### Section A

**Name of PI:** Tania Roy and Paul Rae: Aesthetics and Politics  
**Department:**  
**WBS No:** R-103-000-076-646  
**Date & Amount Received:** 15/09/2009 & S$ 1125.82  
**Amount Balance:** SD $1036.17  
**Signature of PI:** [Signature]  
**Date:** 15/05/10

### Section B

(1) Final Report Write up (Itemization of books/works discussed, principal participants, invited speakers, financial statement of expenditures. A couple of paragraphs summarizing themes and nature of discussion. Please also refer to the quality of participation and list of books/description)

**Readings completed in Semester 2, AY 2008-09**
- Agamben, G. *The Open: Man and Animal*  
- Badiou, A. *Handbook of Inaesthetics*  
- Latour, B. *We have Never been Modern*  
- Nancy, J-L. *The Creation of the World or Globalization*  
- Ranciere, J. *The Politics of Aesthetics*

**Readings to be covered in Semester 1, AY 2009-10 (ongoing)**
- **26 August**  
- **16 September**  
- **7 October**  
- **28 October**  
- **18 November** wrap-up
Regular Participants from Semester 2, 2008-09; first term of reading group.

- Dr Paul Rae (English Language and Literature) [ellrpa@nus.edu.sg]
- Dr Tania Roy (English Language and Literature) [ellrt@nus.edu.sg]
- Dr Timothy Amos (Japanese)
- Dr Ingrid Hoofd (Communications and New Media)
- Dr Denis Kera (Communications and New Media)
- A/P John Phillips (English Language and Literature)
- Dr Luke O'Sullivan (Politics)
- Ms Anne Marie Schleiner (Communications and New Media)
- Dr David Teh (English Language and Literature)
- A/P Bobby Wong (Architecture)
- Cyril Wong (English Language and Literature)
- Anjali Kera Roy (Asia Research Institute)
- Saranindrantah Tagore (Philosophy)

Quality of Discussion

Participation maintained at least 8 and usually 10-12 individuals through the semester. Discussion extended for the full three allotted hours, and for the most part was focused and invested. On more than one occasion, participants voluntarily presented written critical responses to readings, raising the level of discussion considerably. Each discussion proceeded from an exposition of materials covered, to a critical discussion. At least one participant, Dr. John Phillips, has indicated that the group has directly engaged his research output this year; having informed a critical comparative review of recent works by Ranciere and Badiou, to be shortly published in the tier-1 journal, Theory Culture and Society.

While the first semester’s reading took the form of a critical survey of recent, widely translated and well-market works on cultures of late capitalism, globalization, bio-politics and governmentality, all the works were drawn from Continental European traditions of philosophy, social and cultural theory (Latour, Badiou, Agamben, Nancy, Ranciere). In the second semester, we diversified the scope of the group following discussions and participants’ interests; in order to consider questions that inevitably arose out of reading these texts in this part of the world. These involved the question of how theory might ‘travel’ to clarify parallel or competing versions of modernity, and what reformulations or alternatives might be more appropriate.

Guest Speaker and Workshop (Semester 1, 2009-10/current)

This one-day symposium on October 16th, 2009 was organized to coincide with a visit by eminent continental philosopher Alphonso Lingis. NUS faculty members from across the disciplines were invited to present working papers on any aspect of community within the contemporary context. As the title of the symposium “The Calculus of Community” suggests, there was a particular focus on the ways in which communities are measured, assessed or
understood, and on how processes of integration and differentiation both intersect and presuppose each other. As such, a critical engagement with the ideas of the writers cited above from our reading list, and/or the themes that follow, were encouraged:

- Contemporary definitions of community
- How communities are constituted, sustained and/or dissolved
- How the rhetoric of community functions within public discourse
- The ideology of community and communitarianism
- Community formation as a practice of inclusion and exclusion
- The relation of community to other modes and scales of social organization
- Culture and community
- The aesthetics of community creation and participation
- The relationship between community, locality, dispersal and displacement
- Community and temporality

Theoretical interventions into contemporary social and cultural theory were encouraged as a means of advancing reflection on these themes. Methodologies re-examined the conjunction between epistemology and history; phenomenology as a turn to questions of cultural location; and/or the historical relation between radical social critique and strategic politics.

We hosted 10 core participants at this day long workshop, and left attendance open to the Faculty and students. Alphonso Lingis presented an original essay, drafted for our purposes, during the event.

Alphonso Lingis also presented sections from his forthcoming book, entitled “Violence and Splendour” in an open hour long lecture to the FASS on October 15th, 2009; which had strong faculty-wide attendance of close to 50 persons. The lecture was engaged in a 15 minute response presented by Associate Professor Ryan Bishop (ELL), followed by 45 minutes of questions and discussion.

Currently, co-convenors Paul Rae and Tania Roy are organizing a discussion around Alphonso Lingis’ essay, by soliciting 4-5 articles from established international scholars and local cultural practitioners. These will engage the essays’ interrelated motifs of capital, identity, performance and community. The published discussion will be placed in a special section in a reputable IRJ.