



University of
Western Sydney

CENTRE FOR
CULTURAL RESEARCH



Date

October 21, 2010

Time

2pm - 4:30pm

Venue

Gallery
Female Orphan School
Building EZ
Parramatta Campus
([view map](#))

RSVP

Ruth Harrison
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Apologies

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[View 2010 Seminar
schedule](#)

James Arvanitakis
(University of Western Sydney)

Staging Maralinga: Art, Justice and Community

Verbatim theatre has emerged as an important art form in telling untold stories as well as presenting fresh perspectives on incidents we are familiar with. From the re-enactment of the British decision to invade Iraq to the suicide of a refugee in Manchester, this form of theatre attempts to document the words and experiences of witnesses and reflect the story back to them. Much like other forms of documentary, however, the playwright is left with difficult decisions regarding what to record, what to leave out and how to make 'good theatre' not just a document. This is a political decision no different to other forms of documentary making.

This presentation reviews the emergence of verbatim theatre in its various forms and the lessons learnt from one production based on the story of nuclear veterans at Maralinga. Prepared with the assistance of playwright, Paul Brown, I interrogate the way such productions claim authenticity as well as their attempts to highlight issues of injustice. Drawing on various theoretical perspectives, I argue that verbatim theatre can both challenge and reinforce established forms of community.

Dr James Arvanitakis researches in the transdisciplinary areas of globalisation, citizenship, young people, security and the cultural commons - incorporating issues around hope, trust, safety and intellect. Having held various positions within human rights-based organisations including AID/WATCH and Oxfam Hong Kong, his research seeks to maintain a particular focus on issues of social justice. He has also worked with playwrights and artists to document stories of injustice. He is the author of *Contemporary Society: A Sociological Analysis of Everyday Life* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

Bobby Banerjee
(University of Western Sydney)

Histories of Oppression and Voices of Resistance: Towards a theory of Postcolonial Translocality

In this paper I want to interrogate the political, economic, and social conditions that enable the extraction of natural and mineral resources from Indigenous and rural communities in Africa, the Americas, and the Asia-Pacific. The end of direct colonialism and the emergence of the development state did not necessarily translate into forms of local sovereignty for these communities who bore the brunt of development. I describe the emergence of resource wars in the postcolonial era and how organizational technologies of extraction, exclusion and expulsion lead to dispossession and death. I conclude by discussing possibilities of resistance and develop the notion of translocal governance where local actors most affected by development are able to forge a series of temporary coalitions with international and national groups in an attempt to promote some form of participatory democracy.

Professor Bobby Banerjee is Associate Dean of Research at the College of Business at the University of Western Sydney. He has also held positions at the University of South Australia, RMIT, University of Wollongong and the University of Massachusetts. Prior to his academic career, he spent 5 years working for multinational corporations in the chemicals industry. Prof. Banerjee has over 100 publications, and is the recipient of 31 internal and external research grants. He is a Senior Editor of *Organization Studies*, and his book *Corporate Social Responsibility: The Good, The Bad and the Ugly* (Edward Elgar, UK) was published in November 2007.