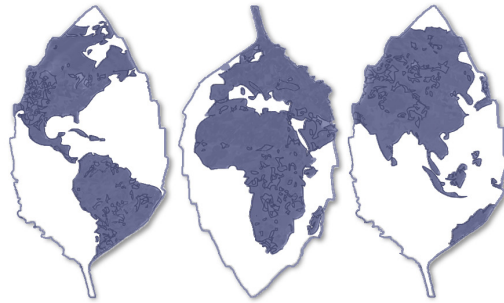


“BLACK RADICALISM/RADICAL HUMANISM: W.E.B. DU BOIS’S COOPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH”



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Since the inception of Atlantic slave system, the degree of systemic violence that Western societies have perpetrated upon African and Afro-descended peoples is astonishing. No historical community has been more affected by, or more aware of, how this modern form of domination has been mediated by European conceptions of humanism, humanity, and the human. Yet central to many of this community’s most important radical thinkers, inseparable from their reflections on freedom and unfreedom, is a commitment to radical humanism. However, this widespread and persistent feature of black Atlantic criticism is often ignored by scholars or treated as problems to be explained away. This talk focuses specifically on W.E.B. Du Bois’s Depression-era vision for a “cooperative commonwealth”, whereby black economic self-management would anticipate a new form of sociality that would also catalyze a multi-racial movement to overcome capitalism, abolish the color bar, and reconstruct American democracy.

Gary Wilder is a Professor in the Ph.D. Programs of Anthropology and History, and is the Director of the Committee on Globalization and Social Change at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. He is the author of Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World (Duke, 2015) and The French Imperial Nation-State: Negritude and Colonial Humanism Between the World Wars (Univ. of Chicago, 2005). He is currently co-editing a volume with Jini Kim Watson entitled The Postcolonial Contemporary (to be published by Fordam University Press) and is working on a book provisionally entitled “Cooperative Commonwealth: Radical Humanism and Black Atlantic Criticism.”

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