livelihood and extract compost from the remnant organic waste for agricultural use. The compacting method is not the most appropriate in Manila. The rubbish dump piles up very high and is prone to smouldering fires... this creates lots of pollution.

One must apply scientific principles in appropriate context as quoted above rather than copying from technology used in other parts of the world.

2. How, if at all, does your classroom/student-interaction get influenced or altered by your awareness of cultural diversity?

In my teaching, my aim is to make students from different backgrounds aware of our teaching and learning practices for which they have come to Australia. They appreciate that. This is part of their cultural learning. The students' point of view evolves. A very shy PhD scholar from the Philippines used to approach me everyday seeking guidance. I realised her cultural background and told her that in Australia we give students a lot of freedom. One has to read the literature and come up with one's own idea/interest/questions. Within a few months of her return to Philippines after completion of study, she became the Head of a department. What

mattered was not only the knowledge, but the attitude of independence and ability to take initiative towards improved research. That is our strength, for which students come to Australia. My team's approach is to be culturally sensitive if a student is shy or uncomfortable with the learning environment ... but we eventually encourage them to participate in groups and take advantage of the environment. They will interact with the whole world after all.

My approach is that I am culturally "blind". I don't classify people just because they come from a certain culture/country ... not to pigeon-hole them. I regard people as people for who they are, not for their cultural backgrounds. I have also had very shy and inward-looking students from here in Australia.

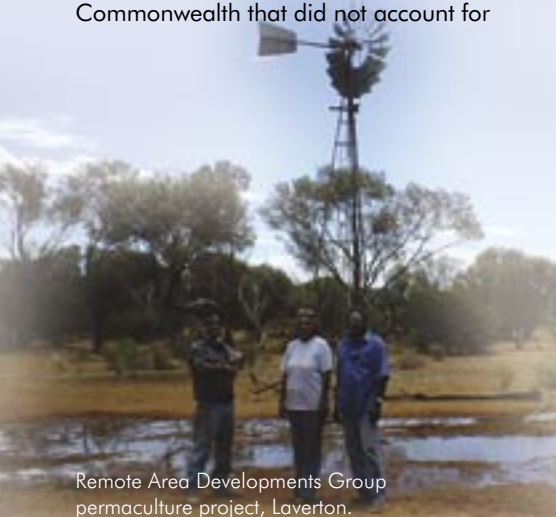
We regard students as people first ... and people with differing personalities and requirements; culture is just part of it. When we identify students with problems we deal with it appropriately ... it can be irrespective of cultural background. If a problem is due to cultural background we deal with it in a culturally aware manner.

3. Any humorous anecdote/s you can cite, that clearly highlight/s the interface of cultural background of your students and the topic you teach them or help them research into?

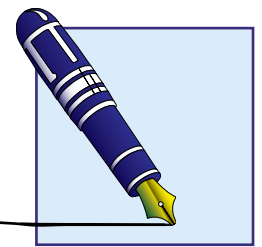
Can't remember one off hand ... but in waste management and pollution control we tend to use a lot of euphemisms. One such is referring to a landfill site (rubbish dump) as "Garbology Park"! The huge rubbish dump outside metro Manila referred to above is called the "Smokey Mountain".

4. Is the Murdoch teaching community sufficiently aware of cultural diversity in its day-to-day teaching and interaction?

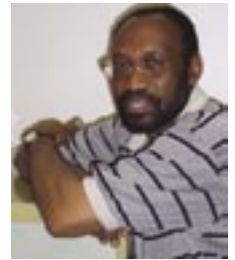
Everyday I interact with people who are culturally aware. I assume the whole university community is like that.



Remote Area Developments Group permaculture project, Laverton.



CRONULLA AND AUSTRALIAN NATIONHOOD: ADVERSITY IN DIVERSITY



As I was mulling over the Cronulla race riots I began by looking at what it means to be Australian. I began to explore how racism itself masks other elements in the Australian community rather than the other way round. While John Howard takes the view that there is little racism in Australia I think racism plays such a huge role in Australian political thinking that it now has to continuously find new ways of hiding its ugly face. To cut to the chase, I believe that at the end of the day the Cronulla riots were no more or less than a reflection of the continuing struggle for national identity in Australia. This identity search is premised on the awareness that the much-flaunted desire for multiculturalism will continue to battle its many ghosts for a long time to come. For a start, as Hsu-Ming Teo (2003:152) says, in Australia "whiteness is not an ethnicity. Precisely, it is the norm by which everything else becomes an ethnicity".

I begin therefore from the premise there is in Australia an inherent struggle between ethnicity and assimilation, and that denied a visible presence within the political and social imaginings of Australian identity, certain subcultures would use resistance and defiance to construct and mobilise a deliberate multicultural identity for Australia. However, this new identity construction renders the struggle "unresolvable" because it forces the subculture to be a target within an unequal power relationship. What happens then is the greater desire for the subculture to embrace multiculturalism as "symbolic power" and use it to mediate

the ambiguities that are evident in the Australian cultural and political scene. Central to this ambiguity is the view well described by Hsu-Ming Teo (2003:143) thus:

"Multiculturalism does not accept, confront and challenge the discourse of race, but rather repress it. Because multiculturalism and mainstream Australian history functioned around the notion of a core "Anglo-celtic" national culture so called ethnic cultures were inevitably marginalised."

Essentially whiteness dominates the cultural imaginings of multicultural Australia and is nowhere to be found in the discourses of ethnicity and is therefore never interrogated or even examined. It is evident that while there is clearly a process of assimilation taking place in Australia, ethnic identities are growing stronger underlining the argument that ethnic sentiments and national sentiments can co-exist just like tradition and modernity do co-exist. What is required is to recognise how social capital of the minority groups can be utilised in a power relationship, conferred through symbolic power.

Whiteness as culture is the default culture of all Australians whether they like it or not. This is premised on social pressure and despite the macro-political multicultural policies the ethnic is invariably marginalised. Historically marginalised identities often attempt and can manage to form subcultures. Notice the British punk or even the Rastafarian subcultures that reveal the formation of subcultures that mobilise identity and coalesce communities in opposition to dominant cultures. In Australia this formation has not yet evolved, but the rumblings of these group formations can be heard loud and clear and the Cronulla was the one place the noise became a menace.

The inherent contradictions between the mainstream Anglo-saxon culture and the new and emerging subcultures are

becoming more and more defined. These subcultures are reflections of identity formations first, but more important they are expressions of a mobilization act towards resisting the dominant culture. What happened on the beach amongst the soccer playing minority group was an attempt at designing space within and against the predetermined and hegemonic cultural space that is the Aussie beach. This act of space designing failed to take into account that the beach space is already considered a shared space that also defines the community's sense of justice and equality. This normalisation within Australian cultural discourses however fails to see the contradictions of this determination that has in its premise the dominant Anglo-celtic national imaginings- its hold on land.

Territoriality is simply the process through which environmental boundaries (and foci) are used to signify group boundaries (and foci) and become invested with a sub-cultural value. This is the function of football teams to skinheads, for example. Territoriality is thus not only a way in which kids "live" subculture as a collective behaviour, but also the way in which the sub-cultural group becomes rooted in the situation of its community. (Cohen:1980: 85)

But what is even more disconcerting are the subcultures that grow out of the failed multicultural policies. What we saw at Cronulla was the failed attempt at the formation of a subculture of defiance and resistance towards multiculturalism because of the failure of the multicultural discourses. The resulting gaping hole in the Australian national psyche needs to be filled with probably a mixture of the new and old.

In the aftermath of the riots the media and society began the process of bringing together and closer the conflicting parties to talk. This was the right direction indeed.

Continued page 7...



TECHNOLOGY AND DIVERSITY:

Special keyboard -- Assistive Technology

A team from the Department of Mechanical Engineering led by Associate Professor Ong Soh Khim and Professor Andrew Nee has won the Samsung DigitAll Hope 2005 for their project Augmented Reality Assistive Keyboard. They share the prize, a grant of US\$500,000 with 11 others from Southeast Asia and Australia.

The team has invented a device which marries Assistive and Augmented Reality technologies, to help all to access and use full computer functions in composing and sending emails, control household appliances, such as television sets and lights. Assistive technology is used in devices like writing aids for those with difficulty in moving their hands and fingers for example, allowing limited movements of limbs to operate certain equipment. Augmented Reality

(AR) technology allows the overlay of virtual information onto a real scene through the use of computer – providing augmented information in the form of interactive media, such as texts, computer graphics and video clips, customised to the user’s needs. The NUS team’s invention which is equipped with a head-mounted device with cameras and special eye-glasses, enables users to control target electronic gadgets through a virtual keyboard by just turning their heads from side to side. The technology developed by the team will also help students with physical disability participate in mainstream schools, allowing them to better integrate into society.

“With Samsung DigitAll Hope’s funding, we can customise the Augmented Reality Assistive Keyboard for different applications. We envision the project to be useful to individuals with disabilities to carry out their daily

tasks and we hope to bring it to users in other countries as a useful assistive tool,” said Associate Professor Ong who is also a Nominated Member of Parliament.

(<http://www.nus.edu.sg/corporate/research/gallery/research47.htm>)



SAMSUNG WINNER: Clockwise from left: Ms Zhang Jie, NUS researcher; Mr Sang-Jin Park, Regional CEO and President, Samsung Asia; Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Community, Youth and Sports and Second Minister for Trade and Industry; Associate Professor Ong Soh Khim, NUS and Ms Shen Yan, NUS researcher.

Connecting Culture and Technology

Culture exerts a strong influence, even on something that is often thought of as being mechanical – computer technologies.

This counter-intuitive connection has been drawn by Associate Professor Bernard Tan of NUS’ Department of Information Systems. His research raises an alert that the culture-technology fit should be considered carefully when designing or deploying computer technology in different cultural contexts because computer technologies developed based on knowledge of one cultural setting may not work very well in others.

In his research on the impact of cultural differences on computer

technologies, Assoc Prof Tan has focussed on group support systems or GSS. Increasingly used by groups whose members may be in different locations around the world, a GSS is a suite of computer-based tools that supports collaboration (e.g. in brainstorming for solutions to problems) among proximate or dispersed teams.

Assoc Prof Tan compared GSS usage in individualistic cultures (e.g. United States) against collectivistic cultures (e.g. Singapore). His findings showed a marked contrast between the two. In an individualistic culture, GSS capabilities seemed to empower the minority to challenge the majority’s views. This, however, was not the case in a collectivistic culture. The previous assumption that GSS

capabilities would reduce majority influence under all circumstances was overturned.

Assoc Prof Tan went on to challenge another widely-held belief that GSS usage can reduce the influence of decisions made by the leader on team members in all contexts. Again, he found evidence that GSS could reduce the long-term impact of decisions made by the leader on team members only in an individualistic culture but not in a collectivistic culture.

Assoc Prof Tan’s research has made him advocate that although computer technologies are, in theory, powerful tools for facilitating teamwork, they may prove ineffective or inefficient in practice if deployed in inappropriate cultural contexts. Assoc Prof Tan is now studying the impact of cultural differences on the behaviour and performance of software development teams.

(<http://www.nus.edu.sg/corporate/research/gallery/research14.htm>)



Technology bridges distance and culture in collaborative problem-solving.

"MY DREAM"



Students with disabilities often face barriers to participation in employment, training and community activities because they are not aware of the opportunities available, or perceive too many barriers to pursuing these options. The 'My Dream' proposal promotes greater access to Vocational Education and Training for students with disabilities by reducing barriers to participation in our local community, and lead to greater equality between persons with and without disabilities. A cross-sectoral partnership has been established in the City of Rockingham. Stakeholders include the Rockingham City Council, South-West Chamber of Commerce, The Kwinana Industries Council, Kwinana Industries Education Partnership, Bridging the Gap, Department of Education and Training, Disabilities Services Commission, **Murdoch University** and others. Murdoch University (Media and Student Equity) has supported the project by documenting the project's launch as well as the project's progress at the Warnbro Community High School Education Support Centre. Seven students from years 8 and 10, with mild intellectual disability, participated in the project along with their teachers, members of the community and local business. Murdoch's support has been acknowledged by the School and the Kwinana Industries Education Partnership. The project has already produced some tangible outcomes. Some of the School's students have started with flying colours towards meeting their annual goal/s.

Photo: Patrick Herford recording a workshop of 'My Dream', June 2005. Production supervisor: Martin Mhando; Co-supervisor: Supratik Mukherji. Photo by: Supratik Mukherji

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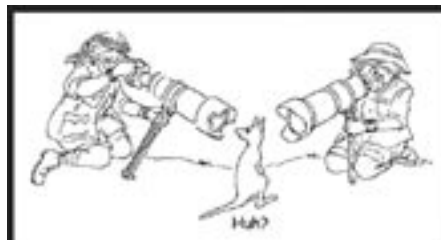
However, what the various media gurus and social commentators, as well as the police in this case, took was the approach that talking was only a direction towards a destination, a target. While the ultimate target was not defined (the obvious destination of course was to stop the violence) however there was this clear desire to move people from point A to point B and it began with talking.

In my humble opinion talking was and still is all that is required in this environment. Talking is not simply an approach that takes us past something else and enables us to see or reach a certain appointed target. What we are attempting to reach is the mind of the people of the world of Australia. We must avoid coming to conclusions that through specific analysis we would be able to reveal certain "truths" or "realities", "beliefs" or "attitudes". This is especially so when we know we are confronted by racial prejudice. The intention here is neither to analyse nor even avoid dealing with racism, but to create an environment where we re-define prejudice while creating conditions for talking between aggrieved Australians. It is in the process that results will be gained and not the other way around. To talk means to express ones mind, to reflect the worlds that we inhabit, and in doing that we re-orient ourselves with the status of what we are talking about. It is a journey and but unlike in the song you cannot get off. And while on that journey lets keep talking about that other question of Australian identity – the symbolic importance of Aboriginal land rights.

Dr Martin Mhando
Senior Lecturer
Media Communication
and Culture

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<http://www.2docstock.com/cartoons/>

Diversity Matters @ Murdoch (DM@M)



Our world is diverse.

**We believe there's
a lot between
black-&-white,
good-&-evil,
0-&-1 ...
and a lot more
... beyond.**

**The world is one,
but with many ways.
'DM@M' wants to walk
the ways together with you.
Let us make 'DM@M'
an interactive newsletter.
Send us your thoughts ...
views ... 'unlike'_s
... 'alike'_s**

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MOTOROLA

EOWA
EMPLOYER
OF CHOICE
FOR WOMEN

You are MOTO

**You envision
the future**

**Your energy is
contagious**

**You are a
dreamer
and a doer**



What is MOTO? Imagine a new, seamless, flowing easier world. In your car. In your home. At work. Out in the world. Phones that pay for parking without touching a key. Cars that know where you're supposed to be and how to get there. Homes that record your favourite tunes and movies and share them with your friends. Products and systems that carry intelligence into your work and your life. Into the next thing you'll want to do. That's MOTO. Everywhere.

As a Motorolan, MOTO represents your innovative spirit. Your talent. Your diversity. Your focus is on innovation, customer delight and quality. Around the world, Motorola employees collectively leverage their MOTO every day to make customers' lives better, easier and more fun. Whether in Australia, the United States, South Africa, China, Brazil or any other country, Motorolans are part of a special community of highly talented, fiercely committed, truly spectacular people. Though they perform many different functions and speak many different languages, they are bonded by a shared desire to shape the future of communications.

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To learn more about opportunities at Motorola, visit www.motorola.com.au and follow the careers link. Motorola is an Equal Opportunity employer.