

Re- exploring a school: re-storying multiculturalism in globalized times.

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As the century draws to a close Australians are becoming aware that they live in globalized times. Time and space contract as people, knowledge and images flow ever faster across territorial boundaries in contradictory conditions of 'complex connectivity' (Tomlinson, 1999) which are different as well as differentiating; divide even as they unite; mean mobility for some even as they locate others more fixedly than ever before . This paper looks at ways multiculturalism might be understood, as the day to day lives of Australians become constituted by historically situations emergent not only within imagined communities but in shifting, changing, fragmenting worlds .

In this paper, I explore ways multiculturalism policy and practice was understood and implemented in a particular state secondary school, in the years 1988, and in 1998. I find that, processes of globalization, marketisation, a changed approach to administration as well, as an extended and increasingly diverse immigration program changed ways multicultural policy and practice is understood and implemented over that period of a decade. The ways of thinking which focus these practices also changed. In 1988 teachers and parents were concerned with the permeability of barriers traversing essential yet assimilable ethnic and racial groups. In 1998, these barriers became less visible as teachers and parents seemed blind to difference and yet concerned to advance particular ethnic and cultural aspirations.

These explorations of ways multiculturalism was played out between 1988 and 1998, suggest ironic contradictions between alterity and universality predicted by Homi Bhabha . They articulate contradictory subtexts both of innate and essential difference yet

commonalities, universalisms and samenesses. To understand multiculturalism in globalized times, these contradictions need to be deconstructed and reconsidered in ways which locate these sutured relationalities between ways selves make and position shadow others within places and spaces of day to day lives and the fragmenting contingencies of discourses to which these positioned identities are articulated.

Introduction

This paper considers the impact of globalization on multiculturalism in contemporary Australian times. Contemporary literatures describe globalization as sets of interweavings and interchanges, which change ever faster as people come to live in worlds where taken for granted assumptions about locality, nationality, ways of thinking and doing, are up for grabs, need to be re-imagined. As goods, people, knowledge and images flow across territorial boundaries in complex connectivities, the nexus between imagination and geographic space, becomes increasingly stretched; deterritorialised. Imagined worlds become constituted by the historically situations of persons living not just within imagined communities but in shifting, changing, fragmenting worlds. At the same time, these are times of immense contradiction as connectivities of time and space are differentiated as well as differentiating; divide even as they unite; mean mobility for some even as they locate others more fixedly than ever before .

Definitions of multiculturalism also consider something negotiated, changing and contested. A most recent document put out by the National Multicultural Advisory Council at the request of the Howard Liberal Government explains that principles of Australian multiculturalism incorporate and refocus the goals of the 1989 national agenda to argue that:

Australian democracy guarantees us our civic freedoms and our fundamental rights and equality, and it is the institutions of Australian democracy that enable diversity in our society to flourish, Australian society is diverse, encompassing a wealth of cultures histories and traditions, rural and urban, of indigenous and all other Australians. The proper functioning of our society requires us to manage the consequences of our cultural diversity in the interest of the individual and society as a whole. This will be achieved and Australian multiculturalism will be a continuing and fundamental strength in our society, if the Australian people and the institutions of our society base their actions and measure their achievements of on the following principals for living with cultural diversity(, executive summary, p.11).

The impact of globalization on multiculturalism, this document suggests, is implicit in ways consequences of diversity are managed in the interests of individuals and in the interests of society as a whole. Its underlying principals for living with cultural diversity: 'civic duty', 'cultural respect', 'social equity' and 'productive diversity' subtly refocus principles of 'cultural identity', 'social justice' and 'economic efficiency' conceived of by the 1988 National Agenda (, p.iix).

Explorations of changes to Government definitions of multiculturalism over a decade are intriguing ones and ones which, I am sure, will be the product of other academic papers. I consider today two major foci within the Government's definition: that of 'consequences of diversity' and that of 'managed'. In doing this I question: What is it that people think that they are dealing with when they talk about managing diversity, what is it that needs to be managed, and how is it that this should be done? How have these ways of thinking and practice changed as the day to day lives of Australians become constituted and

reconstituted within the shifting changing, fragmenting interconnecting yet all so familiar and concrete localities constituent within forces of globalization?

In suggesting this I consider findings which suggest that multiculturalism and its related discourses underpin both day to day discussion and the top downedness of official policy , , so that:

Code words are used to give selective and exclusionary meaning to notions national identity, national spirit, citizenship and social political values in order to discuss and justify efforts to marginalise Australians of Asian, indigenous and some other migrant backgrounds

Multicultural codings provide the language and the ways of thinking which frame national imaginings, proscribe, practice and maintain relationalities between margin and centre, nation and other, us and them as they are textualised within an Australian context. They conceptualise ways that race and nation become recontextualised, define and practice ways, that others become relational shadows of selves.

Central within my analysis in this paper is the story of a school, and the ways teachers and parents at that institution understood multiculturalism in the years 1988 and 1998. I find that, processes of globalization, marketisation, a changed approach to administration as well, as an extended and increasingly diverse immigration program changed ways multicultural policy and practice were understood and implemented over that period of a decade. The ways of thinking which focus these practices had also changed. In 1988 teachers and parents were most concerned with the permeability of barriers which seemed to traverse essential yet assimilable ethnic and racial groups. In 1998, these barriers seemed not of concern, even as they were reinserted as teachers and parents suggested they were both blind to difference and yet concerned about particular ethnic and cultural groups.

It seems that even as I note changes in ways multiculturalism was played out between the years 1988 and 1998, I find them caught within ironic contradictions between alterity and universality predicted in the literature (, , . I suggest that, even as Australians come to live in increasingly globalized times, politics of difference are articulated by subtexts of innate difference which continue to denote one group as another race and constructs race difference. Recent literatures (explore ways representations of human difference, as they struggle within historical nexus of social meaning, become signifiers of race otherness. Numbers of markers; colour and physiognomy but also culture, nation, or gene pool become essential, primordial bases of seemingly impervious racial boundaries between groups. These subtexts of innate difference; denote one group as another race, even as they are contradictory processes; subject to change, fragmentation, inconsistency and negotiation.

Such ways of naming and practicing relationalities between an 'Usness' and a 'Themness' become crucial considerations within my discussion of multiculturalism within globalized times. To understand these concepts I consider ways multicultural practices are understood and practiced within day to day lives of those living within an increasingly globalized contemporary Australian context. To do this I look at conversations held with teachers and parents collected from a particular state secondary school, once in 1988 and again in the year 1998. As I look at these data I find these ways of practicing and understanding multiculturalism, indeed deal with diversity. The naming and the actioning of relationships with otherness become central within these discussions. In the second part of this paper I therefore study these definitions, ways they have changed and what this means to ways multiculturalism can be understood in increasingly globalized times.

Same place: Changing times

The storying of research into a school takes place within a context of place and time - and these interweave their own and new storyings. I came back to Southgate to find that, in many ways, nothing had changed. The school nestled, as it had done in 1988, in the middle of a light industrial area of Metropolitan Melbourne. Factories continued to front the boundaries of the school; small but neat yellow brick fifties housing faced across its back. Huge steel electric pylons still strode across weedy, though properly mowed grass playing fields. The prefab school buildings, built like so many others during the late 1950's and early 1960's, changed only in the numbers of portables which abutted them.

Yet changes had been made. Within the inner courtyards of the school small landscaped areas brought sudden images of green and peaceful sitting. The fronthall to the school entrance had been refurbished. Within the classrooms were large and very well resourced computer laboratories. A language centre had been established within the confines of the school. The nearby migrant hostel had been reopened since 1988 but was now once again closed. In 1988, this discussion with Paterson, parent and council member, already encapsulates feelings of change and yet unchange:

I think when you've been in an area as you said - I come down here because of the rural atmosphere - There was tea tree. It was a beautiful underlay ... It was like an English scene - We'd go for a walk on a Sunday afternoon down a lane - Its a lane opposite just like an English lane - There were foxes. There were snakes - We had snakes in our back garden . We had foxes come and take our fowls - It was like a real country atmosphere - It was country down here. We spent one January night chasing catching up with a thief who had taken all the hoses from one of our neighbors - We apprehended the thief and had to go to Springvale court the next day .- You know all this sort of went on but it was great it was a lovely atmosphere - Now its all gone to what it was

.....

Q. So the population must have changed a lot too

A. It's just unbelievable

I would say its how many years would it be its going back I would say the last 15 years ... It started from that point on - We've been here for 31 years. I would say half the time it started to change then - I think when the enterprise hostel opened - when that opened that sort of created a lot of sorts of people living in this area - probably the first place they come to in Australia - and then they looked around and I think you will find , you know, the Southgate area particularly. Its amazing - particularly when all the Asians come - They thought this is alright and they all started to buy a house or live around the area - and gradually its even got bigger and bigger and now down in Southgate the actual population(Paterson wpc78.tr)

In 1988, Mr. Paterson, parent and council member, remembers an Eden, an English scene, a country aspect, a rural atmosphere, beautiful, idyllic. There were snakes in the garden, foxes and thieves but they barely effected the lovely atmosphere, the sense of neighborhood. It was a paradise, Paterson reminisces mournfully, which is gone 'all gone to what it was'. Change came as something 'unbelievable', something 'amazing', came with the opening of the Enterprise migrant hostel. Change came when 'all The Asians came', 'when

They thought this is alright', 'created a lot of sorts of people living in the area' Since change came its 'got bigger and bigger'.

In 1988, there was a general feeling amongst long term school residents that the demography of the school had suddenly changed. Since the Second World War, Australia had sought large numbers of migrants as a means to either 'populate or perish'. Official policies for non discriminatory immigration policy were only finally introduced into Australia in 1972 by the Whitlam Labor Government. The significant, and unprecedented increase in immigration, especially in migration from Asia, was continued by both the Fraser Liberal Government of 1975 - 1983 and the Hawke Keating Labor Government's of 1983 - 1996 . A large number of these immigrants had come to live in particular areas of Melbourne and Sydney, so that by the time I carried out my pilot study of Melbourne schools there were very few metropolitan schools which had not become increasingly cosmopolitan.

In 1988, teachers and parents discussed other changes which were only just beginning to impinge on ways education took place over the next decades. Practices of 'Corporate managerialism' stressed outputs and outcomes rather than processes and rules, followed by a pervasive push to make schools self governing and self managing. Social justice concerns were increasingly weakened, replaced instead by an increased focus on efficiency and effectiveness. The greater emphasis placed on the role of market forces made academia a product rather than as a right and business principles became applied to school administrations. Schools it was argued needed to obey the competitiveness of market forces. Finally, the development of human capital theories emphasized workplace rather than general education, the accommodation of technological change, and the reconceptualisation of the individual rather than the social as the major benefactor of education. Education, it became argued was a 'user pays' concept ,

By 1998 teachers and parents Southbank Secondary College re-negotiated these organisational changes. The School found that to survive financially, they needed to sell themselves as a product bought not only in Australian but overseas as well. Although in 1998, the numbers of international students within the school were small, the different needs of those students as well as the different ways of working required when the client pays, were beginning to impact on ways teachers understood their work.

You've got to do marketing. You have to go out there and market and enter the commercial world,.. it's a competitive world out there to try to get students and so you've got... some of your staff going overseas and trying to jump in....and that's a hard market, we're very successful at it...extremely successful at it. The most successful...

... our reputation now is really good overseas,... So it's a different perspective, those people are paying for their places so they're clients that are paying ...You have to get it right for any student. If, in fact, the schools go along with having to...we generate... 56% of our budget here by lots of things, the international students being one and if that's the way the schools are going to go. It's for the success, the future success, of all the students if they do a good job with the international students. That's the cream, that's the money that comes in that gives you something to do for your students, each of your ordinary students. So it's a very important part(Marrickll 311 - 338).

The stories that travelers told, whether they were teachers or parents had also changed between 1988 and 1998. In 1988 migrants told stories of hard times, of desperate escape attempts and of their enormous relief when they found a safe haven, Australia, where they intended to settle.

A. When we escaped it was very dangerous - First we had to go down a canal - and we rowed into the night no moon no stars ... lose the way because they couldn't see the boat - and when we went there we escaped ... the communist saw us but they had no boats we were very scared - we lay down on the boat and looked up to see many days. They were shooting - but we were lucky no-one was injured ...

A. After 5 days and 5 nights we went to Malaysia. We just asked them maybe soldiers we asked them the way ... they asked us to go to there ship and carry us to Malay island - now if someone asked me what is the luckiest day of your life I think not win Tatts not get money I would say that is the day the Malay soldier took us to there ship and take us to the island (Nguyen bep.4, n8

Migration, for Nguyen was a difficult, once only, one way process. In 1998, this had not altogether changed. But for many migration had become part of a process of constant movement and change. For Thuyen, a teacher also from Vietnam, travel and identity were something floating:

Because I've got no root. In Vietnam I am not Vietnamese, I am a floating person. In Vietnam I didn't feel that much, because I was young and my parents were rich. I didn't feel it that much. I am not Chinese, I am overseas Chinese, can you see that? Because you float, then you float easily.

So, even in Vietnam, you're saying, your birth place. You were really, floating because you were Chinese and then you came to Taiwan and you were....

I'm not the same Chinese, I am, always, a marginal person.

You went, then, to....

Paris, I got a French Passport, in fact, but I'm not French. I'm happy the way I am, because I'm just a floating person. I float, I just look on the positive side, because I float(Thuyen II 447 - 519). I

By 1998, people began to move and to stay still in ways which were unimaginable even a decade before.

Multicultural practices

It was in the context of such changed times that teachers and parents thought about and practiced multicultural policies and practices. In 1998 I found these included discussions about: multicultural and Australian weeks and days (weeks and days given over to showcasing particular cultural groups within the school); parental involvement (programs to encourage more active parental commitment within the community life of the school), Language programs (both to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) and to teach Languages other than English (LOTE)) and welfare programs (both as the work of community aides and of teaching staff within the school). The development of these practices were by no means always unproblematic and were often fiercely controversial. Most teaching staff supported the implementation of multicultural and Australian weeks and days and were committed to programs which welcomed parents into the school. The implementation of language programs was more controversial as teachers debated their rationale, the manner of their implementation and relationships between English and Community Language teaching, but nevertheless continued to be major policy initiatives within the school.

In 1998, multicultural practices were once again something similar and yet markedly changed. Multicultural weeks were discussed only in passing, parental involvement was still an important but much changed focus for school activities and communication aides continued to help in school welfare programs. Language programs were vastly extended within the school. An English Language Centre had been established on the school grounds, ten Languages other than English taught at the school and several secular subjects were now taught bilingually. A large number of generalized programs had been established in the school, specifically to work with multicultural concerns: for instance Vocational Educational Training(VET), anti bullying policies and affirmative action programs. Most importantly, the school had become internationalized: twenty six international students attended the school and links with sister schools and internet communications established.

Ironic intersections

Beneath these changed formulations of practice teachers and parents changed ways they understood diversity and ways it needed to be dealt with. For John, speaking in 1988, multiculturalism was important because:

That's were the barriers are broken down - If there's going to be racial barriers that's where its going to be a sort of broken down. I think it's a sad case sometimes. They want to be friends but people wont sort of accept them - when I'm out in the garden, the rose garden ... I speak to everyone that goes past and smile to them or try and make themselves and its remarkable the smile you get back - One day I saw some of them looking at my roses. I went outside and gave them a bunch of roses - They thought that was great - Its just trying to break down that barrier - I think that they're so acceptable to that - My wife was out weeding the other day and she had four or five little ones I'd say they would be about four years old or six and they helped her weed that garden - They thought that was great (Paterson II 106 - 124)

John, speaking in 1988, described diversity as collections of people made quite other, caught as they were on the other side of material and almost impermeable barriers. Those behind the barriers were usually pleasant enough, a little exotic, needed to be looked after and helped to fit in. These barriers between them and those like himself were something absolute in their presence and yet something which could be overcome by a smile, an interest in gardening, friendship.

For Susan, also speaking in 1988, these boundaries were unbreakable barriers making borders between those who were like herself and others who were absolutely and fearfully alien.

Its really quite incredible - the acceptance and the co-operation - the working together and not necessarily being racist - of wanting to be with that person or that person because their eyes are different and all that sort of thing - and it never ceases to fascinate me - I guess to my way of thinking - it should in theory produce a great deal of tolerance - but I just don't whether human beings are tolerant - I just don't know whether the barriers can ever really be broken down - I think that there is always going to be that non- acceptance and really if you're white Caucasian or southern European or something there is a chance there that coming out of a different - a very different culture and you look different - if you are Asian - but - you smell different - all of those sorts of things - whether it is going to work into a melting pot I don't know - but I believe that there will always be pockets of racism -

A. So do you think that multiculturalism will work

Maybe it will -one would hope that it would - It may be the answer to so many problems - I don't whether you can ever breakdown the barriers completely (Susan88II 479 - 500)

To Susan, difference between groups is something absolutely alien; blue eyes, brown eyes, very different cultures, different smells. Overcoming such differences, Susan argues, requires perseverance and tolerance but in the end they form barriers which cannot, and most probably not ought not to be completely overcome. Even as Susan argues this, she finds herself fascinated by her contradictions as she notes that students do come together and barriers are falling down.

Fixed on the other side of barriers, in 1988, are a silent, larger than life, wonderful, frightening them. They stand in opposite relation to the teller who assumes herself undeniably and indisputably one of us. Our culture, our smells remain unanalyzed. Rather what Susan sits on the other side of barriers storied by those she is not. She is tolerant of their difference, smellless, has no colour, no culture. That which is intrinsic and extrinsic to usness is relational to that which is on the other side of those barriers.

Despite the fact that I reinterviewed nine staff members when I returned in 1998 all those teachers who found difference frightening in this way had left the school. In 1998, conceptualizations of such ironic intersections had become more subtle. Teachers and parents still at the school seldom described groups as essentially other, as they had in 1988 nor were they concerned about presences of barriers between them. When I reinterviewed Bill Kelty, for instance, he explained that:

I'm more than happy with Asian kids coming in, Asian people or Asian background, coming into Australia. As a group, they seem to be wanting to fit in. I can not see how people can have a problem with Asian people, to be ho....but I deal with Asian kids and that's different, perhaps and then. I don't have any threat from them I don't feel any threat from them. I think it does Australia good, seeing the success stories I've been to....Asian students that want to get married, I've been to their marriages, invited along. I don't see them and I don't.... The kids now, they've been brought up here, you don't look at them as Asians. They're Australian kids, they've....a lot of them have a lot values, that I've had. I can remember having, as school kids, they're not Asians and the kids from a European background. You don't look at them as kids. You, just, look at them as students to teach, then you enjoy teaching. (Kelty, 98p.11)

Students, Bill was quick to explain to me, are all the same, just 'students you teach, then you enjoy teaching. Even as he has told me this, differences between students are reinserted. Bill doesn't mind 'Asians' coming into his area, 'doesn't feel any threat from them'. Even as Bill defines all kids as the same, he defines some as distinctly and potentially frighteningly other.

Frankenberg, defines moments of 'colourblindness' where assertions are made 'that we are all the same under the skin', that culturally we are converging' even as difference is asserted and the other is once again there as a problem, as a threat. Her work brings to mind Homi Bhabha's illustration of these slipperinesses as a central irony in western conceptions of multiculturalism. In his much quoted chapter *Cultures inbetween* argues that *Diversity* (areas of experience and practice marked and separated as different) and *difference* (practices of signification which are both reflective and constitutive of

prevailing economic and political relations and mark out people as different) become conflated in contemporary western societies. It is a slight of hand where on the one hand studentness is envisaged as constituted by universal, atomistic, self possessed, equally empowered individuals different only because of privately made choices to maintain experiences and practices marked as different; and yet and at the same time as members of groups who are positioned, both conceptually and practically, as being primordially, essentially and inalienably different.

As look at differences between ways teachers and parents understand what multiculturalism is; what it is that they are dealing with, I find such conceptions markedly changed caught as they are within ironic contradictions between alterity and universality.

Framing others

At the beginning of this paper I suggest that multicultural policies set out to deal with diversity. I therefor set out to explore what diversity means in such school context and how it is dealt with. By 1998, I find what is dealt with to be a contradictory notion which both understands and maintains notions of otherness and yet maintains conceptions of commonalities. Teachers and parents no longer discussed their world as consisting of groups who were primordially and essentially other. Instead they discussed difference as something far more superficial yet still remorselessly present.

Gunew considers that these ironic contradictions which differentiate some as other are not innocent, but contain a violence, a framing which define conditions of relationships between margin and centre, Us and Other. Following from Derrida she argues that margins are ambiguous signs which serve to bind, provide the conditions of possibility of, that which is intrinsic through that which is extrinsic. She suggests that otherness, is not something formulated out there and away from itself but in relationalities between self and other. These are framings fraught with ambivalence. Even as, these exclusions and marginalisations make others, make the conditions of being other, they are have sense only in relation to self as framing 'sustains and contains that which , by itself, collapses forthwith' (P.28). As such other becomes shadows of selves caught at just this point between what is perceived as real and fantasy(Hall, 1996, Hall, 1997***). Susan places her voiceless 'groups' of others behind the most impermeable of barriers maintained by essentially different smells and cultures even as she is forced to acknowledge some common humanity as these groups work together. There is as Bhabha argues always something left over, something both outside and inside, a process of splitting on both sides of the division - in here as well as out there.

In arguing that these framings have terrible consequences, I take Fanon's suggestion that words, as well as deeds, are the weapons through which the terrors and violences of actioning otherness takes place. It is this constitution of the other through words which Spivak defines as absolute epistemic violence, the absolute annihilation of the other. defines as absolute epistemic violence, the absolute annihilation of the other. Textual ingredients, of thought and of deed, constitute others as shadow selves, obliterate the trace of the other, puts the social text of the other under erasure. Caught within dealings with race are struggles to formulate that which is self through the violently appropriated shadowings of others. The subtext of innate difference which serves to denote one group as essentially, primordially and seemingly forever always different are the inherent ingredient of these makings.

To say that teachers and parents understood themselves, defined senses of unities of what is us through others and in doing so silenced the other so completely, is only to look at the symptoms of the process. The logic of such violent framings is the need to turn them around otherwise. The violence inherent in the naming and practicing of race needs to be turned

upside down, its project re-inverted so that which names, rather than the named; Us, rather than other becomes the centre of analysis. As literatures of whiteness (See for example explain, the nature of 'we' who names, is something unaware, remains something unspoken, takes itself for granted. The teachers and parents whose conversations I discuss, know who they are but leave the discussion of who we are undisclosed. As I argue this it is interesting to look back at my discussions with Bill Kelty. My initial question asks not about others but about self, asks who he is. It is notable that Bill does not talk about his own identity but goes on to talk about those others, 'The Asians'****

I have argued that inherent within logics of diversity are framings which define that which is self through others, and seek to define that which is intrinsic and extrinsic to us. Yet I have argued that these relationalities fall apart. In an increasingly changing world, that which is intrinsic and extrinsic, margin and centre are also changing, contested, and fragmented notions. They interweave with trajectories of experience and history, work across the hyphen so that even as one seems part of one thing, one is part of another, one is made other. Nguyen's family comes from Vietnam, he returns to teachers college; a newly arrived parent at the school, his children live in Australia for most of their lives. Moreover, the story of Thuyen emphasizes ways that, in an increasingly globalized world, who one is becomes increasingly fragmentary, changing, and multipositioned.

These relational ways of making other struggle together with moments of understanding identity. Hall's (***) conception of the enlightened subject, the sociological subject and the post modern subject are useful here. Moments of enlightenment described the subject as fully centred individual, endowed with reason, able to choose. The sociological subject is understood as interactive between a core essential self and social and cultural worlds, between personal and public worlds. The post modern subject is understood as having no fixed identity but rather floats, as it is formed and reformed as we are represented within the day to day of the historical and cultural systems which come to represent us.

These different moments of understanding identity struggle together in conversations which seek to define relationalities of self and alterity. To teachers and parents in 1988 and again in 1988 conceptions of alterity remained intertwined with such notions of universality. In 1988 such considerations of alterity seemed more evident as teachers understand others in moments which Frankenberg defines as essentialism, whereby groups are understood as being essentially and biologically different. In 1998, these considerations seem different, as they seem become mediated by places we occupy in the social and cultural world. Nevertheless, conceptions of such sociological subjects' appear to be stabilized within world in ways which are unified and predictable (Hall). It replaces Hall argues one type of politics with another, a change from the struggle over the relations of representation to the politics of representation itself, a change from struggles against absolute othernesses, to far more subtle ones which nevertheless make otherness firmly and fixedly there.

In globalized times these conceptions becomes more complex. The nexus between geographic space and representations of the identities within it become deterritorialised as it becomes increasingly clear that cultures are neither coherent, bounded, contiguous nor naturally localised and locality bound, deterritorialised. In worlds of rapidly changing cultural, technological and economic interweavings resentments from elsewhere feed and emerge from the innermost sanctums of our very homes. As the world that is known, becomes separated from the world which is in easy reach, worlds become imagined in texts constituted by persons living not only within the reach local communities but within the conceptual and practiced imaginings of shifting, changing, fragmenting worlds. In my study of a particular Melbourne school teachers and parents tried to deal with just those changes. Even as they traveled ever faster over the net and in airplanes to sister schools, as information flowed rapidly through chat-sessions and television channels, even as people

migrated, floated from one place to another, teachers and parents remained as fixedly within the school as they had been before. It is within this context that conceptions of universalism struggle with alterity.

Multiculturalism in globalized times

In this paper I set out to discuss the impact of globalism on multiculturalism in Australia. To do this I considered two major foci within Government definitions of multiculturalism: that of diversity and its consequences and that of managing or dealing with that diversity. Crucial to this analysis is the story of a school and ways teachers and parents understood multiculturalism at both ends of this decade. I discuss ways that changed processes of marketisation, technologisation, communication as well as a diverse and expanding immigration program changed ways teachers and parents understood and tried to deal with diversity. Nevertheless, I found that conceptions of otherness remained contradictory and ambivalent caught as they were between ways of considering otherness and conceptualizations of subjectivity.

I suggest that these ways of understanding matter in that they continue to frame that which is intrinsic and that which is extrinsic in relation to Us. To understand multiculturalism as it takes place in globalized times, it is these contradictions which need to be deconstructed and reconsidered.