

### A day of conversations with Banduk Marika and John von Sturmer

On 18<sup>th</sup> September 2009, members and visitors to the Institute were treated to a day of conversations with Banduk Marika and John von Sturmer. Many at the Institute are by now familiar with John and his work as an anthropologist, cultural critic, psychoanalyst, experimental writer, performer and film-maker, and participants on the day were delighted to have the opportunity to listen and speak with John again. Banduk, on the other hand, is a less familiar face at the Institute. An accomplished artist, committed environmentalist, traditional landowner and distinguished cultural leader from Yirrkala in northeast Arnhem Land, Banduk was appointed to the Institute last year as Special Fellow, Cultural Exchange Projects. The day of conversations presented itself as a first opportunity for participants to learn something of Banduk's life, work, politics and art, and we look forward to seeing and hearing much more from her in the coming years.



A contemplative Banduk Marika between sessions

Banduk began the session by generously offering a detailed account of her own life story. Banduk comes from a long line of activists *(Continued p.2)*

### New collaborative venture with Jadavpur University

Planning is under way for a programme of research and practice on the relationship between the international and the everyday. The broad outline of the initiative was agreed at meetings in Kolkata in February between the Institute and the Department of International Relations at Jadavpur.



(L-R) Phillip Darby, Professor Anjali Ghosh, Professor Partha Bose (Head of Department), Edgar Ng and Professor Sumita Sen at Jadavpur

The programme will involve the development of an archive about the ways international processes manifest themselves in ordinary life and how, in turn, the everyday can work to change the nature of international relationships. The informing assumption is that matters international should not be determined very largely in a "top-down" manner by state and corporate interests, working together with regimes of "experts". Rather, they need to be grounded in the lived experience of ordinary people.

In the first instance, we are interested in developing an archive of stories about how the international connects with everyday life. It is envisaged that, where possible, the written record will be supplemented with audio-visual material, thus enabling the production of documentary and feature films. The next stage is to uncover the politics of these stories and to pursue them in particular contexts. *(Continued p.3)*

## A day of conversations with Banduk Marika and John von Sturmer *(continued from p.1)*

– her father and his brothers put up the first land rights case against Nabalco and were signatories to the 1967 Bark Petition that now hangs in Parliament House in Canberra. Banduk herself was a successful claimant in the first Aboriginal copyright case in the early 1990s. Banduk now runs a successful land care organisation and nursery in Yirrkala.

However, she began her working life as a domestic servant in the Yirrkala mission, before moving to Darwin in the 1970s to work with disadvantaged young people, women and children at the YWCA. Later she moved to Sydney, where she commenced her career as an artist. During all these years away, Banduk returned frequently to Yirrkala, and witnessed many disturbing changes associated with the establishment of a mining town in the nearby vicinity, including a widespread increase in alcohol and drug related issues, and domestic violence. Upon returning to Yirrkala to live, Banduk set up an environmental management organisation, and for the past 20 years the key motivation underlying her work has been to reconnect young people to kin and country as a means of stemming the tide of abuse. In her recounting of this personal history, Banduk's frustration with the vicissitudes of various governments and their policies and practices was clear. Throughout, Banduk's constant struggle has been: how to continue doing what she knows needs to be done, despite the constant shifting of the ground beneath her feet?

John moved the discussion from the concrete and particular to the more abstract and general by asking participants to consider two related questions. First, what is it about Aboriginal society that is so compelling that many of those who move out almost inevitably return, not by force but by choice? And second, why has western society always been (for the most part) so oblivious to the richness that is Aboriginal society, ever intent instead on destroying it? John's suggestion was that, rather than seeing Aboriginal people as living in misery and destitution, we might instead see the continued participation of Aboriginal people in Aboriginal societies as an active and voluntary choice. From this perspective, truly remarkable Aboriginal people might be

considered as having been produced by – rather than in spite of – their participation in those same societies. Indeed it would seem that, far from being constituted solely by lack, Aboriginal societies are immensely engaging. This is true even under current circumstances of great difficulty, and John asked participants to consider what it is that makes Aboriginal societies so attractive as to produce amongst their members a resistance or reluctance to embrace the “new order” and the tantalising opportunities for “betterment” persistently on offer. John's hope is that, by asking and answering these questions, non-indigenous Australians might simultaneously find themselves forced up against their own limits, expectations and assumptions, thereby finally beginning to learn their place as humble guests in this land hosted by indigenous people.

A rhetoric of bridge-building pervades much of the discourse surrounding Australian indigenous/non-indigenous relations. The metaphor of the bridge is, of course, nothing more than a euphemism for assimilation. By contrast, Banduk and John encouraged participants to venture into the zone beneath any would-be bridge. Here the terrain is marshy, unstable and uncertain. Though rich with possibility, it offers no clear pathways in the nature of a bridge, a flowing river, or a well-travelled road. For many of us, the landscape of the humid intercultural zone is also incredibly unfamiliar, and participants on the day were grateful to have two such proficient intercultural zone dwellers as their guides.

Naomi Tootell



Heather Winter and John von Sturmer at the day of conversations between John and Banduk Marika

## 'Conversations' at The Institute of Postcolonial Studies: 18<sup>th</sup> September 2009

A day of listening about an ancient peoples' dispossession,  
Engaging in concerned, stimulating discussion  
Of the myriad clusters of diverse communities  
Languages, behaviours, traditions and customs  
Woven together like many patterns in a masterly work of art,  
Aboriginal Australia, stretching back in time to the Dreaming  
Forty thousand years and more ago.  
These pre-eminent Australians, defeated by the occupation  
Of those who came a mere two hundred and seventy years ago in recent time  
To bring a foreign civilization to an unknown continent  
To claim land which was not theirs to come and go.  
Now, a people disparaged, misunderstood, excluded  
By governments that have made promises and left them to a hopeless fate  
By the repeated failures to keep what should be sacred, inviolate.

But are we not Australians, old and new,  
advancing to a common goal  
Of well-being, happiness, freedom, prosperity and peace?  
Or do the faults and failures cause us to waiver,  
render feeble our call  
To work, to strive, for the betterment of all?  
These many tongues, expectations, life choices  
Desire the right to speak in their own voices  
Be heard, understood, receive assurance  
Of their essential role, inclusion, among all who call this country home.

Shelagh Goonewardene

Shelagh wrote this poem after attending the day of conversations. Born in Colombo, she was an actress for many years and has written extensively about Sri Lankan theatre. She is the mother of the late Devika Goonewardene.

## New collaborative venture with Jadavpur University (*Cont'd from p.1*)

Although the programme is framed in an open and expansive way, the idea is to generate specific projects of an applied nature in areas such as the struggles of Indigenous peoples, security, development, coastal regions and climate, and how far personal relationships can help shape our thinking about international relationships. In some fields the Institute already has substantial expertise, plus proposals ready to go or on the drawing board. Our colleagues at Jadavpur also have their own areas of particular concern and are considering which to take up in the programme.

A distinctive feature of the initiative is that it cuts across disciplinary boundaries and the enclosures of knowledge characteristic of the academy. A key consideration in our planning is the desire to harness the creativity and liveliness of artists, activists and younger scholars. Students will play an important part and their role will receive full recognition.

An inbuilt strength of the initiative is that it involves working across the North/South divide. In many ways it is likely that the international will appear in different guises when viewed from the vantage points of Kolkata and Melbourne. So also will the nature of the everyday as it is experienced in and recorded from these two locations. It is hoped that in the coming months our collaborative network will be extended by setting up further partnership arrangements in Harare and Caracas. The present initiative builds on the close working relationship between members of the Institute and the Department of International Relations at Jadavpur, which was formalised by the signing of a Memorandum of Association between the University of Jadavpur and the Institute in 2002.



(L-R) Moinak Biswas (Film Studies) with Phillip Darby in the new media lab at Jadavpur in February 2010

## News of Members

**Michael Dutton**, the Institute's founding Fellow, has returned to his chair in politics at Goldsmiths College, London, after a two year stint as the 'next phase' Professorial Research Fellow in the Griffith Asia Institute at Griffith University. While in Australia Michael's primary research focused on culture and passion in the formation of politics. His main project concerned the township of Anren in central Sichuan. This is the home of the famous 114 life-sized clay statues of the Rent Collection Courtyard, made and remade during the Cultural Revolution. The township is also the site of the biggest collection of Cultural Revolution relics which are housed in the private museum of Fan Jianchuan. While in Australia, Michael was inducted into the Academy of the Social Science.

**Rob McQueen** has been appointed to a chair in law at Monash University. Rob, a founding member of the Institute, played a major role in Council, the book series and in the seminar programme during his time in Melbourne. In 2005 he moved to Queensland to take up an appointment as professor and head of school at the Griffith Law School. He is currently President of the Australian and New Zealand Law and Society Association. We are delighted to have Rob back with us.

Matt Clancy, who worked at the Institute for about a year, is now with United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh. Matt first went to Bangladesh in 2008 as part of AusAID's Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development programme. He spent the year volunteering with UNDP, working as a policy researcher and communications adviser. At the beginning of 2010 he was offered a position as a consultant for a further year.



(L-R) Chris Barry, Frank Osowski, Louise Gourlay and Elizabeth Cham during the seminar *Philanthropy: Meet the Grantmakers*

## Ashis Nandy to visit

We are delighted to announce that Ashis Nandy, Distinguished Fellow of the Institute, will be visiting the Institute in second semester of this year. We very much look forward to Ashis and Uma being with us once again. In recent years Ashis has become a legend. In 2007 he was awarded the Grand Prize in the Fukuoka Awards. In 2008 he was included as one of the top one hundred public intellectuals in the world in an internet poll jointly conducted by the *Prospect Magazine* in the United Kingdom and the journal *Foreign Policy* in the United States. In the Independence Day special issue of the Indian periodical *The Week*, published on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2009, Ashis was named in a list of the "25 most valuable Indians".



Ashis Nandy at home in Delhi chatting with Phillip Darby in February this year

### Development Officer

The Institute is very pleased to announce the appointment of Sybil Gibb to the part-time position of development officer.



Sybil took a degree in journalism at RMIT and has worked in staff management and advertising. She has also undertaken voluntary work, involving drafting press releases, and been active in campaigning on social issues of concern to North Melbourne residents. For some time Sybil has been administrative assistant to Liz Cham.

## Thinking about philanthropy

On Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February Elizabeth Cham, Senior Fellow of the Institute, and the IPCS hosted “by invitation” meetings addressed by Peter Goldmark and Dr. Peggy Dulany who were visiting from the United States. In the morning session, organised by the Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network, Peter Goldmark spoke about the role of philanthropy in the environment and climate change debate. The afternoon session, attended by leading grantmakers from all sectors of Australian philanthropy, featured a conversation between Peggy and Peter about new directions in philanthropy. In her contribution to the discussion Peggy broached issues not normally raised in philanthropic circles. She spoke about the importance of working to change patterns of thought and behaviour, putting less emphasis on the rational and more on matters of the heart and feeling. Several people present commented later that this was a conversation that will remain with them for years. In both sessions there was lively exchange between the speakers and local participants.



An animated Paul Carter (left) and Peter Goldmark in deep discussion

Peter Goldmark directs the Climate and Air Program for Environmental Defence Fund in the United States. Earlier he was chairman and chief executive officer of the International Herald Tribune, executive director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and the budget director of the State of New York. He also served as president of the Rockefeller Foundation.

Peggy Dulany is Chair of the Synergos Institute, an independent nonprofit organisation dedicated to creating locally based solutions to poverty. Peggy founded Synergos in 1987 to facilitate relationships between grassroots leaders and political or business people. She has consulted with the United Nations and the Ford Foundation and has sat on over thirty nonprofit and corporate boards. Recently, with her father, David Rockefeller, she established the Global Philanthropist Circle.



Elizabeth Cham introducing Peggy Dulany. (From left) Louise Gourlay, Judy Roach, Elizabeth Cham, Peggy Dulany, Ian Donaldson, Joe Lo Bianco, and Lady Marigold Southey

### Reconciliation roundtable at Institute

The Institute hosted a roundtable discussion on Australia India reconciliation in the afternoon of Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February. The forum was an initiative of the Global Reconciliation network and it was occasioned by the recent violence directed against Indian students. Among those present were Indian students, representatives of student, local government and community organisations plus some academics. The forum was facilitated by Mick Gooda, ATSI Social Justice Commissioner. At the conclusion of discussion a press conference was held attended by SBS, Channel 10, AAP, the Age, Leader Newspapers and 3AW. Further information about the work of the network is available at [www.globalreconciliation.org](http://www.globalreconciliation.org).

## First Semester Seminar Programme

Convenor: Kevin Murray - working with Phillip Darby

Kevin Murray is Adjunct Professor, RMIT University, Research Fellow, University of Melbourne and Adjunct Research Fellow, Monash University.

A new series running over two years will explore the potential for dialogue across the South. This South is understood as two overlapping regions. There is the geographical South, involving those countries like Australia inhabiting the 'lower' world - including Latin America, Africa, South Asia and the Pacific. And there is the political Global South, a gathering of nations formed in opposition to the industrialised 'first world'.

The latter use of South has emerged as a name for what is otherwise known as the 'developing' or 'third' world. Unlike 'developing', the use of 'South' does not presume that its future will be measured by how much it catches up to the already developed world. What is particularly distinctive about this formation is the emergence of 'south-south' as an axis of engagement. In the colonial 'hub and spokes' model, non-Western countries needed to connect to the colonial centres in order to engage with each other. But increasingly trade and politics is bypassing these centres through bodies such as the IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa) association.

And now we are beginning to note south-south intellectual dialogues. A number of south-south academic networks have emerged in recent years to share common histories and discuss common challenges.



Co-patron Justice Anthony North speaking with Anoma Pieris after the launch of her book.

What is Australia's place in south-south? Australia's intellectual engagement with the South has been partly through postcolonial theory. This has involved rich dialogue between the centre and periphery about the impact of colonisation, particularly on cultural identity.



Asha Varadharajan at her seminar on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2009

South-south dialogues are not simply predicated on undoing Western colonial legacies, but witness a revival of interest in pre-colonial connections and a concern with new power configurations such as the rise of China and India. The dialogical process also extends decolonisation into new areas – for example, challenging universalism in fields of knowledge such as law, medicine and science.

This year, the focus will be on the conduits and barriers in Australia's engagement with the South. Next year will provide an opportunity to consider more fully the perspectives emerging from Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Topics include:

- The 'South' of Western knowledge, including international law
- The relation between 'South' and regionalism as a critique of universalism
- Extension of Indigenous Studies into 'mainstream' disciplines
- The degree to which knowledge can be abstracted from its location
- Ways of understanding knowledge 'ethically' in terms of the impact it has on the world

- Traditional knowledge and intellectual property
- Modernism as a local phenomenon
- New cartographies
- Settlerism

This series is not intended to propose South as a fixed model. It is used as a means of stirring discussion, challenging preconceptions and developing new partnerships across our region. *South Perspectives* is a network of academics established in 2008.

([www.southernperspectives.net](http://www.southernperspectives.net))

**7:30pm, Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> March**

### **Thinking South: Re-Locating Australian Intellectual Culture**

Modern Australia was formed by colonial invasion, dispossession of indigenous people, dependent development, and social struggles - framed in turn by the British Empire, the American hegemony, and neo-liberal globalization. Australian intellectual culture, formed to a large extent around universities whose institutional ideology emphasises a placeless modernism, has had difficulty in locating itself securely. A tension has long existed, for intellectuals of the settler population, between intellectual extraversion (in Hountondji's sense) at the price of dependence, and a resistant nationalism that acknowledges place at the price of marginality. One path beyond this is engagement with the legacy of colonialism and the situation of Australia's indigenous people now; another is engagement with the structures of world inequality, exploring connections around the global South. In this session I will sketch our place in a global political economy of knowledge; discuss the intellectual wealth of the periphery; and assess responses by Australian intellectuals to the difficulties and possibilities of our location in the world.



Raewyn Connell is Professor, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney. She is the author of *Southern Theory*, described in the *British Journal of Sociology of Education* as 'a key text for the period in which we are living.'

### **7:30pm, Wednesday, 31<sup>st</sup> March From Papunya to Rio: the model of Australian Indigenous art across the South**

Looking from outside, Australia has been extraordinarily successful in developing an Indigenous cultural industry. This is particularly evident in painting, but is also present in other areas - craft, dance, film and music.

The situation is different in many other countries of the South. The regional cultures of Africa, Pacific and Latin America are rich, but the role of Indigenous artists is often marginal. There are extremely few Indigenous artists exhibiting their work in Brazil. There are no Mapuche professional dance troupes in Chile. There is no school of Khoi-San desert painting in South Africa.

Does the experience of Indigenous arts in Australia have something to offer other countries of the South? And what might these other countries have to give in return? What would be the best means of setting up this kind of exchange? How might this exchange further develop Indigenous arts in Australia? How does a southern exchange differ from the profiling of Indigenous art in centres such as the Musée de Quai Branly in Paris?

These questions will be explored by Ilana Goldstein, a visiting academic from São Paulo, Brazil. Ilana is in Australia with the task of understanding how the Australian model might be applied to Indigenous communities in Brazil such as the Tupi. The session will take the form of a conversation about what Australia and Latin American countries might have to share in Indigenous cultures.



Ilana Goldstein, UNICAMP - Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Brazil.

Philip Morrissey, Academic Coordinator of the Australia Indigenous Studies program at the University of Melbourne, will be a respondent.

## 7:30pm, Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> April Dry Thinking and Human Futures

Alongside the dessication of parts of the planet thinking also grows drier. Instrumental reasoning not only fails to imagine the reciprocities that inform living human and non-human regions – and their exchange – but actively inhibits a capacity to narrate these. In effect, the disparagement of concrete thinking mediated through metaphors of all kinds is a leaching of language that directly impoverishes the physical and the psychic domain.

Paul Carter is Professor of Creative Place Research at Deakin University. His book *Dark Writing: geography, performance, design* was published in the Institute's *Writing Past Colonialism* series in 2009. His new book is entitled *Ground Truthing: Explorations in a Creative Region*.



Co-patron Robyn Archer talking with John Fillmore, Chair of the Institute's Board of Directors

## 7:30pm, Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> May 'Apply to the British Council. Form Within': Some Reflexions on Contemporary Space and Matters of Alignment

There seems to be an unseemly haste to renew the categories of antique thought. An inner conservatism fuelled by a convenient to-hand. Space is imagined and visualised largely as cartographic space; and the socio-political as discrete nations. How convenient, how too convenient! (The State can be erased as a spatial category for it claims a self-evident generality.) Ethnicity is self-evidently not the way of the future; nor the notion of *gemeinschaftlich* communities. Geography is dead. Space as a socially meaningful category has to be conceived

ethically; as providing zones of participation and communicative possibility. The notion of occasion is critical in this respect. Free trade creates globality; indeed, it relies on it. But globality is not constitutive of the social and cannot be accorded the status of end or guiding principle. The best it can create is a calculus of placement. The social demands a beyond to itself – a sense of future, a transcendental something. If we want to know where Nigeria is, fine, open your atlas. But there are more important issues: the matter of sensory manipulation (shopping malls, airport terminals, the interior of aircraft, the classroom), the deletion of personality, the confusion of well being with 'secure being' (law and order, safety first), the dissolution of personal responsibility. Such mechanisms are the true determinants of contemporary spatiality. In the meantime cyberspace itself is gutted. We are bound to the machine; but might not the machineries of our extension operate as it were hands-free and subject to command? The capacities of computer technology to provide zones of self-objectification are underplayed, being conceived under the head of consumption rather than election. Choice may be reconsidered as a disciplinary practice: not so much the creation of personal canons, but of what I might call a selfing-neighbourhood. This involves a project of self-identification and self-recognition. The notion of culture is inadequate to account for the 'natural' variability of thought, motive and action at the personal level. Let me suggest that the notion of sensibility returns us in a very direct way to the notion of ethical being.

John von Sturmer is a Senior Fellow of the Institute of Postcolonial Studies.



Lucas Ihlein at his presentation of *Bilateral Encounters: Blogging as Art* on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2009

## Falling Behind: politics of body states

The four events in this performance series staged encounters between audiences and artists working broadly in the mode of dance. Dance holds language back so that, potentially, other values can be recognised. With this performance series we aimed to present different opportunities for sensuously apprehending as much as understanding 'the other'. The events were also provocations in terms of the Institute as a civic space and how it might be used and inhabited. At the same time we tried to use the Institute to cut across the more conventional codes of performance and its reception – using its different spatial and interdisciplinary possibilities for their transformative potential. We were also interested in what happens before and around events – the 'pre-movement' and the poetics/politics of 'setting up'.

Hence it was a pleasure to have the twenty or so Saman dancers take over the Institute for a rehearsal which they did uninhibitedly, demonstrating how capable they were of settling in, being at home and making do, filling the Institute with their sociable preparations. Clearing the boardroom to make space for Brydie Dyson's 'Empty Vessels' installation (Listening with Irigaray 24/9) was also memorable for the diverse negotiations which needed to take place – the various ways of standing firm and giving ground, which were also explored in the well-attended 'Listening with Irigaray' event.



Jonathan Sinatra (*front*) and Stewart Shugg dancing at the Institute

The main conference room of the Institute came into its own as the place of encounter between the audience and the joyful dancers from Indonesia

(Dancing Welcome 12/9); and for the concentrated silent duet of Jonathan Sinatra and Stewart Shugg ('Managing Instability' 8/10). In the workly quality of Russell Dumas's choreography for this duet the dancers didn't 'occupy' or claim the space by any extrovert proclamation: they just attended simply and rigorously to their actions with one another, generously making it possible for spectators to be drawn in to all of their falls and shifts of weight.



The group of Saman dancers after their performance on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2009

For the performance of Steve Paxton's 'Satisfyin' Lover', we walked from the Institute to St Mary's church hall and were told that 'Walking there' was also a work of Paxton's. Once at the hall we broke into two large groups: those watching and those performing or being watched. The dance is pure 'action' in the ancient Greek sense – it involves a series of appearances where each person emerges, walking, as her/his own instance of the human, held (precariously perhaps) in the gaze of witnesses. All the events were oriented towards allowing human matter to be perceived as such: 'If we regard all events as already intelligible...one watches, responds, dances, whatever it is, with the event, which is different to an the understanding of the event'. There was a sense by the end of the series that a community had come into being – even if few people attended all of them.

Sally Gardner

## Report on two public meetings

For a few years now the Institute has been trying to take postcolonialism out of its “natural” academic habitat and explore how postcolonial insights can be deployed to influence public debate. We have also taken the view that postcolonialism has much to gain from engaging with the experiences of those directly working for change on the ground. With these considerations in mind, the Institute hosted a public meeting on climate change on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2009 and another, in collaboration with Mark the Evangelist – North Melbourne, Uniting Church of Australia, on asylum seekers on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

The three speakers at the forum on climate change have all made significant contribution to raising the awareness of environmental issues in Australia. Rob Adams, who chaired the meeting, has a long-standing involvement in promoting “greener” urban design. Denise Boyd brought a wealth of activist knowledge accumulated from working with major environmental organisations. Greg Hunt is of course the face of the Opposition on environmental issues. But what is less recognised is that his interest in the environment goes back to his university days. When he chose to focus his honours thesis on the pros and cons of an emissions trading scheme, the idea was virtually unknown in policy circles.



(L-R) Rob Adams, Denise Boyd and Greg Hunt

Given the diverse backgrounds of the speakers, it is perhaps not surprising that the meeting covered a wide range of issues. But the principal message that emerged was a political one: it is time for the West to accept its responsibility and act on protecting the earth’s environment. Certainly this

requires commitment and courage from our political leaders. But just as important is a shift in thinking within the general populace where self-interested motivations must be replaced by a more empathetic approach to “world” problems. In short, as one audience member put it, what is needed is a “surgery in attitudes”.



(L-R) Phillip Darby, Caz Coleman, Michael Roberts and David Manne

Much the same feeling was shared by those who attended the public seminar on asylum seekers three months later. The meeting was convened to address the controversies triggered by the arrival of boats of asylum seekers from Sri Lanka. In many ways, the new “crisis” was a replay of the Tampa incident in 2001. As David Manne pointed out, there had been no substantive change in the debate. And the victim mindset and racism as described by Michael Roberts were also on plain display back then. Even when hearing Caz Coleman detail the shabby Australian treatment of the refugees as compared to the response of some European countries where the refugee “problem” was so much more serious, one could not help but have a sense of déjà vu. It is clear that the issue of “border protection” will continue to be a lightning-rod for deep-seated cultural politics. Postcolonialism cannot afford to be sidelined and must play a proactive role in the debate.

Edgar Ng



(L-R) Phillip Darby, Libby Dempster, Brydie Dyson, Margaret Cameron and Sally Gardner on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2009

## Book Series: *Writing Past Colonialism*

Two books in the series are due for publication with the University of Hawai'i Press around the middle of the year. The first in line is by Lanny Thompson of the University of Puerto Rico and is entitled *Imperial Archipelago: Representation and Rule in the Insular Territories under U.S. Dominion after 1898*. It is a comparative study of the symbolic representations, both textual and photographic, of Cuba, Guam, Hawaii, the Philippines and Puerto Rico that appeared in both popular and official publications in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War of 1898. The book examines the connections between these representations and the different forms of rule established by the United States over these territories at the turn of the century.

The second is an edited volume by Morgan Brigg and Roland Bleiker, both of the University of Queensland, and is entitled *Mediating Across Difference: Oceanic and Asian Approaches to Conflict Resolution*. Against a background of the ethnocentrism of Western approaches to conflict resolution, this book shows that cultural difference, far from being solely a source of conflict, can be a valuable resource for working across difference. It explores rich and diverse insights into the management of conflict emanating from Asia, Oceania, Indigenous Australia and New Zealand. The book represents a first in its specific field.

Two other manuscripts are in the final stages of the reviewing process. Several others are further down the track.



(L-R) Assa Doran, Shohini Ghosh and Mridula Chakraborty after the presentations by Shohini and Mary John on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2009

## Student group initiatives

The newly re-formed IPCS student group is currently planning a symposium for postgraduate students in 2010. The details of the symposium are yet to be finalised, but we write now to gauge your interest in attending, presenting at, or even helping to organise such an event. At this stage we anticipate the symposium will be held over two days (most likely a Friday and Saturday), sometime during the latter half of this year.

Our proposed theme is the ethics and politics of postcolonial encounters: friendship, collaboration, negotiation and engagement. Potential topics that might address this theme are wide-ranging, as there are many possible sites and strategies for postcolonial collaboration and engagement. For instance: creativity, art, and performance; graffiti, crime and the law; activism, and theory; sport; policy, practice and governmental intervention; social, critical and legal theory; architecture, building and planning; media, public space, design and culture; biology, public health and medicine. We would welcome participants from any discipline, with a focus on any geographical region, and invite people to engage actively, creatively and critically with the symposium's theme in relation to their particular area of research interest. We would also encourage experimentation and diversity in the mode of presentation. Thus, while some presentations may stick to the traditional format of "giving a paper", others may incorporate visual, performative and/or participatory elements.

The group is also considering regular film nights, which engage with postcolonial themes and would welcome suggestions.

There are possibilities of postgraduate and undergraduate students contributing to a chapter in an edited book commemorating Devika Goonewardene. Also to find a place for their own work in the International and the Everyday programme outlined on pp.1 and 3. It would be good to have an early meeting to discuss these openings. If you would like to become involved, you can contact us directly:

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To find out more about forthcoming events, you can check the IPCS website at [www.ipcs.org.au](http://www.ipcs.org.au)

## **Postcolonial Studies**

The second half of 2009 produced two very different, though equally important, issues of *Postcolonial Studies*. The first, 12.3, saw a return to the kind of speculative and engaging scholarship that propelled *Postcolonial Studies* into the disciplinary spotlight over twelve years ago. Coming out of Goldsmiths College, London University, this issue showcased the sheer breadth of what postcolonial scholarship can mean to different scholars from within the same institution. From Alexander Düttmann's critical interrogation of the limits of performativity in Queer theory in 'A Man for All Seasons', through the playful engagement with memory in Bart Moore-Gilbert's extract from a forthcoming work entitled *My Father was a Terrorist?: a Kind of Memoir*; right up to Les Back's evocation of landscape, monument and geopolitical haunting at the borderlines of contemporary European 'union' in 'Beaches and graveyards'; this edition of *Postcolonial Studies* does much to redress the increasing reversion of the discipline to its purely literary origins. Capitalising on this sense of innovation at the margins of the discipline, issue 12.3 also witnessed the Journal's first foray into poster art with a deeply ironic and self-effacing original pull-out work by artist-in-residence in the politics department, John Reardon.

The second of the two issues to close 2009 was a themed special issue edited by Suman Seth of Cornell University. Revisiting a domain of postcolonial inquiry which in many ways was eclipsed by the supposed 'newness' of contemporary fascinations with the traces, flows and hybridisations of a globalised world order, Seth revisits the question of what happened to earlier efforts by postcolonial scholars such as Dipesh Chakrabarty and Gyan Prakash to critically engage with the linear histories and universalities of science studies. Divided into two main parts, this issue of the journal provides not only updates on well known areas of scholarship at the intersection of science and postcolonialism – cartography, botany and scientific method – but also three 'programmatic' essays looking forward to how the study of technoscientific flows may be revitalised by postcolonial analysis, as well as its inverse: what an infusion of materialistic science studies might do for postcolonial analysis. Authors appearing in this issue include Warwick Anderson,

Sandra Harding, Richard Rottenburg, Daniela Bleichmar and Charlotte Furth.

The year ahead promises to be a productive one with special issues on 'settler colonialism and indigeneity', 'art and politics' and 'Rey Chow, postcoloniality and interdisciplinarity'.

Finally it is with regret that *Postcolonial Studies* announces the resignation of Associate Professor David Bennett from the Melbourne Editorial Board. David's contribution to the Board was a valuable and committed one. The Journal wishes him well in his research endeavours. Replacing David will be Anoma Pieris from the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning at the University of Melbourne.

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