

EMPATHY AND THE MYALL CREEK MASSACRE

Images, Humanitarianism & Empire

» JANE LYDON

In my recent book, *Photography, Humanitarianism, Empire*, I set out to explore how images have worked historically to create empathy and mobilise social action.¹ Many scholars have examined the role images have played in shaping ideas about race and difference, but I became interested in the broader array of emotional relationships and ideas they helped to define, and especially the ways in which they may have helped to argue for humanitarian ideals and, ultimately, human rights. A key question raised by this history is the way that images may prompt what eighteenth-century philosopher Adam Smith called ‘fellow feeling’, today often glossed as empathy. Today, empathy is generally considered to be a self-evident good. We try to teach our children empathy by encouraging them to imagine what it would be like to ‘walk in another’s shoes’. Empathy is seen to be an essential skill for medical students, in particular, alongside technical knowledge, so as to establish trust, the foundation of a good doctor-patient relationship. Over the last decade, a substantial body of research has argued that more empathetic doctors can be linked to ‘greater patient satisfaction, better outcomes, decreased physician burnout, and a lower risk of malpractice suits and errors.’² Empathy is considered a cognitive skill that can be taught, rather than a personality trait, and so empathy training is increasingly being incorporated into medical courses around the world. Frequently

such teaching is premised upon the belief that fictional narratives, art, or music may effectively convey another’s experience and allow the observer an enlarged understanding of their plight.

This belief has also played an important part in accounts of the development of human rights. For example, Lynn Hunt, in her groundbreaking history, *Inventing Human Rights*, argues that the psychological foundations for human rights emerged during the revolutionary period of the late eighteenth century in America and France, from a new humanitarian sentiment entailing forms of subjectivity characterised by sympathy and autonomy. ‘Sentimentalism’, the moral expectation that one should care about others, was grounded in new means, such as the epistolary novel, to bring observers into proximity with the distant victims of suffering.³ In Hunt’s account, the idea of human rights that emerged during the eighteenth century was succeeded by a period of relative ‘silence’ during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which was finally broken at the conclusion of the Second World War.⁴ In this analysis, the long ‘silence’ about rights was caused by the emergence of nation states — so that debate occurred within ‘specific national frameworks’ — and by the challenge to a shared humanity posed by racial science.⁵

More recently, others have complicated Hunt’s account by pointing to the proliferation

(background)
Montage using
article figures.

of debates, processes and events entailing concepts of human rights across the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, within imperial and global contexts. This research has begun to view the history of human rights as a process that developed dialogically between the Western metropole and the colonies, as debates about universal humanity were fought around race, slavery, colonialism and imperial rule. Rather than a 'silence' about human rights, this period witnessed a more complex series of engagements that shaped the emergence of a global category of shared humanity, formed in negotiations over the nature of empire and Britain's role in the wider world.⁶

This story reveals the close historical and intellectual relationship between human rights and humanitarianism, distinct and

to circumstance, response or refusal in systems of circulation and exchange that Sara Ahmed terms 'emotional economies'.¹² Extending the focus on the function of emotion in written texts, I also explored the practices surrounding viewing and using images, attending especially to their affective content. Such practices constitute humanitarian 'objects of feeling' — those toward whom we feel pity, anger or love.¹³

From the mid-eighteenth century a so-called 'cult of sensibility' arose in Britain, stressing a set of values that regarded sensation as a 'moral and emotional capacity', and that came to associate sensibility with refined feeling, discrimination and taste as well as an intense sensitivity to the suffering of others.¹⁴ Adam Smith's landmark 1759 work, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, examined the human capacity

HUMANITARIANISM IS A TERM THAT PASSED INTO EVERY DAY USAGE AFTER 1800 AND REFERS TO A PHILOSOPHY OF ADVOCATING OR PRACTISING COMPASSIONATE ACTION.

sometimes incommensurable as these concepts might be.⁷ Humanitarianism is a term that passed into everyday use after 1800 and refers to a philosophy of advocating or practising compassionate action.⁸ Eventually the expansion and stabilisation of this category, and its extension to all humankind within a growing view of the human as a universal, global category, produced the twentieth-century system of principles and law that we now term 'human rights'.

FELLOW-FEELING

As I have noted, many argue that this was enabled by new technologies of seeing and a sense of empathy with and responsibility for the suffering of others.⁹ Such concern has taken the form of emotions defined variously over the last three centuries as pity, sympathy, fellow-feeling, compassion and empathy.¹⁰ Scholarly interest in emotions, sometimes termed the 'affective turn', has defined emotions, or 'felt judgements', as embodied feelings experienced in the context of cultural values and principles.¹¹ Emotions may be collective, historically created and locally contingent, and respond dynamically

for 'pity or compassion, the emotion which we feel for the misery of others, when we either see it, or are made to conceive it in a very lively manner'.¹⁵ Smith argued that it is not just suffering that 'call[s] forth our fellow-feeling', but that with any 'passion' evinced from the object, 'an analogous emotion springs up, at the thought of his situation, in the breast of every attentive spectator.' Our joy for 'those heroes of tragedy or romance who interest us, is as sincere as our grief for their distress, and our fellow-feeling with their misery is not more real than with their happiness'.¹⁶ And he explained that while 'pity' and 'compassion' signify our fellow-feeling with the 'sorrow of others', by contrast 'sympathy' denoted 'our fellow-feeling with any passion whatever'.¹⁷ Smith's broad conception of sympathy encompassed what during the twentieth century increasingly came to be called 'empathy', a term introduced into English only in 1909 from the German '*Einfühlung*' (or 'feeling into').¹⁸ In its earliest turn of the century usage, empathy referred to an aesthetic experience, such as a reaction to a work of art, as well as a bodily response.¹⁹ During the twentieth century, empathy merged with and completely replaced the multidimensional concept of sympathy used by earlier observers.²⁰

Identifying the ultimate limit to such 'fellow-feeling', Smith pointed out that 'though our brother is on the rack, as long as we ourselves are at our ease, our senses will never inform us of what he suffers'. The viewer is limited by her own experience and remains unable to truly enter into another person's subjectivity; empathy can thus only be felt as an imaginative identification. In the end, 'it is the impressions of our own senses only, not those of his, which our imaginations copy'. Significantly, Smith grounded moral conduct in the experience of seeing and being seen; he considered sympathetic identification with others a natural response to viewing their experiences, prompted by an inner spectator, 'the man within'.

Twenty-first century neuroscience has corroborated Smith's notion of sympathy — or, as we now term it, empathy — as a process of mirroring the mental activities or experiences of another person based on the observation of his bodily activities or facial expressions.²¹ The term 'mirror neuron' refers to the significant overlap between 'neural areas of excitation' aroused by our own experience as well as our observation of someone else's.²² Our consciousness of this relationship — our bodily observation and awareness of our simultaneous separateness and identification — is central. Smith wrote, 'We suppose ourselves the spectators of our own behavior, and endeavor to imagine what effect it would, in this light, produce upon us. This is the only looking-glass by which we can, in some measure, with the eyes of other people, scrutinize the propriety of our own conduct.'²³ Smith's recognition of our innate disposition for motor mimicry anticipated a mode of sympathy, moral appeal and campaign for reform designed to confront viewers with the plight of suffering victims in order to prompt empathy.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the cult of sensibility, along with its stereotype, 'the Man of Feeling', had become the object of parody and satire, suggesting its decline. However, a culture of 'sentimentalism' emerged from this emotional regime, infused with a new power by evangelical Protestantism, to become a key element of nineteenth-century philanthropy and humanitarianism.²⁴ The rise of 'humanitarianism' has been closely linked to the antislavery movement and a shift in perception

towards the end of the eighteenth century that made slavery appear morally unacceptable to many. This new cultural orientation emphasised sympathy for suffering and revulsion from pain, uniting ethical witnessing with a moral universalism and a notion of necessary action to alleviate suffering.²⁵

Humanitarian narratives were an integral aspect of the culture of sentimentalism and the growing moral expectation that one should care about others. Thomas W. Laqueur's classic essay, 'Bodies, Details, and the Humanitarian Narrative', argued that the humanitarian narrative 'relies on the personal body, not only as the locus of pain but also as the common bond between those who suffer and those who would help': detailed accounts of the suffering body elicited 'sympathetic passions' that could move a person from feeling to action.²⁶ In addition, in many contexts humanitarians successfully deployed graphic scenes of distress as a powerful prompt to sympathy, expressing through visual means the liberal political philosophy of rights and, some argue, contributing to the abolition of slavery throughout the empire with the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833.²⁷ According to this view, such images create an empathetic imaginative identification with those unlike 'us' that expands the category of humanity itself.²⁸

HUMANITARIAN IMAGES IN COLONIAL AUSTRALIA

So what evidence do we have for the work of these emotional images and narratives in colonial Australia? How did colonial experience contribute to global debates about universal humanity and rights? One landmark scandal that polarised observers across the British Empire took place during a decade that marked the height of metropolitan antislavery sentiment, yet was also a time of intense frontier violence in south-eastern Australia. Following the horrifying Myall Creek Massacre of June 1838, humanitarians in New South Wales and Britain attempted to arouse compassion for the victims using affective antislavery strategies. But colonists had become increasingly agitated by violent clashes with Aboriginal people, and many argued for their extermination.



(above)
View across Myall
Creek.

PHOTO:
IAIN DAVIDSON FAHA

In recent years new research has begun to reveal how 'slavery' was invoked in the settler colony of Australia, seemingly so distant from the Atlantic slave trade and its canonical forms of subjection and exploitation.²⁹ The British campaign that culminated in 1833 accumulated tremendous cultural, moral, and affective power, and was subsequently adopted for many different social causes throughout the nineteenth century.³⁰ Following the abolition of slavery, the movement's leaders sought to redirect popular interest from abolition to the empire's Indigenous peoples, as exemplified by the 1835–6 'Select Committee on Aborigines' inquiry (Aborigines Select Committee). This applied the language of antislavery to British settlers and sought to define principles that would uphold the rights of Indigenous people across the empire. In particular, a range of diverse relations between colonists and Indigenous peoples, including forced indenture, trafficking and prostitution, were characterised by humanitarians and Indigenous people as slavery.³¹ Such analogies reveal how metropolitan ideas about humanity, freedom, and ultimately human rights, have been tested against colonial experience, whilst domestic Australian interests were adjudicated by imperial humanitarianism, in a dialogue that was global in scope.³² However, recent work on imperial humanitarianism has

also traced the imbrication of humanitarian ideals and the apparatus of colonial government, challenging simple oppositions between moral and political, philanthropic and colonial interests.³³

1836 had been a particularly bloody year in New South Wales, as Aboriginal people of the northern plains came under intense siege from squatters and convicts moving out into their country. The public climate of fear and anger in the colony was exacerbated in October by news of the murder and ill-treatment of survivors from the wreck of the *Stirling Castle* on Fraser Island in Queensland, and that of the *Charles Eaton* in Torres Strait. Earlier, the *Oldham* had been wrecked in 1832 in the Pacific, with only seven surviving a massacre to become enslaved.³⁴ Framed as horror stories, in which Indigenous people figured as savage cannibals, these accounts prompted vengeful responses from colonists, with many urging extermination. Such nightmares were given weight by 'scientific' arguments concerning the supposed essential racial difference of Aboriginal people, considered by some contemporaries to represent an 'intermediate stage' of human development.³⁵ In this way the evangelical language of brotherhood and a shared humanity was severely challenged by popular views of Indigenous people as primitive savages.



In late September 1838 Sydney newspapers began to publish 'most horrible accounts' of events at Myall Creek, in which eleven stockmen murdered around thirty-three Weraera people, predominantly women and children. They rounded them up, tying them together with rope, then led them to a creek bed where they were hacked or clubbed to death and then decapitated.³⁶ At a time of heightened public fear and anger in New South Wales, primitivist stereotypes battled with affective antislavery strategies employed by humanitarians both in Australia and in Britain. So missionary Lancelot Threlkeld of the London Missionary Society sought to invoke atrocity to horrify and shock settlers, in arguing in his 1837 annual report that a 'war of extirpation' had long existed, and providing graphic descriptions of torture and cruelty.³⁷ As Laqueur observes, narratives such as Threlkeld's, that spoke in such an extraordinarily detailed way about 'the pains and deaths of ordinary people', produced a literary 'reality effect' in which the body as locus of pain formed a common bond between sufferer and observer.³⁸

THE LIMITS OF EMPATHY?

Mistrust, however, has always surrounded such representations and the emotions they seek to excite.³⁹ As considerable recent scholarship has argued, it is clear that the emotions – such as empathy and compassion — aroused by such narratives and imagery do not always lead to reform or progress, but may in fact maintain inequalities and foster division.⁴⁰ Wariness about empathy stems from three chief problems: feeling is not necessarily linked to action, so that these emotions may simply reinforce the status quo; representations of suffering may obscure the other's subjectivity, distancing and diminishing their humanity; and third, and most unsettling, as Lauren Berlant suggests, perhaps 'compassion and coldness are not opposite at all but are two sides of a bargain that the subjects of modernity have struck with structural inequality'.⁴¹ Such doubts have led some to conclude that humanitarianism itself relies upon a notion of the human that is partial, limited and exclusive.⁴²

For these reasons, visual theorists exploring the operation of empathy and antislavery imagery have also focused on identifying its *limits*. Marcus Wood's analysis of antislavery visual culture concludes that slaves were represented as passive beneficiaries of white compassion, reflecting abolitionist perceptions of black men and women as human, but not equals.⁴³ Wood argues that the abolitionist movement's logo, Wedgwood's medallion of the kneeling slave captioned 'Am I not a man and a brother?', helped to popularise the antislavery movement, but emphasised the slave's helplessness and need of white compassion.⁴⁴ This strategy was also used to represent the victims of Myall Creek in official accounts, as actors such as Governor Gipps emphasised their peaceful and harmless behaviour.⁴⁵



(far left)
Smoking ceremony,
Myall Creek.

PHOTO:
JAIN DAVIDSON FAHA

(above)
The emblem of
the abolitionist
movement, the
kneeling slave in
chains, surrounded
by the words 'Am
I Not a Man and a
Brother?' Medallion;
jasper ware; chained
kneeling slave in
relief in black, with
inscription above;
set in an oval gold
mount.

SOURCE: TRUSTEES OF
THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

(right)
'Phiz' (Hablot Knight Browne),
'Australian Aborigines
Slaughtered by
Convicts'.

SOURCE: PELHAM CAMERON, *THE CHRONICLES OF CRIME; OR, THE NEW NEWGATE CALENDAR*, LONDON: SYDNEY: PRINTED FOR T. TEGG, 2 VOLUMES, 1841, BETWEEN PAGES 472–3.



One rare image, produced in London within three years of the event, 'Australian Aborigines Slaughtered by Convicts', circulated widely among contemporaries. This engraving by 'Phiz' was published in the 1841 *Chronicles of Crime; or, The New Newgate Calendar*, showing the Myall Creek victims being dragged along by ruffians on horseback (see fig. above). 'Phiz' was the pseudonym of Hablot Knight Browne, a popular artist best known for illustrating Charles Dickens's *Pickwick Papers* and many other novels from 1836 onwards.⁴⁶ The *Newgate Calendar*, originally a register of names compiled each month by the Ordinary, the gaol-keeper of London's most notorious prison, developed into a series of sensational accounts written by the Ordinary, in order to supplement his wages.⁴⁷ From its beginnings, British crime reporting of this kind was intended to be both instructive and profitable.⁴⁸ Phiz produced 52 engravings for the 1841 edition, perfectly harmonising with the *Calendar's* melodramatic tone. This

edition was published in London, Sydney, Hobart and Glasgow by Thomas Tegg, one of the largest publishers of his day, and is the first example of an attempt to exploit colonial as well as metropolitan audiences.⁴⁹ Among the *Calendar's* 500 cases, the only other Australian crimes included were the escape of Mary Bryant, and the exploits of Van Diemen's Land convict Alexander Pierce, a murderer and cannibal.⁵⁰ These sensational tales characterised the colonies as places of savagery, bestiality, daring and transgression.

The upraised, shackled hands of the Aboriginal people in Browne's image evoke Wedgwood's antislavery logo, emphasising the innocence and vulnerability of the victims — but also their passivity and need to be helped by the white humanitarian.⁵¹ Simultaneously, the image exaggerates the brutality of the perpetrators, drawing them as caricatures rather than realistically. The framing text describes the 'atrocious cold-blooded massacre of which



these persons were guilty' and contrasts the 'victims', 'the unoffending aboriginal natives of the country', with their murderers, 'Englishmen, who, however, from their sanguinary disposition, do not deserve that they should receive such an appellation.'

The text goes on to describe the 'unresisting', 'hapless wretches' who were 'brutally butchered', and finishes its account of the atrocity by describing how '[t]he demon butchers then placed the bodies in a heap, kindled an immense fire over them, and thus attempted to destroy the evidence of their unheard-of brutality.'⁵²

degraded convicts, ignoring the wider context of frontier violence. For example, the discovery of the crime is attributed to the observation of carrion birds at the site, completely omitting the two white ex-convicts who testified against the murderers. This perspective echoes that of the Aborigines Select Committee, for whom lower-class white convicts were the source of colonial sin and contagion. The committee's introduction argued that 'unoffending' Australian Aboriginal people 'suffered in an aggravated degree from the planting among them of our penal settlements', and that 'very little care has since been taken



(above, left)
'The Man with the Carpet-bag' by 'Phiz' from *Chronicles of Crime*.

SOURCE: PELHAM CAMERON, *THE CHRONICLES OF CRIME; OR, THE NEW NEWGATE CALENDAR*, LONDON: SYDNEY: PRINTED FOR T. TEGG, 2 VOLUMES, 1841, BETWEEN PAGES 312–313.

(above, right)
Frontispiece by 'Phiz'.

SOURCE: PELHAM CAMERON, *THE CHRONICLES OF CRIME; OR, THE NEW NEWGATE CALENDAR*, LONDON: SYDNEY: PRINTED FOR T. TEGG, 2 VOLUMES, 1841.

HUMANITARIAN GOVERNANCE RELIED UPON POPULAR SENTIMENT REGARDING THE CLAIMS AND CAPACITY OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE, AND IMAGERY PROVIDED A POWERFUL TOOL IN THESE DEBATES.

This reversal, in which the white masters rather than their black victims are cast as 'savage', was a common antislavery trope in this period, expressed also in literary responses to Myall Creek such as Eliza Hamilton Dunlop's poem 'The Aboriginal Mother', which echoed transatlantic antislavery poetry.⁵³

As signalled by the caption 'Australian Aborigines Slaughtered by Convicts', it is also significant that this popular account portrays the atrocity as a single episode initiated by

to protect them from the violence or the contamination of the dregs of our countrymen:⁵⁴ As Elizabeth Elbourne points out, the Committee's emphasis on personal and national morality deflected attention from 'structure' — that is, the system of colonisation itself and its inherent inequalities.⁵⁵ Others have noted that colonial scandals reveal the transgression of rules, ultimately serving to re-sanction social norms.⁵⁶ Framing frontier atrocity as convict crime allowed both colonists and humanitarians

(right)

Needlework picture of kneeling slave, America, 1820–55, wool on linen.

THE COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG FOUNDATION. MUSEUM PURCHASE. ACCESSION #1990-222, IMAGE #DS1995-0174.

(far right)

Sugar bowl, England, 1825–30, hand-painted bone china.

THE COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG FOUNDATION. MUSEUM PURCHASE, MR. AND MRS. JOHN C. AUSTIN, PHYLLIS M. CARSTENS, MRS. JOYCE LONGWORTH, ANN WINTER ODETTE, JOHN F. ORMAN, JR., MS. JOAN M. PLOETZ, MR. AND MRS. THOMAS G. POTTERFIELD, MR. AND MRS. ROBERT PRIOLEAU, JOAN N. WOODHOUSE, THE DWIGHT P. AND ANN-ELISA W. BLACK FUND, AND THE JOHN R. AND CAROLYN J. MANESS FAMILY FOUNDATION. ACCESSION #1998-37, IMAGE #DS1998-068.



to displace their own complicity in Indigenous dispossession. By laying the blame for damage to Indigenous peoples not on the system of colonisation itself but on a class of already guilty outlaws, imperial authority was reconstituted.

For white viewers, the savage white represents a narrative figure that Greg Dening called a 'comfortable' sort of villain, one whose wickedness is so unimaginably distant from the viewer's experience that it allows us to feel safely detached.⁵⁷ Such a conception of atrocity renders it as grotesque and the victims as other, conferring a sense of the distance of these people and events from the viewer's everyday present, and effecting narrative closure for at least some white viewers. For popular audiences, the visibly depraved cartoon figures of Phiz's convicts made it clear where blame should be placed: at the door of these (already convicted) murderers rather than with the larger forces of state-sanctioned violence and dispossession, explaining the event as a tragic crime rather than an inevitable consequence of white invasion.

CONCLUSION

This historical example demonstrates the ambivalent and politicised effects of such affective strategies. The historical conjunction of British imperial philanthropy and settler violence in New South Wales during the 1830s shaped radically polarised views regarding frontier violence and the impact of colonisation upon Indigenous people. Humanitarians represented the Myall Creek massacre as an atrocious cruelty



toward Aboriginal people, but colonists saw their eventual conviction as an injustice to the white perpetrators. Many colonists refused to acknowledge the basic humanity of the victims, and notoriously, one juror in the Myall Creek trial later declared that 'I look on the blacks ... as a set of monkeys, and I think the earlier they are exterminated from the face of the earth the better. I knew well they were guilty of the murder, but I, for one, would never consent to see a white man suffer for shooting a black one.'⁵⁸ As many have argued, such responses to Myall Creek prompted a frontier culture of secrecy, and hindered colonial officials pursuing similar crimes against Aboriginal people for decades afterwards, because they were unsure of the legal outcome.⁵⁹

Humanitarian reactions to Myall Creek, and attempts to awaken compassion for its victims, were clearly shaped by the British antislavery movement. Yet the politicisation of humanitarian sentiment both in Sydney and London limited the impact of literary and visual accounts. The upper-class humanitarians of the 1836 Aborigines Selection Committee were concerned with morality — atonement and redemption — and particularly the sins of the settlers. Seen in this context, we must recognise the class-based displacement of guilt on to already-condemned

convicts, while leaving the larger apparatus of colonisation unscathed. Philanthropists usually stopped short of acknowledging Aboriginal rights to the land, demonstrating that their idealising empathy with Indigenous peoples was deeply complicit with dispossession.

Nonetheless this lobby constituted a powerful voice for justice in 1830s New South Wales. Among its concrete effects, the humanitarian campaign prompted the creation of a colonial philanthropic network, and in London, the Anti-Slavery Society and the Colonial Office pushed to admit Aboriginal evidence into court, and to bring Indigenous imperial subjects under the protection of English law.⁶⁰ Despite the inequality of affective relationships such as pity and protection, and the undeniable *limits* of empathy, such historical examples demonstrate that sentimental responses may have real political consequences. Humanitarian governance relied upon popular sentiment regarding the claims and capacity of Aboriginal people, and imagery provided a powerful tool in these debates. In 1830s practice, common primitivist stereotypes showing Aboriginal people as non-human, primitive, and cannibal, were opposed by images that argued for their fundamental humanity. Even as Phiz's engraving of the imprisoned Weraiarai reduced them to abject victims, and obscured the structural forces behind their plight, he drew upon familiar and powerful abolitionist imagery to assert their innocence and shared status as human beings. ¶



JANE LYDON FAHA is the Wesfarmers Chair of Australian History at the University of Western Australia, and currently serves as the Chair of History (2016–18). Her research centres upon Australia's colonial past and its legacies in the present.

Her books include *The Flash of Recognition: Photography and the Emergence of Indigenous Rights* (NewSouth, 2012), which won the History Award in the 2013 Queensland Literary Awards, and (ed.) *Calling the Shots: Aboriginal Photographies* (Aboriginal Studies Press, 2014) which brings together Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal scholars to explore the Indigenous meanings of the photographic archive. Her *Photography, Humanitarianism, Empire* was published by Bloomsbury in July 2016.

1. Jane Lydon, *Photography, Humanitarianism, Empire* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016). I am grateful to Bloomsbury for allowing me to draw from my introduction. For support in researching the Myall Creek massacre I also acknowledge the Australian Research Council Discovery project 'Anti-Slavery in Australia' (DP140101793); I am most grateful to my co-Chief Investigators Fiona Paisley and Jennifer Burn, and Partner Investigators Philippa Levine and Kevin Grant, for their intellectual engagement and enthusiasm throughout the project.
2. For a recent review see Bee Teng Lim, Helen Moriarty, Mark Huthwaite, Peter Gallagher, Roshan Perera, 'Teaching Empathy to Undergraduate Medical Students: Translation to Practice', *Focus on Health Professional Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 17 (2016), 59–70. Quotation from Sandra Boodman, 'How to Teach Doctors Empathy', *The Atlantic*, 15 March 2015 <<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/03/how-to-teach-doctors-empathy/387784/>> [accessed 29 January 2017].
3. See for example Carlo Ginzburg, 'Killing a Chinese Mandarin: The Moral Implications of Distance', *Critical Inquiry*, 21 (1994), 46–60; Karen Halttunen, 'Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture', *American Historical Review*, 100 (1995), 303–34.
4. Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2007).
5. Hunt, p. 176.
6. Emily Baughan and Bronwen Everill, 'Empire and Humanitarianism: A Preface', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40 (2012), 727–8.
7. Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown, 'Introduction', in *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy*, ed. by Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 1–28.
8. Wilson and Brown, p. 2. While rights are often secured through an appeal to the humanitarian principle of ending unnecessary suffering, these orientations may exist in tension, as exemplified by the slave owner who campaigns for the kinder treatment of slaves or, conversely, the abolitionist who nonetheless submits to the apparatus of slavery in order to buy and free the enslaved.
9. Gary J. Bass, *Freedom's Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention* (New York: Knopf, 2008). For a prominent dissenting view, see Samuel Moyn's *The Last Utopia* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 19–20, 243n. Moyn rejects the connection between humanitarianism and human rights, which, he argues, took recognisable form only in the 1970s. In my opinion, Moyn's definition of

- human rights is unhelpfully narrow, and I prefer to see humanitarianism and human rights as overlapping concepts with interlinked histories.
10. While it is true that each of these distinct categories has attracted scholarly definition and historicisation, as I explain further, here I seek to emphasise what they *share*.
 11. Thomas Dixon refers to 'felt judgements'. See Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Barbara Rosenwein, 'Worrying about Emotions in History', *American Historical Review*, 107 (2002), 921–45.
 12. Affect is not merely a universal dimension of *attachment*, it is always already an *attachment to*, given specificity by a range of social encounters. Sara Ahmed, 'Happy Objects', in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010), pp. 29–51.
 13. Sarah Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), pp. 8–9, p. 83.
 14. Daniel Wickberg, 'What Is the History of Sensibilities?', *American Historical Review*, 112 (2007), 661–84; See also James Chandler, 'The Politics of Sentiment: Notes toward a New Account', *Studies in Romanticism*, 49 (2010), 553–75.
 15. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. by D.D. Raphael and A.L. Macfie (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, [1759] 1984), p. 9.
 16. Smith, p. 10.
 17. Smith, p. 10.
 18. Karsten Stueber, 'Empathy', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last revised 14 February 2013 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/empathy/>> [accessed 29 January 2017].
 19. Carolyn Burdett, 'Is Empathy the End of Sentimentality?', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 16 (2011), 259–74.
 20. I aim to use terms such as 'sympathy' within their historical context; however, in drawing on the extensive recent critical literature focused upon a broad and inclusive usage of 'empathy', I use this latter term to refer to the constellation of sympathetic emotions. Some now consider empathy to refer to a closer identification with another's emotional state than sympathy, but I choose to retain the inclusive sense of Smith's 'fellow-feeling'.
 21. See for example C. Daniel Batson, 'These Things Called Empathy: Eight Related but Distinct Phenomena', in *The Social Neuroscience of Empathy*, ed. by Jean Decety and William Ickes (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009), pp. 3–16; C. Daniel Batson, *Altruism in Humans* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
 22. Giacomo Rizzolatti and Corrado Sinigaglia, *Mirrors in the Brain: How our Minds Share Actions and Emotions*, trans. Frances Anderson (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).
 23. Smith, p. 112.
 24. John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).
 25. David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).
 26. Thomas Laqueur, 'Bodies, Details, and the Humanitarian Narrative', in *The New Cultural History*, ed. by Lynn Hunt (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 176–204.
 27. Elizabeth B. Clark, "'The Sacred Rights of the Weak": Pain, Sympathy, and the Culture of Individual Rights in Antebellum America', *Journal of American History*, 82 (1995), 463–93; Maurice O. Wallace and Shawn Michelle Smith (eds), *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).
 28. In this vein, scholars such as Martha Nussbaum, Richard Rorty and K. Anthony Appiah have argued for models of cosmopolitan reading that allow the reader to bridge difference: Richard Rorty, 'Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality', in *On Human Rights: The Oxford Amnesty Lectures*, ed. by Stephen Shute and Susan Hurley (New York: BasicBooks, 1993), pp. 111–34; Martha Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life* (Boston: Beacon, 1996); K. Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006).
 29. Fiona Paisley and Jane Lydon, 'Australia and Anti-Slavery', *Australian Historical Studies*, 45 (2014), 1–12. See contributions to this special issue.
 30. Richard Huzzey, for example, argues that having achieved their purpose, the older abolitionist organisations declined but were replaced by newer forms of anti-slavery, particularly evident in literature and culture: Richard Huzzey, *Freedom Burning: Anti-Slavery and Empire in Victorian Britain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); Seymour Drescher, *Capitalism and Anti-Slavery: British Mobilization in Comparative Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).
 31. Penny Edmonds, 'Collecting Looerryminer's "testimony"', *Australian Historical Studies*, 45 (2014), 13–33; Jane Lydon, 'The Bloody Skirt of Settlement: Arthur Vogan and Anti-Slavery in 1890s Australia', *Australian Historical Studies*, 45 (2014), 46–70; Fiona Paisley, 'An Echo of Black

- Slavery: Emancipation, Forced Labour and Australia in 1933', *Australian Historical Studies*, 45 (2014), 103–125.
32. Lydon, *Photography*; Adele Perry, 'Vocabularies of Slavery and Anti-Slavery: The North American Fur-Trade and the Imperial World', *Australian Historical Studies*, 45 (2014), 34–45; Baughan, 727–8; Rob Skinner and Alan Lester, 'Humanitarianism and Empire: New Research Agendas', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40 (2012), 729–47; Andrew Porter, 'Trusteeship, Anti-Slavery and Humanitarianism' in *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, ed. by Andrew Porter (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 222–46.
 33. Alan Lester and Fae Dussart, *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Intervention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Lydon, *Photography*.
 34. Allan McLInnes, 'The Wreck of the "Charles Eaton"' (Cairns: Cairns Historical Society, 1983), 198–220; Kay Schaffer, *In the Wake of First Contact: The Eliza Fraser Stories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
 35. See for example 'Domestic Intelligence', *Sydney Herald*, Wednesday 29 August 1838, p. 2. For histories of racial thought see for example Bronwyn Douglas and Chris Ballard (eds), *Foreign Bodies: Oceania and the Science of Race 1750–1940* (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2008).
 36. For accounts of the massacre see Alan Atkinson and Marian Aveling (eds.), *Australians 1838* (Sydney: Fairfax, Syme and Weldon Associates, 1987), pp. 54–60; R.H.W. Reece, *Aborigines and Colonists: Aborigines and Colonial Society in New South Wales in the 1830s and 1840s* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974); Brian Harrison, 'The Myall Creek Massacre' in *Records of Times Past: Ethnohistorical Essays on the Culture and Ecology of the New England Tribes*, ed. by Isabel McBryde (Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1978), pp. 17–51; Roger Milliss, *Waterloo Creek* (Ringwood, Victoria: McPhee Gribble, Penguin Books, 1992).
 37. Niel Gunson, *Australian Reminiscences and Papers of L.E. Threlkeld, Missionary to the Aborigines, 1824–1859* (Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1974), vol I, p. 139. See also Anna Johnston, *The Paper War: Morality, Print Culture, and Power in Colonial New South Wales* (Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2011). Threlkeld's language also recalls the much older critique of colonisation by sixteenth-century Dominican reformer Bishop Bartolomé de las Casas. I thank Kevin Grant for drawing my attention to this link.
 38. Laqueur, 178.
 39. Karen Halttunen, 'Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture', *American Historical Review*, 100 (1995), 303–334.
 40. Berlant, 'Introduction: Compassion (and Withholding)', in *Compassion: The Culture and Politics of an Emotion*, ed. by Lauren Berlant (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 1–24.
 41. Berlant, p. 10.
 42. Lynn Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).
 43. M. Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America 1780–1865* (New York: Manchester University Press and Routledge, 2000); M. Wood, *The Horrible Gift of Freedom: Atlantic Slavery and the Representation of Emancipation* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 2010).
 44. Wood, *Blind Memory*, pp. 22–23; R. Oldfield, *Popular Politics and British Anti-Slavery: The Mobilisation of Public Opinion Against the Slave Trade, 1787–1807* (London: Routledge, 1998).
 45. The day after the seven convicts were hanged at Sydney, 19 December 1838, the new Governor, Sir George Gipps, sent a dispatch to Lord Glenelg at the Home Office, noting that for some weeks before the tragedy, around fifty people had been living in the area 'in perfect tranquility, neither molesting the Whites nor being themselves molested by them.' *HRA Series I, XIX*, Gipps to Glenelg, pp. 700–04.
 46. Valerie Lester, *Phiz: The Man Who Drew Dickens* (London: Random House, 2011).
 47. By the end of the eighteenth century the *Newgate Calendar* had joined the King James Version of the Bible, the *Book of Common Prayer*, *Pilgrim's Progress* and Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, as the five titles 'most likely to be found' in even less well-read households: Kelly Grovier, *The Gaol: The Story of Newgate, London's Most Notorious Prison* (London: John Murray, 2008), p. 183.
 48. S. Chibnall, 'Chronicles of the Gallows: The Social History of Crime Reporting', *Sociological Review*, 29 (1981), 179–217.
 49. L.F. Fitzhardinge, 'Tegg, James (1808–1845)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University <<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/tegg-james-2718/text3827>> [accessed 29 January 2017]; J. Barnes and P. Barnes, 'Reassessing the Reputation of Thomas Tegg, London Publisher, 1776–1846', *Book History*, 3 (2000), 45–60.
 50. Cameron, Vol I, pp. 330–331.
 51. Wood, *Blind Memory*.
 52. 'Charles Kinnaister, and Others: Executed for the Murder of Australian Aborigines', in Cameron, pp. 472–474.
 53. Katie Hansord, 'Eliza Hamilton Dunlop's "The Aboriginal Mother": Romanticism, Anti Slavery, and Imperial Feminism in the Nineteenth

- Century', *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature*, 11 (1) <<http://openjournals.library.usyd.edu.au/index.php/JASAL/article/view/9793>> [accessed 29 January 2017]; Anna Johnston, 'Mrs Milson's Wordlist: Eliza Hamilton Dunlop's Linguistic Collection and the Economies of Representation', unpublished paper delivered to 'Colonial Economies, Violence and Intimacy', University of Tasmania, November 2016.
54. Aborigines Protection Society, *Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes (British Settlements), Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons* (London: Published for the Society, by W. Ball, A. Chambers, and Hatchard and Son 1837), p. 10.
 55. Elizabeth Elbourne, 'The Sin of the Settler: The 1835–36 Select Committee on Aborigines and Debates over Virtue and Conquest', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 4 (2003), 1–23.
 56. Kirsten McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies: Sydney and Cape Town, 1820–1850* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004), pp. 8–11; S. Epstein, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
 57. Greg Denning, *Mr Bligh's Bad Language: Passion, Power and Theatre on the Bounty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 340–341.
 58. 'Advance Australia: The Jury System', *Sydney Gazette*, 11 December 1838, p. 2.
 59. Harrison; Reece; Jane Lydon, "'No Moral Doubt": Aboriginal Evidence and the Kangaroo Creek Poisoning, 1847–1849', *Aboriginal History*, 20 (1996), 151–75.
 60. Jane Lydon, 'Anti-slavery in Australia: Picturing the 1838 Myall Creek Massacre', *History Compass* (in press); Russell Smandych, 'Contemplating the Testimony of Others: James Stephen, the Colonial Office, and the Fate of Australian Aboriginal Evidence Acts, circa 1839–1849', *Australian Journal of Legal History*, 11 (2004) <<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/journals/AJLH/2004/11.html>> [accessed 29 January 2017].