



CETREN

Transregional
Research Network

CETREN

THE CEMIS-CEMEAS TRANSREGIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK

SPEAKERS' SERIES

**MILITANCY AND DISSIDENCE:
RADICAL AESTHETICS & RADICAL POLITICS
IN THE 20TH CENTURY**

THURSDAY

23 JANUARY 2014

2-4 PM

**WALDWEG 26
TOWER BUILDING**

ROOM 6.103 (LEVEL 6)



YI ZHENG

**THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW SOUTH WALES**



ABOUT THE TALK

THE LATE BRITISH HISTORIAN ERIC HOBSBAWM CHARACTERIZED THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AS THE “AGE OF EXTREMES,” HIGHLIGHTING ITS UNPRECEDENTED SCALE OF DESTRUCTION AND VIOLENCE (1996). EXTREMISM, HOWEVER, WAS NOT ONLY THE HALLMARK OF THE CENTURY’S TOTALITARIAN POLITICAL PROJECTS, BUT ALSO A RECURRENT FEATURE OF ITS RADICAL LITERARY AND ARTISTIC MOVEMENTS, FROM THE VARIOUS AVANT-GARDES OF THE FIRST HALF OF THE CENTURY TO THE DIVERSE AESTHETIC TRENDS AND EXPERIMENTS OF ITS SECOND HALF. WHETHER IN THE FIELD OF POLITICS OR THAT OF THE ARTS, THE RADICAL IMPULSE WAS ABOUT INTERVENING IN AN IMMEDIATE, DEFINITIVE AND TRANSFORMATIVE MANNER. IN THIS, ITS PROPONENTS WERE GIVEN TO VIOLENCE, THE IDEA OF SHATTERING THE EXISTING SYSTEMS, NORMS, AND CONVENTIONS, TO MAKE SPACE FOR THE NEW: NEW SUBJECTS, NEW FORMS OF CULTURE, NEW COMMUNITIES. THIS DESIRE FOR TOTAL TRANSFORMATION AT TIMES MADE ALLIES OF THE TWO, BUT IT ALSO SET THEM AGAINST ONE ANOTHER.

THIS TALK WILL OUTLINE THE TRAJECTORY OF A PROJECT WHICH INVESTIGATES LITERARY AND INTELLECTUAL MILITANCY AND DISSIDENCE IN GERMANY AND CHINA IN THE LAST TWO THIRDS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, WITH A PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE ANTAGONISM AND MUTUAL ATTRACTION BETWEEN AESTHETIC AND POLITICAL RADICALISM. IT WILL DISCUSS THE MOTIVATIONS AND IDEAS BEHIND THE TRAJECTORY AND ITS METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS. THE KEY QUESTIONS WILL BE: HOW CAN WE ACCOUNT FOR INTELLECTUAL HISTORICALLY THIS REMARKABLE ALIGNMENT ON A TRANSNATIONAL SCALE, AND WHAT BRINGS ABOUT ITS PARTICULAR INTENSIFICATION AND VIRULENCE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY?

ABOUT YI ZHENG

YI ZHENG (PHD, THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH) IS SENIOR LECTURER AND CONVENOR OF CHINESE STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES.

HER RECENT PUBLICATIONS INCLUDE: „FROM BURKE AND WORDSWORTH TO THE MODERN SUBLIME IN CHINESE LITERATURE“ (WEST LAFAYETTE: PURDUE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2011), „CONTEMPORARY CHINESE PRINT MEDIA: CIVILITY, TASTE AND CLASS“ (LONDON: ROUTLEDGE 2013), AND „MOTION AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE CHANGING EARLY MODERN WORLD: ORBITS, ROUTES AND VESSELS“ (GAL, OFER AND YI ZHENG EDS. DORCHETTE: SPRINGER 2013).

