

Humanities Australia

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» TESSA MORRIS-SUZUKI » KIM SCOTT » GLENDA SLUGA
» ANDREW STEWART » IAN TEMPLEMAN » THOM VAN DOOREN

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Welcome

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the fifth issue of **Humanities Australia**, the annual journal of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. This issue continues a tradition of showcasing some of the most exciting current work of researchers in the humanities throughout Australia.

For forty-five years, the Australian Academy of the Humanities has been dedicated to fulfilling its obligations as laid out in its Royal Charter; advancing scholarship and promoting understanding of the humanities both within academic institutions and in the national community at large. The Fellowship of the Academy comprises almost six hundred distinguished individuals elected in recognition of the excellence and impact of their scholarship in fields including archaeology, art, Asian and European studies, classical and modern literature, cultural and communication studies, languages and linguistics, philosophy, musicology, history and religion.

Now in its fifth year, **Humanities Australia** is an established and important flagship publication for the Academy. It is just one of the ways in which we seek to support excellence in the humanities and to communicate the value of the humanities to a broad audience. This issue's selection of essays, poems, artworks and reflections collectively demonstrate the importance of the humanities in understanding our national life and human culture, past, present and future. I trust you will enjoy reading **Humanities Australia**.



LESLEY JOHNSON AM FAHA
President, Australian Academy
of the Humanities, 2011–

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Editor's Introduction

» ELIZABETH WEBBY

W

Welcome to the 2014 issue of *Humanities Australia*, which opens with the 2013 Sir Keith Hancock Lecture delivered at the Academy's 2013 Symposium, held in Brisbane last November. The Symposium theme of Environmental Humanities attracted a large audience, who responded enthusiastically to Thom van Dooren's eloquent and stunningly illustrated lecture 'Life at the Edge of Extinction: Spectral Crows, Haunted Landscapes and the Environmental Humanities'. We are especially grateful to Hawaiian artist Margaret Barnaby for allowing us to use some of her beautiful hand-carved woodblock prints on the cover of the journal and to illustrate the lecture.

The crow featured in the prints and lecture is no ordinary crow but a Hawaiian fruit-eating species that is now extinct in the wild. The lecture outlines plans to fence off part of a forest reserve, clear it of pigs, and then attempt to reintroduce the crow to the wild. All very good one might think, but not in the eyes of some native Hawaiians who see hunting pigs as a traditional practice and the fencing of part of the forest as another colonial land grab. In teasing out all the factors involved here, van Dooren provides an excellent demonstration of

the value of a multidisciplinary perspective on environmental issues.

As Thom van Dooren reminds us, Sir Keith Hancock played a significant role in the development of environmental history in Australia. He was also the first President of the Academy at its foundation in 1969, and left a bequest used to establish a lecture in his honour, given every four years by 'a young Australian scholar of excellence'. Another of the Academy's Foundation Fellows, A. D. Trendall, also left a generous bequest to the Academy which funds a lecture in the area of Classical Studies, given annually by either an Australian or an international scholar. The 2013 Trendall lecturer was the distinguished art historian Andrew Stewart, from the University of California, Berkeley, who gave a fascinating and also beautifully illustrated lecture on 'Individuality and Innovation in Greek Sculpture' that we are delighted to include here.

As well as these two lectures, the Academy also arranges an annual Academy Lecture by one of its Fellows. These are usually given at the annual Symposium, but the 2013 lecture was presented in Perth at the University of Western Australia, preceded by a reception for Western Australian Fellows. Given by Peter Hiscock on

(above)
Academy
Secretariat,
Canberra, Australia.

COURTESY AUSTRALIAN
ACADEMY OF THE
HUMANITIES

the topic 'Creators or Destroyers? The Burning Questions of Human Impact in Ancient Aboriginal Australia', it tests recent claims about Aboriginal use of fire in the light of the extended time scale provided by archaeological evidence.

If the impact of Aborigines on the Australian environment is still a matter of debate, there is no doubting the devastating impact on Aboriginal Australia of the arrival of British colonisers. Two contributors to this issue, both from Western Australia, draw attention to contemporary efforts to maintain and reclaim Indigenous languages, history and culture. In 'Fever in the Archive', Anna Haebich focuses on the archive of the West Australian Department of Indigenous Affairs. Its records of 'totalitarian control over Aboriginal people from 1898 to 1972' have, ironically, 'proved invaluable to Aboriginal people researching family and community histories' as well as inspiring 'Aboriginal writers who combined them with community memories to create major works of theatre, literature, history and film'.

One of these writers, prize-winning novelist Kim Scott, describes in 'A Whisper in Stone' how the recovery of Noongar language and stories can help to heal damaged lives. Beginning with an ironic quotation from one of the best-known pieces of colonial Australian literature, Banjo Paterson's 'Clancy of the Overflow', and an apology for what might seem his 'shameless boasting', Scott's piece focuses on one of his readers, a Noongar man who has spent much of his life in prison. This contemporary story is interposed with traditional and historical ones to stress the importance of sharing 'words of comfort not only across razor and steel-capped stone walls but also across the vast, yawning chasm that sometimes divides us'.

Another Western Australian contributor, Philip Mead, celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of the journal *Australian Literary Studies*. The brainchild of two poets, critics and Academy Fellows, A. D. Hope and James McAuley, *ALS* was edited for most of these fifty years by another Fellow, Laurie Hergenhan. It has played a leading role in helping to transform the study of Australian literature

from an amateur to a professional activity. Congratulations, too, to Philip Mead on his recent appointment as Visiting Professor of Australian Studies at Harvard University.

A number of Academy Fellows have also been awarded Australian Research Council Laureate Fellowships in recognition of their distinguished, ongoing research contributions. Two of them have kindly contributed essays that offer perspectives on very different areas of politics. In "Add Women and Stir": A New History of International Politics', Glenda Sluga argues for the need to recognise the contributions made by women in an area often seen as exclusively male. She traces a female line from Germaine de Staël in the late eighteenth century through to Alva Myrdal after World War Two. Sluga, incidentally, was the 2009 Hancock Lecturer.

If women can be invisible in the world of 'high politics', people involved in community activism often fail to get onto the political radar at all. Tessa Morris-Suzuki's essay 'Invisible Politics' begins by noting the disillusion with traditional politics in recent decades, something certainly apparent in Australia, before going on to outline the concept of 'informal life politics' or 'survival politics'. She presents some fascinating examples from her research in East Asia, such as the Citizens' Radioactivity Measuring Stations set up after the Fukushima nuclear accident of 2011.

Although he has now lived in Canberra for many years, the poetry in this issue provides another link with Western Australia, since Ian Templeman was the founder of Fremantle Arts Centre Press, the first to publish Kim Scott, among many others. He trained as a painter and has taken up the brush again in retirement, so we have another first here, poems illustrated by paintings by their author. 



ELIZABETH WEBBY AM FAHA,
Editor, Australian Academy
of the Humanities, 2009-

» IAN TEMPLEMAN



The sudden storm over the black lake electrified the scrub and shaggy trees on the ridgeline by Ian Templeman. 2013, oil on canvas, 60 x 60cm.

COURTESY MAUREEN AND ROBERT BROOKS



IAN TEMPLEMAN AM FAHA initially trained as a painter and in 1972 became the first director of the Fremantle Arts Centre, where he established the Fremantle Arts Centre Press in 1975. From 1990 to 1997 he was Assistant Director-General, Cultural and Educational Services at the National Library of Australia, and from 1999 to 2006 head of Coombs Academic Publishing at the Research School for Pacific and Asian Studies at the Australian National University. He has been publishing poetry for many years; a selected poems, **The Watchmaker's Imprint**, appeared in 2013.

I Have Taken to Dancing

I have taken to dancing on gradual evenings
alone on the tilting flat rock
near a creek curling its voice around a hand of wattle.

In the pleasure of collapsing day's last light
there are no tin-can rattling voices
from timber-cutters working the shadow incised ridges.

I eat this silence from voices, now able to hear
bush talk: the wind's conversations
with birds, murmur of water, knitted hush of casuarinas.

In my head the imagination's pulse electrifies
a response to memory's music,
choreographs a thousand small linked body movements.

I move into my storytelling without voice,
words or the language of reason,
dancing instead with the courage and passion of a convert,
ending a lifetime of amused regret.



Life at the Edge of Extinction

SPECTRAL CROWS, HAUNTED LANDSCAPES AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL HUMANITIES

» THOM VAN DOOREN

*I*t seems very appropriate that this particular symposium of the Australian Academy of the Humanities should include a lecture in honour of Sir Keith Hancock. Although the environmental humanities had not yet taken shape as a field of scholarship during his lifetime, Hancock played an incredibly significant role in defining and ‘crafting’ environmental history in Australia, helping to establish it as a respectable field of study—as Tom Griffiths and others have documented.¹ That strong tradition of historical scholarship is now a core strand of the environmental humanities.

When I began my PhD at the Australian National University about ten years ago, it was one of very few places in the world with a real concentration of research in the ecological or environmental humanities. I was lucky enough to be part of one of the many ecological humanities groups that have developed there, this one primarily a collaboration between Deborah Bird Rose, Libby Robin, Val Plumwood and their students. An anthropologist, an historian and a philosopher—three pre-eminent international figures in their own environmental subfields. But more than this, three scholars keenly attuned to the value of *interdisciplinary* work on the environment. Although my undergraduate degree was in philosophy, I was inspired by my principal supervisor Debbie Rose and the other anthropologists in our group to

conduct interviews and then more substantial ethnographic research. Similarly, I was inspired by the way that others, especially the historians, were thinking and writing, and so I began the task of weaving my philosophical work into accessible narratives. I completed my PhD as something other than a philosopher—although my roots remain in that discipline, I have never been fully at home there.

From my perspective, it is precisely this kind of interdisciplinarity that is at the core of the environmental humanities. While for some the term might refer to an umbrella of sorts—simply gathering up existing environmental subfields within the humanities—it is also something more than this.

At its heart, the environmental humanities brings the traditional concerns of the humanities—for example, with questions of meaning, value, ethics, justice and the politics of knowledge production—into an engagement with the wider more-than-human environment. But this is no innocent alignment: both ‘the environment’ and ‘the human’ will never be the same again. Neither conceptual category can withstand this close proximity. Here, the nature/culture dualism implodes and we’re all repositioned as participants in lively ecologies of meaning and value, entangled within rich patterns of cultural and historical diversity that shape who we are and the ways in which we are able to ‘become with’ others.²

In this context, the environmental humanities is a fundamentally experimental field: one that asks about the new forms of scholarship that are *possible* when we get beyond the various humanisms of the humanities, as well as the new forms of scholarship that are *necessary* in our time of rapid and escalating change. In taking up this experimental role, the environmental humanities responds to a dual challenge: the need to enrich environmental research with the more extensive conceptual, political and critical vocabulary of the humanities, whilst at the same time vitalising the humanities themselves by rethinking the ontological exceptionality of the human.

This is the approach I was lucky enough to be trained into, to inherit, as part of the interdisciplinary group at the Australian National University. Today, there are environmental humanities centres, teaching programmes and journals springing up all over the world—most of them in just the past few years: including our own programme at the University of New South Wales, which hosts Australia’s first undergraduate major in the field. At this time last year we also launched the world’s first international journal dedicated to the environmental humanities.³

Like most of my work, the research I discuss here is grounded in the cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural approach outlined above. It is an effort to bring biology and ecology into conversation with philosophy and my own ethnographic work with local communities. This is an approach to studying and writing about extinction that I have developed collaboratively with Debbie Rose in a series of separate and joint studies that explore what extinction *means* and what forms of life and death are possible in its shadow.

* * *

I stood in the forest listening for crows. Listening and hoping, even though I knew it was foolish. I had been led to this forest precisely because there were no longer crows here, because there were no longer free-living crows anywhere in Hawai‘i. I knew that the last sighting of a crow had been made a decade earlier (in 2002) and that these birds were now

extinct in the wild. But as I stood in the forest I couldn’t help but listen and hope.

I had read descriptions of crows in Hawai‘i’s forest by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century ornithologists writing when these birds were still relatively common. George Munro saw them in 1891, and provided a passing reference to their graceful movements below the rainforest canopy: birds ‘sail[ing] from tree to tree on motionless wings’.⁴ Standing in a forest at 7000 feet elevation—in the heart of the region where they once lived—I imagined for a moment that I could see their feathered



forms moving through the trees. I imagined what it would be like for the now eerily quiet forest, missing this and so many other species of birds, to once again be enlivened by such a charismatic presence.

And so, I begin with spectral crows, haunting a dying forest. This forest was itself in decline for a number of reasons, principally because of the presence of introduced ungulates like pigs, that uproot and graze down any new vegetation. Where once there would have been a lush understory beneath a tall canopy of trees, all that remained now were old trees with no new growth to replace them, and no understory to hold the soil together when it rained. The biologists I was travelling with called this a ‘museum forest’, others have called

(above)
At the top of the Ka‘ū Forest Reserve. A degraded landscape.

COURTESY
THOM VAN DOOREN

it a forest of the 'living dead'.⁵ Either way, it too was perched perilously at the edge between life and death.

In a range of different ways, this lecture is an exploration of the absence of crows, as well as some of the many contestations over,

and consequences of, their potential return. In particular, I am interested in how we inherit and inhabit the legacies of the past to shape possible futures. In a time of ongoing extinction and colonisation, a time in many ways characterised by interwoven patterns of



(right)
Fertile Sources.
Wood block print by
Margaret Barnaby.

COURTESY
MARGARET BARNABY

biological and cultural loss, what does it mean to inherit *responsibly*?

The crow that is my guide into these questions is not just any crow. Known locally by their Hawaiian name—‘*alalā*—these birds are forest and fruit specialists. Although they look very much like the common crows and ravens found in Australia, the United States mainland, and elsewhere, behaviourally they are quite distinct. ‘*Alalā* do not seem to have taken to scavenging and a life beyond the forest. Instead, they ate flowers and fruit, insects and occasionally other birds’ eggs. As Polynesian and then European, Asian and other peoples arrived, ‘*alalā* stayed in the forests even as these places were becoming less and less hospitable for them. Some forests were cleared and others were degraded by introduced ungulates. Meanwhile, new avian diseases and predators like cats and mongooses moved in.

Eventually, roughly a decade ago, the last of the free-living ‘*alalā* died. Initially, only a handful of crows survived in captivity. As a result of years of captive breeding, however, there are now roughly 100 ‘*alalā*, and it is hoped that one day soon they might be able to start being released back into the forests of the Big Island. Before this can happen, however, much remains to be done to prepare the way.

GHOSTS AND CO-BECOMING AT THE DULL EDGE OF EXTINCTION

We don’t know when it was, or where they came from, but at some point in the deep history of the Hawaiian islands, crows arrived. As the islands in this volcanic chain rose above the sea, one by one countless plants, animals and other species arrived by wave, wind and wing and settled in. Animals and plants adapted, co-evolving with others over millions of years. Completely free of mammalian predators, for the longest time these were islands of immense avian diversity. Fossil records indicate that there was once a range of large, flightless birds in the islands.⁶ It is likely that in earlier times many of these birds played important ecological roles as pollinators or seed dispersers for local plants.

Today, however, most of these birds are gone. Of the 113 bird species known to have lived exclusively on these islands just prior to human

arrival, almost *two-thirds* are now extinct.

Of the 42 species that remain, 31 are federally listed under the United States Endangered Species Act.⁷ It is not hard to see why Hawai‘i is regarded as one of the ‘extinction capitals’ of the world—of course, Australia is another of these extinction capitals, with the highest rate of mammalian extinctions anywhere in the world in the past two hundred years.

And so, ‘*alalā* is now the largest fruit-eating bird remaining anywhere in the islands—albeit only in captivity. With its passing from the forest it is thought that several plant and tree species—especially some of those with larger fruit and seeds—may have lost their only remaining seed disperser. Under the rainforest canopy, wide seed dispersal can be a vital component of species’ survival. As birds carry seeds away from their parent trees they spread genetic diversity, they reduce competition, and they can even provide safer places for germination.

Recent research conducted by Susan Moana Culliney suggests that the ‘*alalā* may have been the last remaining seed disperser for at least three plants: ho‘awa, halapepe, and the loulu palms. But dispersal is not just about movement. In addition, it seems that some of these seeds germinate better—or in the case of ho‘awa, will only germinate—if the outer fruit has been removed, something that ‘*alalā* once routinely did.⁸

A long and intimate history of co-evolution lies within these embodied affinities that bind together avian and botanical lives. Crows are nourished, plants propagated and in the process both species are, at least in part, constituted: their physical and behavioural forms, their *ways of life*, emerging out of generation after generation of co-evolutionary ‘intra-action’.⁹

‘*Alalā* haunt the forest in another way here. Beyond my own active imagination, their spectral presence is *inscribed* in the forest landscape. Plants call out to ‘*alalā*, their fruiting and flowering bodies shaped by past attractions and associations that no longer exist.

As ‘*alalā* populations have declined over the past decades, the plants bound up in mutualistic relations with them have likely declined too. Halapepe and loulu palms are themselves now rare or endangered.

In addition, Culliney notes with regard to ho‘awa, that most of the trees encountered today are older and that there is now a ‘general lack of seedlings or saplings in the wild’.¹⁰ And so, it is quite possible that these plants are now what biologists call ‘ecological anachronisms’: species with traits that evolved in response to a relationship or an environmental condition that is no longer present.¹¹ The extent to which the loss of ‘alalā has contributed to the decline of these plant species remains a topic for future study. It is clear, however, that the absence of a seed disperser can only make the future of these plant species that much more precarious. Here, we see that co-evolution can switch over into co-extinction; co-becoming into entangled patterns of dying-with.

Alongside plants and their forests, the disappearance of ‘alalā is also felt by local people. For some native Hawaiians, ‘alalā is part of their cultural landscape: these birds hold stories and associations in the world. ‘Alalā is an ‘aumakua or ancestral deity for some people, and the plants and forests that might disappear or change significantly without their seed dispersal are themselves also culturally significant in various ways.¹² Many other locals are also drawn into this experience of loss. I interviewed biologists, artists, ranchers, hunters and others, some of whom were lucky enough to remember—and so miss—the dramatic presence of these birds in the forest. Many were trying in their own ways to reckon with the affective burden of living in a place where crows are no longer present, a place in which (paraphrasing one biologist), we have lost the most intelligent and charismatic component of our forests.

Here, crows, plants, people and others are tangled up and at stake in each other. But it is the particularly historical character of these entanglements that I am interested in; and more specifically, the way in which life is, at a fundamental level, grounded in rich patterns of inheritance. All of Earth’s creatures are heirs to the long history of life on this planet. We are woven through with traces of the past: our own past, but also that of our forbears whose relationships and achievements we inherit in our genes, our cultural practices, languages and much more.¹³ Some of this inheritance

is linear—from parent to offspring—but it is also more than this: it is radically multivalent, radically multispecies. In Debbie Rose’s terms, here we see that life is a product of both sequential and synchronous relationships and inheritances.¹⁴ Who we all are as individuals, as cultures, as species, is in large part a product of generations of co-evolution and co-becoming in which we are woven through with traces of all of our *multispecies* ancestors.

These entanglements mean that a species like ‘alalā cannot be neatly excised from our living world. Each species is a strand in a fabric, what I have elsewhere called a ‘flight way’—a term that aims to evoke an understanding of species as evolving *ways of life*, as interwoven lines of intergenerational movement through deep history.¹⁵ In this context, extinction always takes the form of an unravelling of co-formed and forming ways of life, an unravelling that begins long before the death of the last individual and continues to ripple out long afterwards: hosts of living beings—human and not—are drawn into extinctions as diverse heritages break down or are otherwise transformed.

There is no solid line here between ‘human’ and ‘ecological’ dimensions, between evolutionary and cultural entanglements: relationships and affinities cut across any simple divide, moving back and forth with ease. The traces that we leave behind in each other remind us that conventional Western notions of ‘the human’ as a being set apart from the rest of the living world, have always been illusory.¹⁶ In Anna Tsing’s terms ‘[h]uman nature is an interspecies relationship’; it is the shifting historical product of ‘varied webs of interspecies dependence’.¹⁷ As it is sometimes succinctly put by native Hawaiians: the people arrived as Polynesians, but the islands made them Hawaiian.

SPECTRAL CROWS AND THE PROMISE OF RETURN

As I travelled, observed and talked with a range of people on a recent research trip in Hawai‘i, I encountered another important site in which the absence of crows was helping to shape future possibilities for everyone. At the centre

of this story is the Ka'ū Forest Reserve in the south of the Big Island—the forest in which I stood listening and hoping for crows. Early in my trip I travelled high up into this area with a group of conservationists and state and federal land managers, a two-hour drive on a very bumpy dirt road that crossed old paddocks, forested areas, and cooled lava fields that stretched out black into the distance as far as the eye could see.

Just a few months earlier, the state government had released its management plan for the area. At its core was a proposal to fence 20 percent of the reserve, almost 5000 hectares.¹⁸ The fenced section would still allow human visitors, but all of the pigs inside would be killed so that the understorey might recover. Hopes and dreams for the future of 'alalā animated this proposal, at least in part. As the forest recovers, it is anticipated that it will be a future release site for these birds—while also contributing to the conservation of a range of other endangered species and ensuring that erosion is minimised so that the forest remains a healthy water catchment.

But not everyone supported this proposal. Although its drafting involved more than a year of serious community consultation, it has been greeted with hostility by some locals. The most vocal opposition has come from hunters—some

of them native Hawaiians—who do not want to see a fence built and the pigs that they hunt removed from the area. Of course, hunters are a diverse crowd in most places, and this is certainly true in Hawai'i. In this context, opposition to fencing is grounded in a diverse range of understandings, values and histories. On the surface, the most prominent opposition to this fence has been justified by the notion that there is not enough accessible public hunting land in Hawai'i, with too much already 'locked up' in conservation.¹⁹ For these people it is often simply a question of whether birds, snails and plants should take priority over human interests. In addition, hunters often challenge the notion that pigs and other ungulates damage the forest, some even arguing that pigs actually play a positive ecological role: tilling the soil and rooting out weeds.²⁰

The three conservationists who led our little expedition to the Ka'ū Forest Reserve that day were all locals, born and raised in the district of Ka'ū. John, an ex-ranch hand, long-time hunter and conservation convert, and Shalan, an ecologist, now both worked for The Nature Conservancy. Nohea, a young Hawaiian woman with deep family roots in the area and a degree in Hawaiian Studies, was working as a community outreach and education officer for the state government.



(left)

Sheltered by the
Loulu Palm. Wood
block print by
Margaret Barnaby.

COURTESY
MARGARET BARNABY



he conveyed the significance of the extinction of ‘*‘ala‘ala*’ to local people was to draw a direct comparison between the loss of this species on the one hand, and the potential loss of Hawaiian language and culture on the other. The value of diversity, of sustaining it into the future, was the point here. While John was mindful of the fact that cultural and linguistic diversity often rely on biodiversity (and vice versa),²² his main point in making this connection in discussions with hunters was as a means of illustrating how biological ‘species’ might themselves also be a kind of valuable diversity in our world. The tragedy of lost cultures in a colonised land allows people to

Together they played a central role in the drafting of the new management plan for the area, especially the community engagement process.

As part of this process, they took numerous groups of locals, including many hunters, up to the section of forest that the state is proposing to fence. After visiting the site, many hunters who were initially sceptical agreed that fencing is a good idea: partly because the visit impressed upon them just how remote the area is (and therefore inconvenient for hunting), but also because they were able to see with new eyes—with biologists’ eyes, perhaps—the extent of the damage that ungulates were doing to the forest.²¹

During these site visits, John, Shalan and Nohea also spent a lot of time talking to local people on the long drive up and back. John explained to me that one of the ways in which

connect with the loss of a bird which, for some, had come to seem insignificant.²³

I am interested in these sites of communication and contestation between conservationists and hunters, which are about much more than ‘*‘ala‘ala*’. In particular, I am interested in the way in which the past is imagined and inherited, how the past haunts the present in often unexpected ways. A key part of this haunting is the way in which the particular histories that we tell, that we inhabit, animate our understanding and action.



(above)
Near the top of the Ka‘ū Forest Reserve. Stopping for a rest.

COURTESY
THOM VAN DOOREN

(right)
Maps and images used to illustrate damage.

COURTESY
THOM VAN DOOREN

Histories are not *of* the world, but *in* the world, as Donna Haraway reminds us about stories in general.²⁴ And so, how we tell the past plays a powerful role in structuring what is nurtured into the future and what is allowed or required to slip away. All of the rich cultural and biological inheritances that constitute our world are at stake, to a greater or lesser extent, in the histories that we weave out of, and into, this forested landscape.

Of course, some hunters opted not to go on site visits to the Ka'ū Forest Reserve, and others remained unconvinced. Many of these people continue to oppose the fencing and removal of pigs from this area; some of the most vocal opponents are native Hawaiian hunters.

For many native Hawaiians pig hunting is understood as a core traditional practice that ought to be widely supported as part of the continuity of Hawaiian culture. In conversations with these hunters, as well as in online discussion forums, I encountered repeated reference to this point of view. For them, any effort to remove pigs and limit hunting is seen as a violation of their Traditional and Customary Rights, protected by the Hawaiian Constitution (Section 7).²⁵

In recent years, however, the notion that pig hunting is a traditional cultural practice has been thoroughly problematised. Detailed historical studies by Hawaiian cultural experts Kepa and Onaona Maly indicate that prior to European arrival pigs were kept close to home. They were also distinctly different animals: of the smaller Polynesian variety not the large European boars now found widely throughout the islands. The only hunting that took place at that time was bird hunting, primarily for feathers used in royal ornaments and clothing.²⁶

With this information fresh in my mind, I expected conservationists to readily dismiss claims by hunters to 'tradition', but found that this was not the case. Instead, almost all of the conservationists noted that this shorter history did not invalidate claims to continued hunting. Many noted that the length of time required to make something 'traditional' was uncertain, that culture is not static, and that several generations of hunting is certainly long enough to establish family traditions—forms of identity

and culture—that ought to be respected wherever possible. In short, they recognised in their own way that, as James Clifford has famously put it: “‘Cultures’ do not hold still for their portraits.”²⁷

But something else was happening here too. Several of the conservationists quickly mentioned this historical research when the topic of pig hunting came up. Although they were clear that this did not mean that hunters had no claim to continue hunting, it clearly changed the *nature* of that claim. In noting that the pigs are different and the practice more recent than sometimes thought, a break with the past is effected in which fencing and pig removal are conceptually separated from contentious questions of native Hawaiian customary practice and rights. As Michelle Bastian has argued, different histories create different continuities and ruptures, with all of their attendant political and ethical consequences.²⁸ Importantly, however, it was not just haole (white) conservationists making this claim; in fact, some of the people that made it most strongly were native Hawaiians who see the removal of pigs from at least some areas of forest as essential to the conservation of not only the environment, but of a rich notion of Hawaiian culture too.²⁹ I will return to this topic shortly.

The desire of some conservationists conceptually to separate pig hunting from traditional Hawaiian culture is, I believe, in large part an effort to *depoliticise* plans to remove pigs. This is nowhere more clear than in the prominent role that the history of the United States occupation of Hawai'i is playing in some of the most vocal opposition to fencing in Ka'ū. With the occupation firmly in mind, for some hunters the proposed fence is one more 'land grab' in a long history of taking.

The last monarch of the sovereign nation of Hawai'i, Queen Lili'uokalani, was overthrown in 1893 by a group of wealthy settlers with the aid and support of members of the United States government and its military. Through a complex series of events over the next five years, Hawai'i became a territory of the United States and fifty years later was made a state. Although there was some attempt, both in the lead up to the overthrow and afterwards, to provide

native Hawaiian commoners with some form of property rights in small parcels of land, this never really worked out in their favour.³⁰ From the Great Mahele of 1848, and subsequent decades of dispossession and annexation ‘by the mid-nineteenth century, Hawaiians and their descendants [had become] largely a landless people’.³¹

For people inhabiting *this* history, fence building is never an innocent act. In this context, conservation is seen as one more excuse to take away people’s rights to access or use land.

As one hunter put it, environmentalists are ‘always using something endangered to the islands for try grab land’.³²

Importantly, these people do not trust the intentions of government agencies in this area, viewing any fencing as the beginning of a slippery slope towards complete loss of access. As another hunter put it: ‘environmentalist want to eventually take it all away and fence it in! They’re starting with these areas, and will start working on more. The alalā, water shed, native plants, etc. is just a smoke screen to grab more land!’³³ In this context, arguments by hunters often explicitly challenge the authority of the Hawaiian State Government, and certainly the Federal Government—illegal governments from this perspective—to exercise any authority in the management of these lands and resources.

This connection between conservation and occupation does important political work. Once a proposal like the Ka’ū Forest Reserve



(right)
Sanguine Moon.
 Wood block print by
 Margaret Barnaby.

COURTESY
 MARGARET BARNABY

Management Plan has been framed by critics in this way, those who speak in its favour are positioned as endorsing the occupation. As Shalan Crysdale put it to me: ‘to be for the plan is to be for the overthrow’.³⁴ In this context, publicly supporting conservation—as a Hawaiian or anyone else—requires one to enter into what another local called the ‘raging fire of emotion’ that surrounds the occupation and subsequent colonisation of the islands.³⁵

In this light, ‘alalā themselves become an enemy of the Hawaiian people. What’s more, the birds’ movements through the forest become suspect as hunters fear that each time ‘alalā move beyond the fenced area (especially if they are nesting), the fence will expand with them. And so, ‘alalā is imagined as a Trojan horse of sorts whose conservation facilitates further loss of land and rights. It should come

as no surprise that in this climate conservationists hold real fears that any released birds will be targeted by some hunters.

INHERITING THE WORLD

Towards the end of my most recent trip to Hawai'i I met with Hannah Kihalani Springer, a kupuna, or elder, who lives in the district of North Kona. Deeply knowledgeable about Hawaiian history and culture, about hunting and conservation, I was eager to hear her thoughts on the past and future of the islands. Sitting in her living room in her family's old homestead, we talked about conservation, politics, sovereignty, ranching, and of course, 'ala'ala.

Hannah is a passionate and active conservationist, President of the Conservation Council for Hawai'i. Like many other people I spoke with, she felt that in some places pigs and other ungulates need to be fenced out and removed. But she also felt that room has to be made for hunters—her family hunts, and in the past she hunted too. And so, like others, she felt that the government could do more to facilitate access to existing state land for hunting.

In contrast to those Hawaiians who strongly emphasise the place of pig hunting in their culture, Hannah noted that the islands' forests are alive with a *diversity* of plants and animals, all of which have their places in Hawaiian stories and culture. In this context, she argued that a singular focus on pigs is not helpful. In her words: we need 'the larger context that is much more diverse and dynamic [...] When we so diminish the conversation we're diminishing the Hawaiian experience and the Hawaiian culture. The forest is important for the myriad characteristics that comprise the whole'.

Other Hawaiians I spoke with who shared this view often referenced another history—the *Kumulipo*, an origin story—in their arguments about the need to hold onto a diversity of plants and animals in the forest.³⁶ For these people, removing pigs from portions of the forest to aid in the conservation of 'ala'ala, other endangered birds and plants, and the watershed, is essential for the protection of Hawaiian life and culture. This is perhaps particularly the case in a place like the Ka'ū Forest Reserve where, even if this fence did go ahead, the remaining

eighty percent of the area would still be open to pigs and hunters.

Speaking with Hannah that day I was reminded again and again that the histories that we tell are themselves *acts* of inheritance. Which is to say, the aspects of the world that we nurture into the future are, in more or less significant ways, shaped by how we understand and tell the past. Histories structure our understandings of what particular continuities mean and why they matter.

There is an important dynamic at work in inheritance here that deserves further attention. In *For What Tomorrow...*, Jacques Derrida excavates the basic structure of inheritance.³⁷ He is primarily interested in what it means to inherit traditions, languages and cultures. At its simplest level, inheritance seems to be about continuity and retention: taking up the past and carrying it forward into the future. Of course, much of this inheritance is not actively chosen; we are thrown into our heritage. But this is not the end of the story. For Derrida, in any act of inheritance there is also *transformation*. While language, culture and tradition all continue from generation to generation, they are living heritages, not fixed once and for all. It is this 'double injunction' at the heart of inheritance that Derrida draws attention to, describing the act of inheritance as one of 'reaffirmation, which both continues and interrupts'.³⁸

But this dynamic extends well beyond the human domains that so interest Derrida. All living beings are involved in their own forms of life and world shaping inheritance *that include both retention and transformation*. Evolution by natural selection—that great engine of new ways of life—is grounded in forms of inheritance that simultaneously retain the achievements of the past while constantly transforming them to produce new variability. This variability arises through recombination, mutation and other forms of transformation, and is the stuff of future change and adaptation. Moving beyond the narrow genetic reductivism commonly found in neo-Darwinian accounts, we are reminded that these lively processes of inheritance include much more than genes: epigenetic, behavioural, symbolic, even environmental heritages are

passed between organisms of all kinds in ways that shape bodies and worlds.

In this context, the fundamental structure of life is one of inheritance. Darwin knew something like this when he drew a comparison between language and biological species with an emphasis on the way in which both are at their core *genealogical*: seemingly ‘individual’ languages and ‘individual’ species are in reality simply moments within longer historical lineages. Here, life takes shape through the constant generation of variability, only some of which ‘sticks’, only some of which is retained and so incorporated into the larger collective (be it a language, a species or indeed a culture). As Derrida succinctly put it: ‘Life—being alive—is perhaps defined at bottom by this tension internal to a heritage, by this reinterpretation of what is given.’³⁹

In this context, inheritance is a productive concept for the environmental humanities; a concept with long and rich histories in both the biological and the human sciences. Reading Derrida with Darwin—or better yet, with more recent work in Developmental Systems Theory—we are able to begin to develop an appreciation of entangled *biocultural inheritances*.⁴⁰ Here we see that the movements of genes, ideas, practices and words between and amongst generations cannot be isolated into separate channels of inheritance: ‘the biological’ and ‘the cultural’ are inescapably bound up with each other in the shaping of worlds.⁴¹ If we scratch the surface just a little, these entanglements are palpable in Hawai‘i’s shrinking forests: as the island’s biotic diversity continues its long role in helping to nourish and shape local cultures; cultures which are in turn remaking those ecologies and the futures of their many inhabitants.

But thinking of inheritance in this entangled way draws us, inexorably, into the space of ethics. In a time of colonisation and extinction—a time in which so much of this biocultural diversity is being lost, often violently—what does it mean to inherit responsibly, how might we live up to our inheritances?⁴² As species, ecologies and cultures undergo ongoing and dynamic change, much of what is and is not passed on is not up to any of us. Where we can and do play a role,

however, the question is usually the same. Never simple, never clean: *what* is to be lost and what retained? Which losses will we accept, and in the name of which continuities? (and vice versa).

It is inside this dynamic that I’d like to suggest responsibility resides.⁴³

But how to inhabit this delicate balance between loss and retention? One of the many things that I learnt from Hannah that afternoon was that responsible inheritance is necessarily grounded in a recognition of, and an attentiveness to, multiple voices, with their diverse histories and imagined futures.

As our conversation was coming to an end we drifted into a discussion of the sovereignty movement in the islands. Hannah told me about a relative of hers, deeply committed to Hawaiian sovereignty, who worked for the state government as a biologist. When asked about the incompatibility between her politics and her employment, this relative would say that she was conserving Hawai‘i’s biotic diversity so that when and if sovereignty comes, the people and the land are in the best possible condition for it. Although Hannah didn’t explicitly say so, it seemed to me that she herself shared this general view. She went on to say:

The conclusion that I’ve arrived at is: ‘I am a citizen of the land’. We have lived on this land, as I’ve described to you, since before Cook’s arrival. And, we’ve seen chiefs rise and fall, we’ve seen an island nation born and die before its time, elected and appointed officials come and go, but here we stand. I’m less interested in the constitution that binds us or the flag that flies over the land, than I am in the quality of life on the land. So, if there are elements within whoever’s constitution it is, that allow us to preserve and pursue the righteous management of the resources that we call home, then I am happy to pursue those [...] I am loyal to this land. Whatever flag flies over it is one that I am willing to use the resources of to continue to be a citizen of this land.

Hannah’s position is one of hope, within which resides a profound responsibility to both the past and the future. Hannah has not forgotten the events of 1893. But she wants to inherit this

history in a way that refuses to see support for conservation as necessarily support for an illegal occupation. She wants to inhabit the history of these islands, her and her family's history, in a way that holds open possibilities for flourishing life into the distant future. In short, she is proposing that we might care for 'alalā, *and* for Hawaiian culture and sovereignty, *and* for the rest of the land and its people.

Of course, there will always be compromises and challenges here—and they will likely always be unequally distributed. But I am inspired by Hannah's effort not to abandon any of these inheritances, to pay attention to their entanglements and to take on the work of nourishing them as a responsibility to the past and the future to come.

Here we see that responsible inheritance requires us to engage with others—their histories, their relationships—to hold open a future that does not forget the past or attempt to reconstruct it, but rather inherits it as a dynamic and changing gift that must be lived up to for the good of all those who do or might inhabit it. This is what Deborah Bird Rose has called 'recuperative work', work that begins from the conviction that:

there is no former time/space of wholeness to which we might return or which we might resurrect for ourselves [...] Nor is there a posited future wholeness which may yet save us. Rather, the work of recuperation seeks glimpses of illumination, and aims toward engagement and disclosure. The method works as an alternative both to methods of closure or suspicion and to methods of proposed salvation.⁴⁴

In this context, 'taking care' is always an historical and a relational proposition; if we're doing it right, care always thrusts us into an encounter with ghosts, our own and others'. Some people live in worlds haunted by evolutionary ghosts: anachronistic plants and lost seed dispersers. Others live in worlds haunted by the wrongs of 1893 and dreams of a sovereignty to come. Others remember 'alalā in the forest when they were children, or are tied to this bit of forest by memories of a grandfather who taught them to hunt.

Responsibility resides in a genuine openness to these diverse voices with all of their complex pasts and futures.

But, importantly, care and responsibility necessarily draw us out beyond the arbitrary and unworkable limits of a purely human space of inheritance and meaning making. In short, 'ours' aren't the only hauntings that constitute worlds. Some plants live and are now disappearing in worlds haunted by 'alalā; some crows are drawn, *called*, to a forest beyond the aviary. And so, paying attention to diverse voices means recognising that nonhumans are not simply resources to be conserved or abandoned, inherited or cast aside, on the basis of whether or not current generations of humans happen to want them around.

In paying attention to some of the diverse ways that nonhumans inherit their worlds, we become aware of just how much is at stake in extinction. For example, there are now suggestions that in captivity the once remarkable vocal repertoire of 'alalā—their raucous calls and mournful songs—is being diminished. Perhaps this is because they have less to talk about, or perhaps juvenile birds simply haven't been exposed to enough chatter from their elders.⁴⁵ Similarly, know-how about predators and how to avoid them may not be being passed between generations in captivity, potentially impacting on their future survival.⁴⁶ In these and other ways, the long accumulated heritage of the species—not just its genetics, but learnt behaviours that took advantage of generations of refinement and adaptation—are now perhaps being undermined to the detriment of any future life for 'alalā in the forest. This is not a criticism of the passionate people who look after these birds, but an unavoidable reality of the captive environment. Here we see in the most tragic of ways that, as a species and as individual birds, 'alalā are historical beings with their own inheritances. Much is at stake *for* them, not just *in* them at the edge of extinction. Furthermore, as we are seeing, the histories that humans tell play a significant role in shaping whether or not, and in what ways, 'alalā are able to take up these heritages to contribute to the crafting of vibrant and thriving worlds for themselves and others.

Ours is a time of mass extinction, a time of ongoing colonisation of diverse human and nonhuman lives. But it is also a time that holds the promise of many fragile forms of decolonisation and hopes for a lasting environmental justice. Here, the work of holding open the future and responsibly inheriting the past requires new forms of attentiveness to *biocultural* diversities and their many ghosts. But beyond simply listening, it also requires that we take on the fraught work—never finished, never innocent—of weaving new stories out of this multiplicity: stories within stories that bring together the diversity of voices necessary to inhabit responsibly the rich patterns of interwoven inheritance that constitute our world. 🍷

Acknowledgements

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2. Deborah Rose et al., 'Thinking through the Environment, Unsettling the Humanities', *Environmental Humanities*, 1 (2012), 1–5.
3. See <www.environmentalhumanities.org>.
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5. Genese Marie Sodikoff, 'The Time of Living Dead Species: Extinction Debt and Futurity in Madagascar', in *Debt: Ethics, the Environment, and the Economy*, ed. by Peter Y. Paik and Merry Wiesner-Hanks (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, forthcoming).
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11. Connie Barlow, *The Ghosts of Evolution: Nonsensical Fruit, Missing Partners, and Other Ecological Anachronisms* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); Daniel H. Janzen and Paul S. Martin, 'Neotropical Anachronisms: The Fruits the Gomphotheres Ate', *Science*, 215 (1982), 19–27.
12. Culliney, 'Seed Dispersal'.
13. Eva Jablonka and Marion J. Lamb, *Evolution in Four Dimensions: Genetic, Epigenetic, Behavioral, and Symbolic Variation in the History of Life* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005); Susan Oyama, Paul E. Griffiths and Russell D. Gray, *Cycles of Contingency: Developmental Systems and Evolution* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001). Françoise Dastur offers a very different but fascinating, albeit human exceptionalist, account of the way in which we 'live with the dead' through rich patterns of inheritance and haunting. See Françoise Dastur, *Death: An Essay on Finitude* (London: The Athlone Press, 1996).
14. Deborah Bird Rose, 'Multispecies Knots of Ethical Time', *Environmental Philosophy*, 9 (2012), 127–40.
15. Thom van Dooren, *Flight Ways: Life and Loss at the Edge of Extinction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).
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17. Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, 'Unruly Edges: Mushrooms as Companion Species', *Environmental Humanities*, 1 (2012), p. 144.
18. Department of Land and Natural Resources, *Ka'ū Forest Reserve Management Plan* (Honolulu: Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife, State of Hawai'i, 2012).

19. Private land is one of the key obstacles here. In some cases, privately owned lands are being closed off to hunters (perhaps because of insurance concerns or landowners' bad past experiences with hunters). In other cases public land where people might hunt is inaccessible because private properties surrounding it—often remnants of large plantation or ranching properties—restrict direct or open access to it. In addition, it should be noted that relatively little State land is actually utilised solely (or even primarily) for conservation purposes (Interview with Lisa Hadway, 25 January 2013—Hadway is the manager of the state government's Natural Area Reserves System, Division of Forestry and Wildlife, Department of Land and Natural Resources.) At present, the state Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) provides 600,000 acres of public hunting area on the Island of Hawai'i. Of this land, [o]nly about 4 percent is currently fenced with hooved animal populations effectively controlled [a requirement for effective conservation]. Under the most ambitious current plans for fencing and ungulate removal over the next decade, about 17 percent of DOFAW lands on the island would be affected, most of which would occur on Mauna Kea, Geometrician Associates, 'Final Environmental Assessment—Ka'ū Forest Reserve Management Plan', (Honolulu, HI: Prepared for Department of Land and Natural Resources, State of Hawai'i 2012), p. 8.
20. Anonymous interviews, 2013. These interviews were conducted by the author with biologists, managers, hunters, native Hawaiians and other locals in January and February 2013 on the islands of Hawai'i and O'ahu. In most cases I have identified participants by name, but in a few cases, where more appropriate, I have referenced them anonymously.
21. What counts as 'damage' is a complex question. In large part it is precisely this question that I address here. The question is which kinds of forests we are trying to achieve; what values and goals ought to underlie our actions in forests; how might we take a diverse range of human and nonhuman voices seriously in these discussions? Asking these questions is about undermining the obviousness of any assumed goals for forest ecosystems, and being specific about the values that guide understanding and action to shape worlds.
22. Luisa Maffi, 'Maintaining and Restoring Biocultural Diversity: The Evolution of a Role for Ethnobiology', in *Ethnobotany and Conservation of Biocultural Diversity*, ed. by Thomas J. S. Carlson and Luisa Maffi (Bronx, New York: The New York Botanical Garden Press, 2004); Gary Martin, Diana Mincyte and Ursula Munster, 'Why Do We Value Diversity? Biocultural Diversity in a Global Context', in *RCC Perspectives* (Munich: Rachel Carson Center, 2012), pp. 59–64.
23. I accept J. Kehaulani Kauanui's argument about the appropriateness of the term 'colonisation' to describe the social and political dynamics of Hawaiian life after what was technically an 'occupation' of the internationally recognised sovereign nation of Hawai'i. See J. Kehaulani Kauanui, 'Hawaiian Independence and International Law (Episode #23)', *Indigenous Politics on WESU Radio* (2009) <<http://www.indigenouspolitics.com/?p=20>>. Also see Noenoe K. Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Durham NC and London: Duke University Press, 2004).
24. Donna Haraway, 'Playing String Figures with Companion Species: Staying with the Trouble', in *Que Savons-Nous Des Animaux?*, ed. by Vinciane Despret (forthcoming).
25. This comment was either made directly to me, or presented by others as a claim commonly made, in several anonymous interviews conducted in January 2013. Similar comments can be found posted to the online discussion forum at: <<http://hawaiiisportsman.forumotion.com/t5382-big-island-video-news-hunters>> [accessed 21 August 2013].
26. Kepā Maly and Onaona Maly, 'He Mo'Olelo 'ālna: A Cultural Study of the Manukā Natural Area Reserve Lands of Manukā, District of Ka'Ū and Kaulanamauna, District of Kona, Island of Hawai'i', (Hilo, HI: Prepared for the Department of Land and Natural Resources 2004), p. 152. Also see Kepā Maly, Benton Keali'i Pang, and Charles Pe'ape'a Makawalu Burrows, 'Pigs in Hawai'i, from Traditional to Modern' (unpublished paper, on file with author, 2007); Sam 'Ohukani'ohi'a Gon III, 'Pua'A: Hawaiian Animal—or Forest Pest?' (unpublished paper, on file with author, ND).
27. James Clifford, 'Introduction: Partial Truths', in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. by James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 10.
28. Michelle Bastian, 'Political Apologies and the Question of a "Shared Time" in the Australian Context', *Theory, Culture and Society*, Preprint (2013).
29. Anonymous interviews, 2013.
30. Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*; Stuart Banner, 'Hawai'i: Preparing to Be Colonized', in *Possessing the Pacific: Land, Settlers, and Indigenous People from Australia to Alaska* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2007).
31. J. Kehaulani Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood: Colonialism and the Politics of Sovereignty and Indigeneity*, (Durham NC and London: Duke University Press, 2008), p. 75.
32. Comment posted to an online discussion forum for hunters by 'Blue Mountain Traila'

- on 6 June 2012. Available online at: <<http://hawaiiportsman.forumotion.com/t5382-big-island-video-news-hunters>> [accessed 21 August 2013].
33. Comment posted to an online discussion forum for hunters by 'Shrek' on 9 June 2012. Available online at: <<http://hawaiiportsman.forumotion.com/t5382p15-big-island-video-news-hunters>> [accessed 21 August 2013]. There does seem to be something to these arguments. Interviews I conducted with conservationists, alongside their own public submissions to the Ka'ū Forest Reserve Management Plan community consultation process, make clear that most conservationists see protecting only 20 percent of the area as, in effect, sacrificing 80 percent. Many of them would like to see a lot more of the area fenced and ungulates removed. It is unclear exactly where the state stands on this—especially in the long term. Its position seems usually to involve some sort of middle ground that leaves both sides equally unhappy.
 34. Interview with Shalan Crysdale, an ecologist with the Nature Conservancy, conducted by the author on 7 February 2013 in Na'alehu, Ka'ū.
 35. Anonymous interviews, 2013.
 36. Anonymous interviews, 2013.
 37. Jacques Derrida and Elisabeth Roudinesco, *For What Tomorrow... a Dialogue* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).
 38. Derrida and Roudinesco, p. 4.
 39. Derrida and Roudinesco, pp. 3–4. Derrida seems to be thinking about 'Life' in a narrower sense than I am here, with quite a tight focus on tradition, culture and language (in human, and in particular philosophical, contexts).
 40. The capacity to tell these stories about inheritance is, of course, *itself* a part of what we inherit from those who have come before us. The cognitive capacities, the cultural traditions (including those of evolutionary theory and the broader natural sciences), that make this awareness possible are themselves gifted to us within and by an historical world. Of course, the capacity to care about any of this, is also a part of this heritage, see Thom van Dooren, 'Fledging Albatrosses: Flight Ways and Wasted Generations', in *Flight Ways: Life and Loss at the Edge of Extinction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).
 41. Elizabeth Grosz presents a related understanding of the simultaneously biological and cultural processes or inheritances that give rise to bodies and worlds in *The Nick of Time*: 'Evolution and growth, in nature as in culture, are precisely about overcoming what has happened to the individual through the history, memory, and innovation open to that individual and his or her group. This is true of the survival of species as much as it is of the survival of languages and of political strategies and positions, historical events, and memories', Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution and the Untimely* (Durham NC and London: Duke University Press, 2004), p. 89.
 42. I have no particular authority to speak on this matter in Hawai'i. But I am drawn by a genuine concern for the future of these forests and all of their inhabitants to attempt to weave my way through these difficult topics, to arrive at some sense of 'where to from here'. Ultimately, however, I do not intend to argue for the 'right to an opinion' on this topic. This paper is written in large part against the proposition that some people might be shut out of conversations that aim to imagine what responsibility and justice might look like in multispecies and multicultural worlds, solely on the basis of the kinds of inheritance that they bring with them, that they don't have the right kinds of history. Furthermore, from my perspective, the relevant ethical obligation is a demand on all sentient creatures to respond when they are witness to suffering, violence and death.
 43. Derrida's primary concern in his discussion of responsibility and inheritance is political conservatism, and those modes of inheritance that uncritically take up and perpetuate the past. In this context, responsibility emerges as a radical questioning of what is to be retained and what lost or transformed. In Derrida's terms, it is only through 'reinterpretation, critique, displacement, that is, an active intervention, [...] that a transformation worthy of the name might take place; so that something might happen, an event, *some* history, an unforeseeable future-to-come' (p. 4). The basic point here is simple and powerful. Inheritance that is mere repetition closes off the future, or rather, closes off the possibility of anything genuinely different and maybe, just maybe, better. Thanks to Ros Diprose for her reading of Derrida in Rosalyn Diprose, 'Derrida and the Extraordinary Responsibility of Inheriting the Future-to-Come', *Social Semiotics*, 16 (2006), 435–47. Also see this paper for a fuller discussion of Derrida's notion of a responsibility 'worthy of the name'.
 44. Deborah Bird Rose, *Reports from a Wild Country: Ethics for Decolonisation* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2004), p. 24.
 45. For further information see: <<http://www.animal-acoustics.com/current-research-phd/hawaiian-crow>> [accessed 21 August 2013].
 46. Interview with Richard Switzer, 17 December 2011. Switzer is an aviculturist who was at the time heading up the 'alalā captive breeding programme as part of his more general coordination of the San Diego Zoo's Hawai'i Endangered Bird Conservation Programme.



Fever in the Archive

» ANNA HAEBICH

Archives are already stories¹

The once serene space of the historical archive is no longer. Outed by Derrida's statement in *Archive Fever* that 'there is no political power without control of the archive, or without memory', the archive has become the site of fierce debate over contested politics, truths, ontologies and historiographies.² A side road has been the burgeoning awareness of archives as 'active, generative substances with histories' and the growth of scholarly studies of archives' own backstories.³ For these studies, John Randolph proposes biography as a useful 'heuristic metaphor' since archives 'lead social lives and have character, have histories of production, exchange, and use across and among a number of social and institutional settings' and connect with lived experiences of archivists and researchers.⁴

In this context the archive of the West Australian Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) is eminently worthy of study.⁵ This sprawling collection is a tangible artefact of state power. Documenting seventy-four years of colonial hegemony and totalitarian control over Aboriginal people from 1898 to 1972, it has been likened to the relic instrument of 'a repressive regime' in the manner of the Stasi records of former East Germany.⁶ The regime's operations, dutifully recorded and secretly guarded by its administrators, caused feverish controversy once they became archival

documents open to the public. Ironically, the archive also contained a treasure trove of stories that proved invaluable to Aboriginal people researching family and community histories. These stories also inspired Aboriginal writers who combined them with community memories to create major works of theatre, literature, history and film.

I was fortunate to come to the DIA archive after first learning from Noongar people of their community memories about family, country and their particular challenges and achievements. I have also lived for many years as part of my Noongar partner's extended family. These influences immeasurably enriched my reading of the archive and also shaped much of my writing from a doctoral thesis in 1986 to *Spinning the Dream: Assimilation in Australia* published in 2008.

Aboriginal researchers face specific challenges in using the archive to create Indigenous history as academic Lynette Russell explains:

I understood that the archival knowledge I would uncover was not Indigenous *per se* but rather was western or colonial knowledge about Indigenous people and their cultures. [...] it was archival texts within which Indigenous people were the object (and subject) of the gaze of colonial authorities and 'experts'.⁷

Of the DIA archive Steve Kinnane and Lauren Marsh note their discomfort with its 'subjectivity [...] being that these archives speak from the voice of a European'.⁸ Aboriginal voices are generally absent. What the archive speaks about is the governance of subject Aboriginal populations through rulings, judgments, instructions, economies and calculations and their sickness, deaths, punishments, removals, institutionalisation and dire living conditions. The general lack of humanity is distressing for any reader but for Aboriginal people reading about their families it can be devastating.

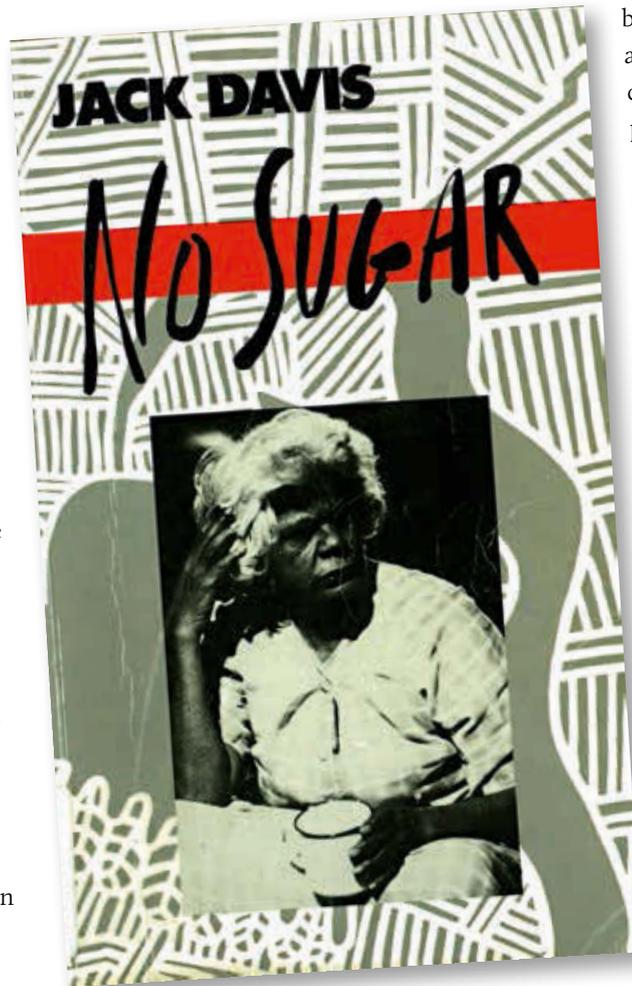
In addition Aboriginal researchers have to negotiate what Russell has described as the 'incommensurable ontologies' of Western and Indigenous knowledge systems. However, she and archivist colleagues are re-evaluating the potential for genuine interaction between the two paradigms. The new position is that archives are not immutable artefacts of the past but that archival knowledge shifts as it interacts with society: archives are 'both fixed and mutating as they continue to fulfill their multiple purposes'.⁹ Concerning Indigenous knowledge systems, they are not static relics of the past but are 'utterly modern [...] dynamic and adaptive' and 'continually influenced by internal creativity and experimentation as well as by contact with external systems'.¹⁰ Interaction between these two ontologies can bring

positive transformations when circumstances of equality and respect support Indigenous knowledge and activities and promote mutual communication and decision-making.¹¹ In this way archival knowledge recorded about Aboriginal people can be reabsorbed as Indigenous knowledge.

We can see this in Aboriginal writers' use of the DIA archive, although conditions were rarely ideal. From the 1980s writers in Perth began negotiating between the archives and their own community stories and produced a burst of major works combining both. Working across various genres of history, biography, family memoir, fiction, theatre and film (sometimes in collaboration with non-Aboriginal researchers), they achieved national success. The enriched storytelling powers are evident in Jack Davis's internationally renowned play *No Sugar*, first performed in 1985 at the Perth Festival. Director Andrew Ross recalls the creative research process

for the play with Davis drawing on his own memories and both men interviewing Noongar people to collect 'a view of the events from their point of view' and then spending 'weeks and weeks every day in the archive, systematically going through material. It was exciting slowly building up a picture of those events and the circumstances around those events, the world in which they took place.'¹²

Government archives like the DIA archive originate as operational records that are produced by the department and systematically



(above)
Cover of *No Sugar*
by Jack Davis
(Currency Press,
1986).

organised for re-use and reference. Then, at a certain point in their history, they are transferred to an archival repository for conservation, preservation and public research. The biography of the DIA archive begins in foundational principles of policy, legislation and administration established in the first decade of the twentieth century that set the parameters of segregation, neglect and punitive controls that characterised administration of Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia for the next sixty years.¹³ Yet there was also a fallibility shaped by changing historical pressures and the enormous challenges of distance, communication, racism, limited resources and resistance to governmental policies. Like other colonial archives it was the product of an ‘unsettled’ mesh of ‘uncertain knowledge’ fashioned out of ‘events on the ground, laws and duties, bureaucratic need and pressures’ into an ‘unruly, piecemeal venture’.¹⁴

Two legislative acts established the overarching principles of Aboriginal governance. The 1897 Aborigines Act wrested control from the British Colonial Office, slashed funding and created an impossible administrative structure with a central office in Perth and volunteer agents dotted around the state. The act applied to ‘Aboriginal natives’ and ‘half-castes living with natives’. The policy was benevolent protection: providing rations for the dying remnants of Aboriginal people and removing their children to missions. The real agenda was to ensure unhindered colonial progress and settlement. The 1905 Aborigines Act consolidated the department’s power and control, institutionalised neglectful care of Aboriginal people and legalised racial discrimination at all levels. Official policy remained protection but in practice segregation and dispossession took precedence. The department’s duties were now all-encompassing but funding remained minimal.

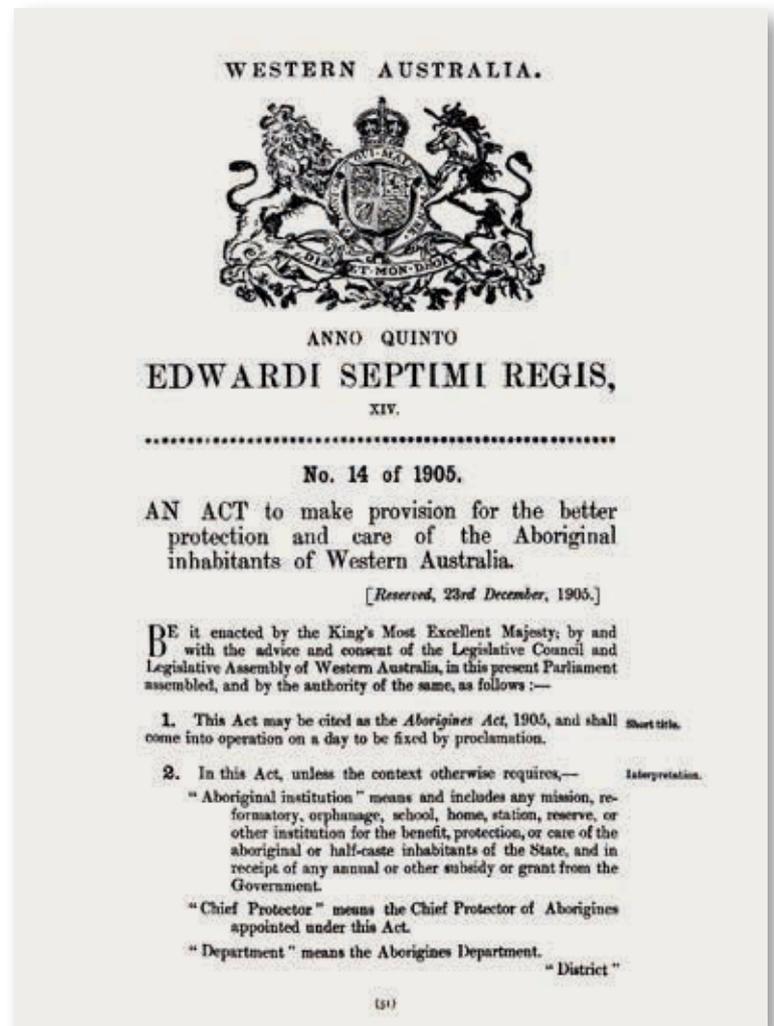
Department files show these principles in action: the negligent segregated services; unprecedented powers to control Aboriginal employment, marriage, sexual contact, children, movement, residence, access to land and use of guns and alcohol; and special powers to discipline and punish. Amendments and regulations facilitated a creeping growth

of legislative controls over the years. Still the department remained largely unaccountable and overlooked by government.

In managing Aboriginal populations the state was divided into the frontier regions of the pastoral north and desert areas and the settled agricultural south. This grid was imposed over the diversity of Aboriginal cultures and lands. English was the language of administration; occasional Aboriginal personal names were the only reminder in the files of languages still widely spoken. Records were ordered according to administrative priorities and jacketed by subject and number as they were created from the beginning of each year. Their titles named Aboriginal people, staff members, volunteers acting locally for the department—police, resident magistrates, pastoralists, doctors and ministers; and they mapped out sites of surveillance and control: reserves, camps, institutions, prohibited areas

(below)
Opening page of
**Aborigines Act 1905
(WA).**

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF
AUSTRALIA. NLA. CAT.
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(above)
Mr A. O. Neville,
Commissioner for
Native Affairs, 1940.

PHOTO: STATE LIBRARY
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
<5000B VOL. 106>

and places of employment, and duties such as rationing, removals, discipline and enforcing controls generally. Some files contained letters from Aboriginal people protesting their treatment or pleading for justice, like this Aboriginal father:

I am afraid that [my wife] will cimitt sueside if the boy is not back soon for she is good for nothing only cry day and night [...] I have as much love for my der wife and churldines as you have for yours... so if you have any feeling atole pleas send the boy back as quick as you can it did not take long for him to go but it takes a long time for him to come back.¹⁵

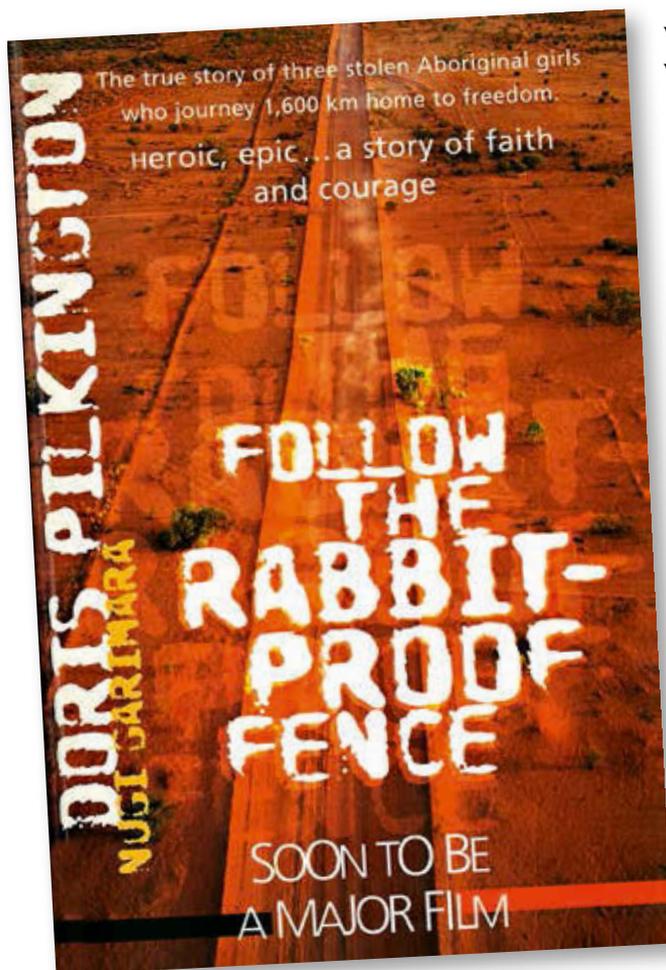
The Chief Protector of Aborigines held the reigns of power; combined with limited accountability this created the potential for a personal fiefdom. Early appointments plucked from the colonial elite proved weak and ineffectual but this changed dramatically in

1915 with the appointment of Auber Octavius Neville. During his 25 years in office Neville positioned himself to dominate the department as his own, setting policy, directing legislation, accruing institutions and controlling minutiae of the daily lives of Aboriginal people. Neville's aggressive leadership inspired many of the later creative works by Aboriginal writers, drawing on Aboriginal memories and Neville's own meticulously kept records.

Neville was a British-born career public servant with little to recommend him apart from a sound public service record and his determination to tackle identified Aboriginal problems around the state. He appeased settler colonists' demands for segregation in the south by building the Carrolup and Moore River native settlements to accommodate families forced out of town camps and their children excluded from state schools. There the adults eked out their remaining days while children were trained to become laborers and domestic servants. Segregation of services in centralised institutions left families with no safety net apart from lifelong detention in the settlements or minimal rations outside and Noongar poverty escalated.

Neville also shaped the disorganised departmental records into a well-oiled system; the principles of the DIA archive and the bulk of its records were created under his watch. He streamlined the recording, listing, indexing, sorting and retrieving of files: with reliable information close at hand he could improve management across the state. This meant accumulating and filing all decisions, actions, interventions, surveillance, family and personal details and data for planning and reports. What was lacking was a parallel system to provide transparency and accountability. Neville also introduced the first centralised card systems and registers for ready access to vital statistics: issue of rations, blankets, tents and clothing; tallies of permits, agreements, recognisances, gun licenses and exemptions granted; Aboriginal convictions generally; breaches by Aboriginal people or others of the 1905 Act; registrations of Aboriginal marriages and deaths (but rarely births).

To ensure enforcement of the 1905 Act Neville replaced local volunteers with police



Miss Dunn, would you bring the Northam file, please, and the warrants? ... Well, I've got all the warrants, following your own census, Sergeant a total of eighty-nine natives.

[He hands over the warrants]

If the list changes at all, let me know and I'll obtain any additional warrants. It's essential that the town and shire be quite devoid of natives after the seventeenth.¹⁹

The DIA records confirm Neville's increasing exasperation. He began to make serious errors of judgment. Davis's play *No Sugar* tells the story of one of his more audacious actions at the time. At the height of the depression during the 1932 election year Neville, acting as the agent of Premier Collier who was also member for the electorate of Northam, arranged for between 80 and 90 Noongar people to be arrested and transferred under police warrant from their camps near the town to Moore River native settlement, which

was already dangerously overcrowded, with 500 residents in rundown shelters designed for 200. The pretext was that some had a minor contagious skin disease but no symptoms were found on their arrival at Moore River. In fact, the Premier had engineered their removal to appeal to the voters of Northam. The Collier government lost the 1932 election with Collier also losing his seat, but still the Noongar families were detained and threatened with arrest if they attempted to return home.

Further examples of Neville's erratic behavior are documented in Doris Pilkington's family memoir, *Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence* (1996). Drawing on the DIA archive and family memories, Pilkington recounts the extraordinary feat of how her mother and two aunts, all young girls, escaped from Moore River settlement in 1931 and trekked overland following the rabbit-proof fence. Pilkington juxtaposes the warm flow of family storytelling with the terse language and content of the files as she narrates how Neville and the

police pursued the girls in order to return them to the settlement, allegedly for their own safety and protection. Pilkington's counter history, fortified by Neville's own words, suggests his motives had more to do with saving face and money than charitable benevolence. With two girls back home in Jigalong, Neville instructed the police to take no action against fourteen-year-old Molly since 'very heavy expenditure was incurred in securing her, and when she decamped a lot of undesirable publicity took place'. Concerning Daisy, aged thirteen, he advised 'I would like the child recovered if no great expense is to be incurred; otherwise the prestige of the Department is likely to suffer.' He spent ten weeks arguing with police in Wiluna over costs for the third girl's daily rations and travel back to Moore River.²⁰

Neville must have found solace in his expanding record system. Kinnane and Marsh counted over 27,000 new files established between 1926 and 1959, many created before Neville's retirement in 1940. They now looked more professional, being typed not

(above)

Cover of *Follow The Rabbit Proof Fence* by Doris (Garimara) Pilkington (University of Queensland Press, 2000).

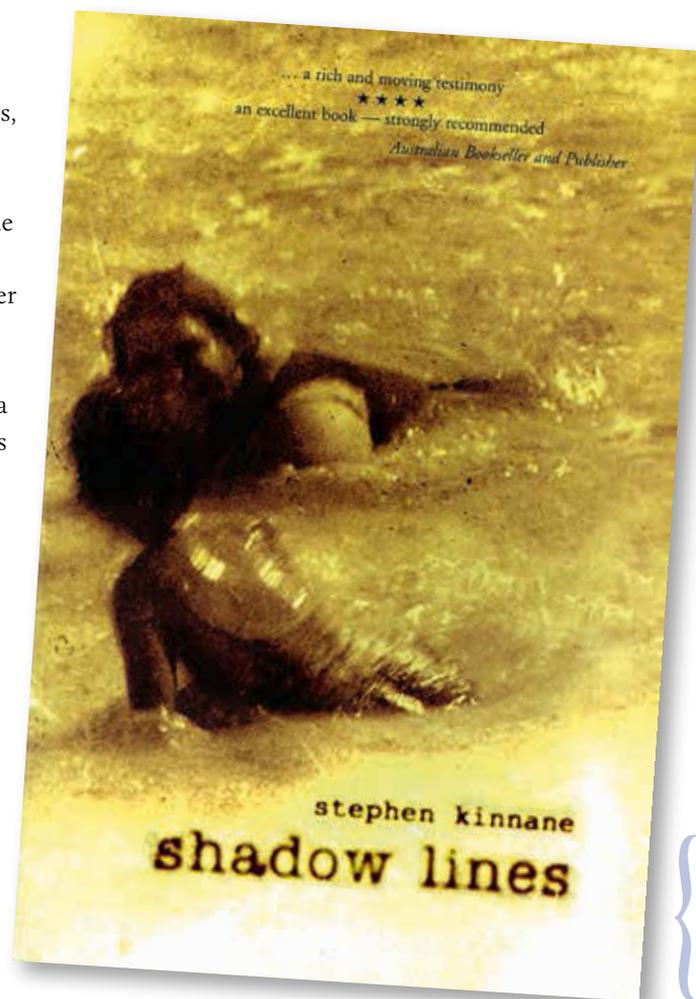
handwritten, and their titles more uniform. Neville's innovation of personal files became the principal record category comprising 54 percent of all new records. With an estimated state Aboriginal population of only 15,000 people this indicates the level of surveillance operating.²¹

Personal files provided a powerful apparatus for invasive micro-management of individual lives. Particular targets of Neville's personal file strategy were girls like Steve Kinnane's grandmother who were removed to institutions and then sent out to domestic service under department control. Kinnane obtained a copy of *File no 1261/21—Jessie Argyle Personal File*, which was three hundred pages thick. Revealed in its pages of notes, correspondence and police reports were the details of her life made known to Neville between 1923 to 1936: her employment and wages, requests for her earnings, her personal spending, medical problems, friendships and spats, boyfriends (all objected to by Neville), her courtship and marriage to Steve's grandfather and the continued police spying on their home in East Perth. Creatively weaving together archival information and family memories, Kinnane wrote *Shadow Lines* (2003), a powerful biography of his grandmother and the Perth world she inhabited. Still, he calls the files 'double-edged': while they enabled him to reconstruct the story of her life it would have been 'preferable' if the files and 'the culture that created them also did not exist'. In a poignant scene of a visit with his mother to his grandmother's first employer, Kinnane describes how he deliberately placed her personal file on the table for all to see. But as memories were shared over cups of tea and cake the file remained unopened and untouched, a silent reminder of the many painful stories in Jessie's life.²²

Neville was also positioning himself as the creator and gatekeeper of knowledge about Aboriginal people and their culture and history. He shaped public understanding of colonial history in lectures and journal articles. In *No Sugar* Davis shows Neville reading his 1936 speech to the Royal Western

Historical Society where he controversially draws similarities between Aboriginal depopulation in Tasmania and the southwest of Western Australia. In the early 1930s, writing under a *nom de plume* in the *West Australian* newspaper, he advocated his controversial new policy of biological absorption. Neville angered anthropologists visiting the Kimberley by seeking to control and even censor their research. A. P. Elkin later referred to him as 'a person who, by the light of Nature, thinks he knows all about Aborigines'.²³ During the 1934 Moseley Royal Commission into Aboriginal conditions in the state, Neville interjected and corrected witnesses, including Aboriginal people who braved his retribution to state their case.

Race mixing weighed heavily on Neville's mind and he was especially alarmed by statistics showing the dramatic increase of the 'mixed race' population in the south, from 1603 in 1919 to 2616 in 1936.²⁴ Under his watch the department's record system came



(left)
Cover of *Shadow Lines* by Stephen Kinnane (Fremantle Press, 2003).

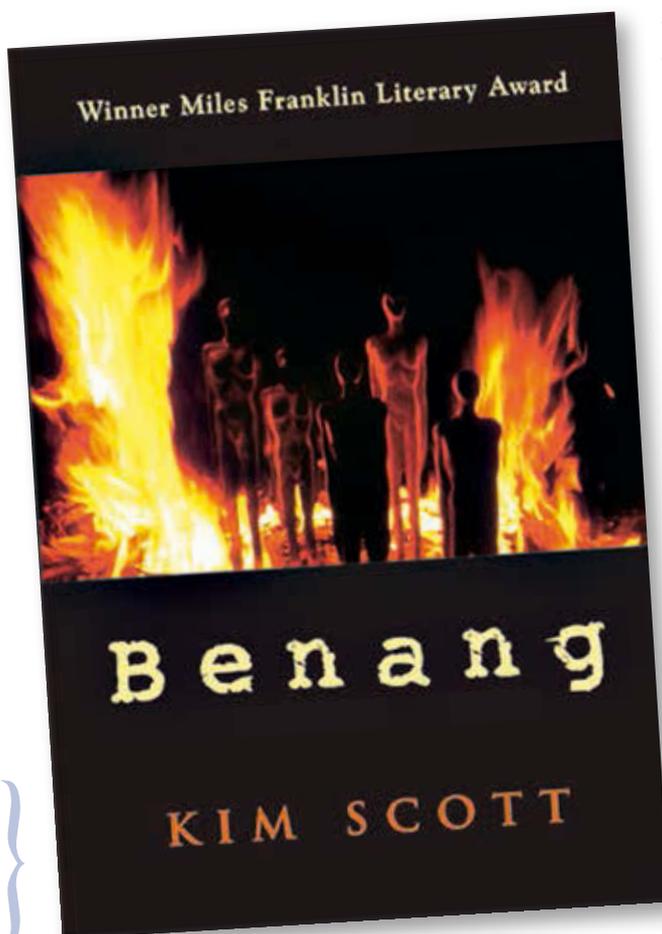
to resemble an alarming ‘racial archive’.²⁵ His expanding family card genealogies, as detailed as any of Francis Galton’s eugenic charts, and the personal files provided an administrative apparatus to divide Aboriginal people into distinct categories that set them apart from each other, sometimes even their own children, and segregated them from settler colonists. Fractional calculations on file covers are proof that determining racial classifications was not always simple. Once caught, the only avenue of escape was to apply for exemptions under the 1905 Act, which were rarely granted.

Ann Stoler reminds us that racial categories are not fixed but are ‘mutating ontologies’ that can be reformulated ‘again and again’ according to historical exigencies.²⁶ In the 1930s when National Socialist Germany was recasting its definitions of Aryan and Jew, Neville proposed to extend existing racial definitions to include ‘quadroons’ and even lighter castes. Neville achieved his goal in the 1936 amending legislation that adopted the policy of biological absorption. The solution was to ‘breed out’ Aboriginal physical and

cultural characteristics by pressuring lighter castes to marry white, thereby providing the ultimate solution. Neville’s retirement in 1940 and the outbreak of war prevented wholesale implementation of the policy, but the files record children being classified according to color with the ‘nearly white’ children being sent to Sister Kate’s Quarter Caste Children’s Home in Perth to be groomed for their ‘ultimate absorption’.²⁷ In 1947 Neville published *Australia’s Coloured Minority: Its Place in the Community* where he famously wrote ‘the native must be helped in spite of himself [...] the end in view will justify the means applied’.²⁸

Kim Scott’s multi-award winning novel *Benang* (1999) is in part a profound response to Neville’s distorted vision and its historical context of reformulated race ontologies and eugenic manipulation for purposes of racial elimination, or purification.²⁹ It is also a personal response to Neville’s treatment of Noongar families gleaned from Scott’s own family memories and the archive. Scott’s protagonist Harley, presented as the ‘first white man born’, is the outcome of a eugenicist experiment conducted by his own grandfather along the lines of Neville’s absorption policy and similar programmes in other Western nations at the time. The shock of Harley’s realisation as he looks through papers in his grandfather’s office surely mirrors an anguished generalised Aboriginal response to the realisation that Neville, who was legal guardian of Aboriginal children to the age of twenty-one, subjected those under his care to this diabolical experimentation. In the way that so many removed children have searched out their birth families to find their identities, Harley attempts to reverse the experiment and reconnect with his Noongar family and culture.³⁰

In 1948 Western Australia began a major period of reform with the adoption of the policy of assimilation and appointment of a determined new Commissioner to lead the charge. This would transform Neville’s closed shop into a modern, outward-looking department. The goal of assimilation was that Aboriginal people would



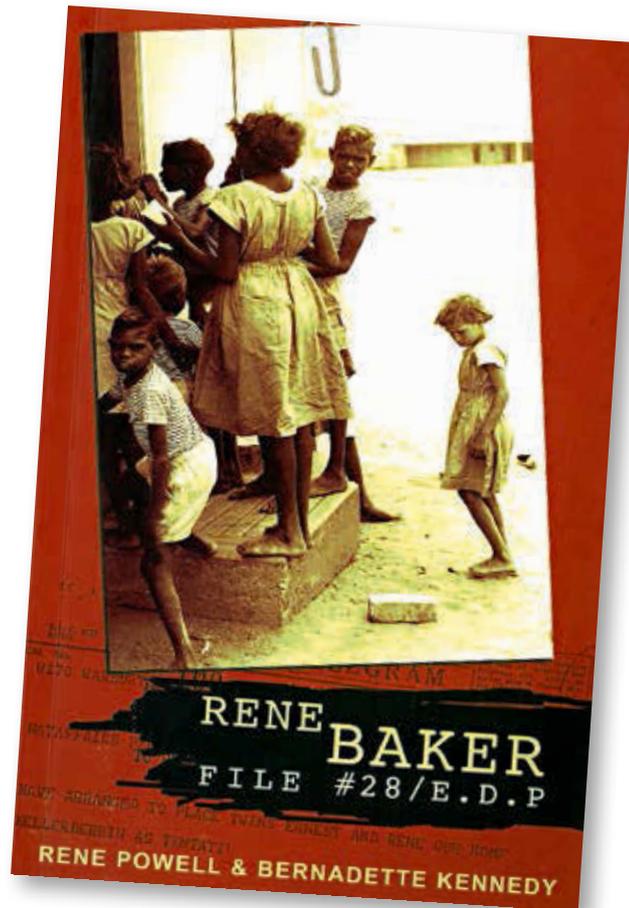
(right)
Cover of *Benang—From the Heart* by Kim Scott (Fremantle Press, 1999).

become citizens living in suburbs and towns 'like white Australians do'. The reforms required to achieve this were daunting: repeal of all discriminatory legislation to bring full citizenship; dismantling the department and mainstreaming services and benefits; and desegregating West Australian society. Few members of the public supported these changes. Nor were there sufficient resources to alleviate endemic Aboriginal poverty and raise living conditions to community standards. It was also the case that some Aboriginal people resented the imposed changes to their way of life, although most welcomed better living conditions and the opportunity of schooling for their children.

The new Commissioner, Stanley Middleton, was a former senior bureaucrat in the Papua New Guinea field service with the necessary experience and proactive stance. His catchcry was 'assimilation into the general community on the basis of reasonable equality in all facets of community life'.³¹ Middleton genuinely sought to move the department into an interim welfare role and then redundancy. He began by replacing police with a field system along the Papua New Guinea model. He stopped segregated services and transferred responsibility to mainstream departments, beginning with health, schooling and then child welfare and housing. He supported federal social service benefits for Aboriginal people to replace rations and blankets and pushed for speedy legislative reform to make Aboriginal citizenship a reality.

The DIA archive records reflect Middleton's initiatives. Files were now stamped Department of Native Welfare. The new decentralised record system that directly linked head office with patrol officers in the field now had file titles like '38/1949 District Officer of Natives Journal'. The titles also showed the new cooperation between government departments: '921/1949 Education of Natives Policy General Correspondence' and '412/1960 Housing for Natives State Housing and Private. General Correspondence'.

These changes were grafted onto the old system that resisted modernisation. Middleton recorded his growing frustrations in the files.



He was outraged by political opposition to the repeal of laws that were 'repugnant to basic humanitarian and welfare principles' and 'unparalleled in the legislative treatment of any other people in the Commonwealth or Pacific territories'.³² He was shocked by Neville's personal files and 'caste' cards with their 'obsessively mapped and meticulously recorded' fractions as far as '21/23rds' and suggested in a note to his Minister that their 'accidental destruction' would be of 'untold benefit'.³³ He was deeply shocked by conditions in the native settlements where 'inmates' sat 'absolutely silent and just stared...[saying] not a word'.³⁴

Middleton had good reason to distance himself from the old files. Of particular concern were practices of removing and institutionalising Aboriginal children. A confidential report in 1949 about conditions for children at Carrolup settlement listed unhygienic conditions amounting to 'gross neglect', 'barbarous' dormitories, insufficient food and inadequate ablutions, and warned of serious epidemics if the situation continued.³⁵ In late 1952 Middleton handed the former settlement over to the Baptist Aborigines

(above)

Cover of *Rene Baker File #28/E.D.P.* by Rene Powell and Bernadette Kennedy (Fremantle Press, 2005).

Mission. Evidence concerning outright illegalities also set alarm bells ringing. In 1950 Middleton had warned his Minister about 'illegal and unsatisfactory procedures' in the past when the department had 'seldom, if ever' obtained ministerial warrants for the committal of children to institutions as required by law and he advised that Aboriginal parents could have taken legal action against the department.³⁶

Fifty years later Rene Powell was shocked to read Middleton's comments in an archive file while researching her removal from Warburton Mission in 1952. Powell and her co-researcher and writer Bernadette Kennedy concluded that her case was one of many 'not so legal' removals of Aboriginal children in Western Australia. They were convinced that Middleton's drive to mainstream child welfare was motivated as much by 'fear of litigation as by any desire for justice'. They published their findings in the book, *Rene Baker File #28/E.D.P.* (2005), using multi-voice narratives, with the authors explaining their reasons

for writing the book, and with voices of administrators, missionaries and police quoted from the files juxtaposed with the contrasting accounts of Powell's removal told by her Ngaanyatjara family.³⁷

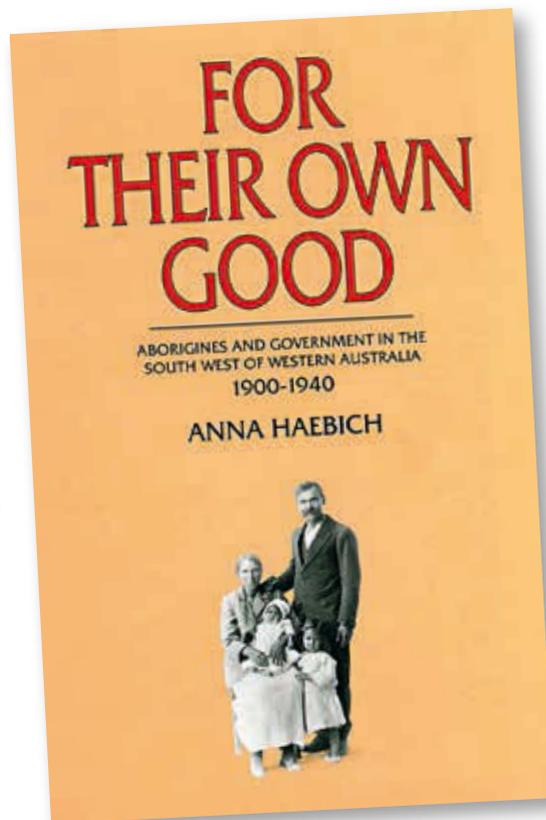
It is likely that Middleton's concerns contributed to the destruction of files that began in 1938 but escalated during the 1950s. Using the card registers Kinnane and Marsh calculated the percentages of files destroyed as 55 percent of administrative files, 21 percent of personal files and 71 percent of staff files. At the same time, they noted how this was tempered

from the late 1950s by growing appreciation of the historic value of the state's archival records, beginning with the appointment of a State Archivist in 1945, the archiving of records in the J. S. Battye Library of West Australian History and State Archives from 1956, and the appointment of a Records Committee in 1958 to oversee disposal schedules for departments. It was not until the 1990s that there were calls for a moratorium on the destruction of invaluable Aboriginal records.³⁸

The year 1972 saw thousands of carefully maintained and guarded records begin their final transfer to the archival repository for storage, conservation, preservation and public research. For the DIA files this did not mean retirement but a new era of fevered controversy. The catalyst for change was the 1972 Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority Act that dismantled the department and repealed the last discriminatory laws. The new Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority had only limited operational functions and the Department of Community Welfare now managed Aboriginal child and family welfare. The records were

split up between the Planning Authority and the Department of Community Welfare and historical files over 30 years old were cleared and moved in batches over several years to be managed by the State Archivist in the Battye Library. Then began the archival processes of listing, shelving and microfilming records for access by researchers.

In 1979, while Western Australians celebrated 150 years of colonial settlement and progress, a new vanguard of social historians were constructing very different accounts of the past using the DIA archive. Already in



(above)
Cover of *For Their Own Good: Aborigines and Government in the Southwest of Western Australia, 1900-1940* by Anna Haebich (UWA Publishing, 1988).

1973 archivist Peter Biskup had published his classic study of policy and practice in Western Australia, *Not Slaves Not Citizens*. Many more radical histories would follow including my own book, *For Their Own Good: Aborigines and Government in the Southwest of Western Australia* (1992), that combined archival research and Noongar accounts of the past.

In these politically charged times controversy was inevitable. The first official act of obstruction was by the Minister for Police, Bill Hassell, who in 1980 banned access to all police records about Aborigines in retaliation for the alleged defamation of the family of a serving senior police officer by historian Andrew Gill in a respectable academic journal.³⁹ In the following year, now wearing the hat of Minister for Community Welfare, Hassell embargoed use of the DIA archive as well after a researcher allegedly breached classified material; he also threatened prosecutions. Aboriginal leaders joined with historians to dispute the government's draconian efforts to gag research.⁴⁰

However, prohibitions continued while the files were carefully assessed and designated as permanently 'restricted' or as 'open' for access to *bona fide* researchers.

By the mid-1980s Aboriginal families were also seeking access to the archive. Passions ran high as they read the often derogatory and misinformed information recorded in terse bureaucratic language. Information in many personal files was so private and contentious that the Department of Community Welfare introduced a further embargo while it developed its policy to restrict access to the

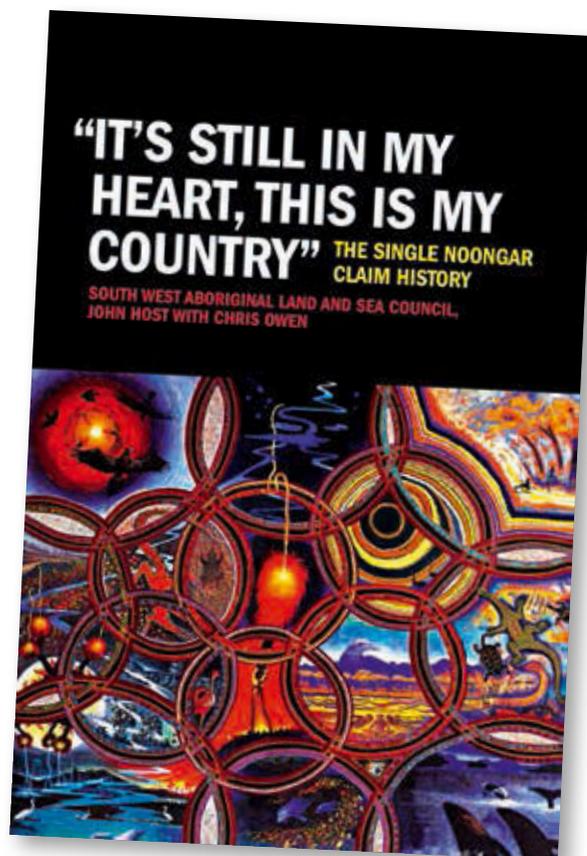
individual concerned or, if deceased, their immediate descendants. Later the department developed a one-stop service providing support for family history research and counseling.

For many of the Stolen Generations these records were the lifelines back to their mothers and families. The documentary, *Case 442 A Son's Journey to Find his Mother*, directed by Mitch Torres, tells how Mr Frank Byrne found his mother in the file for Department of Community Welfare Case 442 as well as the details of his forced removal to Beagle Bay Mission north of Broome. His mother's

story was tragic: after her son was taken she had a breakdown and was sent to a psychiatric hospital in Perth where she spent her remaining years and was buried nearby. The film shows Mr Byrne grieving at his mother's grave and then his determined efforts to successfully return his mother's remains for burial in her traditional country near Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberley.⁴¹

Controversially, the West Australian

government continued to validate the 'truth' of the DIA archive over Aboriginal oral history and memory by obliging Aboriginal people to produce evidence from its records in various claim matters. In a cruel irony this included proving the case for monetary compensation by the Stolen Generations and for Stolen Wages mismanaged by the government. The archive also became a vital source for Land Councils and Native Title claimants to demonstrate ongoing connections to land and culture. In 2009 the South West Land and Sea Council published *It's Still in My Heart, This is My Country*, a definitive



(above left)
Cover of 'It's Still in My Heart, This is My Country': The Single Noongar Claim History by the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council, John Host with Chris Owen (UWA Publishing, 2009).

history of colonisation in Noongar country based on the history report for the Single Noongar Claim that drew together archival research and Noongar oral histories.

During the 1990s simmering tensions erupted into a national campaign for Aboriginal control of the archives. Aboriginal leaders in two national government inquiries, both men from Western Australia, led the way: Pat Dodson in the 1991 *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* and Mick Dodson in the 1997 *Bringing Them Home Report* on Australia's Stolen Generations.⁴² Mick Dodson drew on international conventions and principles when he asserted that the child removals were genocidal and gross violations of human rights and that it was the responsibility of state and federal governments to return records of their genocidal policies to the victims. This would restore knowledge vital for their healing and survival as Indigenous people. Dodson recommended a human rights framework for the archives based on self-determination, non-discrimination and cultural renewal.

There was a muted response to Dodson's recommendations from the Western Australian government. Significant change only began with the 2001 State Records Act that established the State Records Office, independent of the State Library, and charged it to review the status of all DIA restricted files. Thousands were subsequently reclassified as open access. Indexes and guides to the DIA archive were digitised though few files. The Records Office follows the now outdated 1997 *Policy Statement on Archival Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* and the 2005 *Protocol for Libraries, Archives, and Information* drawn up by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library and Information Resources Network.⁴³

Nationally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander archivists and colleagues continue to pursue a human rights agenda, now through the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by Australia in 2009, and have produced national statements based on the declaration concerning Indigenous knowledge, archives and human rights. In Melbourne the Koori Trust and Technology

Project (2004–8) has investigated strategies for Kurri people to become 'co-creators' of archival records using 'Indigenous knowledge, memory and frameworks of evidence'. In 2010 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda called for a 'resettling of relationships' between Aboriginal people and the archives through a process described by Marcia Langton and Martin Nakata as 'dialogue, conversation, education, and working through things together [...] and means for Indigenous people to be part of what they determine should be done'.⁴⁴ The creative works by West Australian writers cited here are testimonies to what can be achieved. They show the passionate, rich storytelling that emerges when Aboriginal people engage with the archives that once controlled their lives and, armed with their shared memories and cultural knowledge, release and transform the hidden meanings and forgotten stories captured within them. ¶



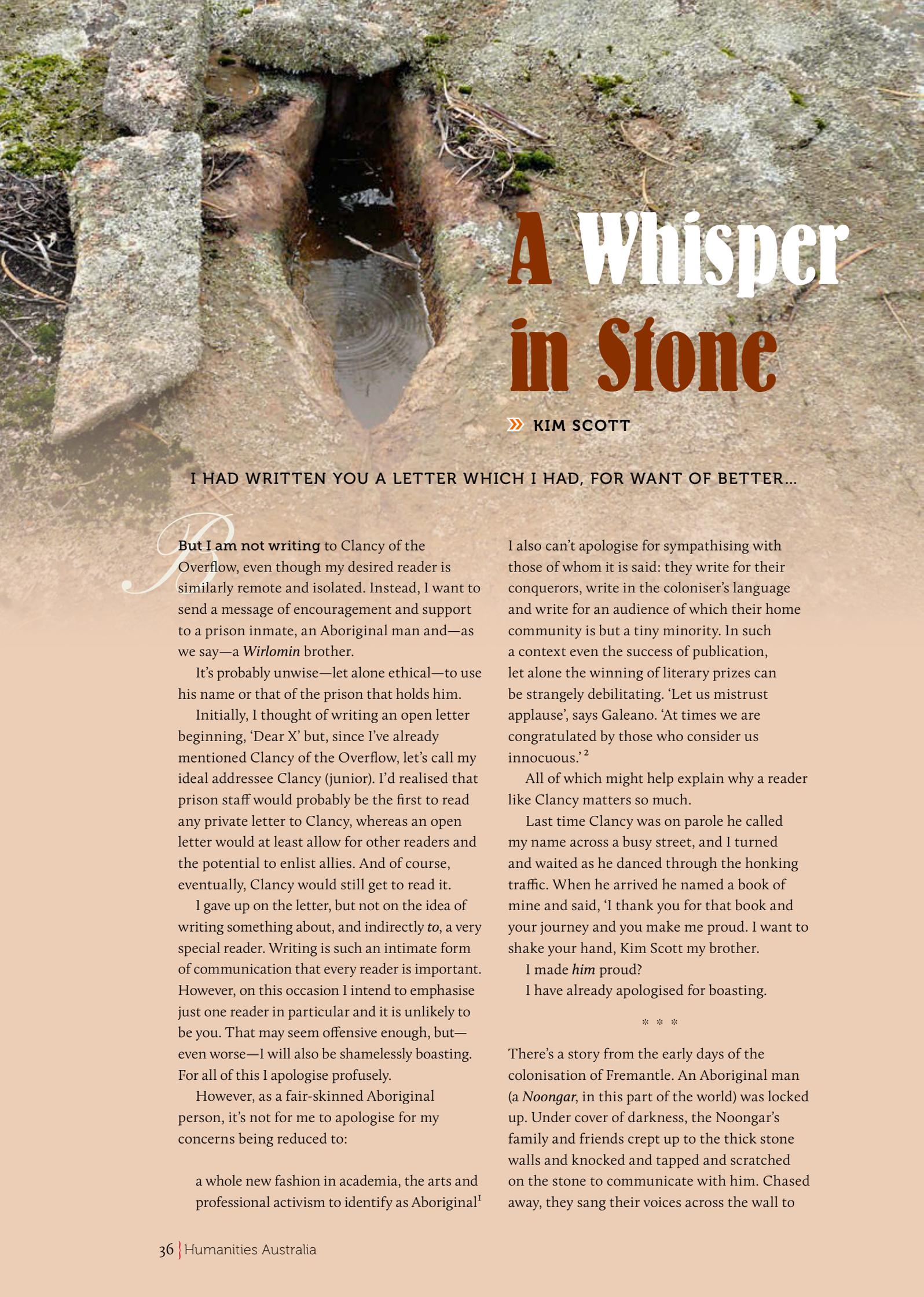
ANNA HAEBICH FAHA FASSA is an internationally regarded historian known for her interdisciplinary research into Australia's recent past. Best known is her book **Broken**

Circles, the first national history of Australia's Stolen Generations. Her current research explores the history of Aboriginal public performance in Western Australia. Anna is currently John Curtin Distinguished Professor at Curtin University.

PHOTO COURTESY CURTIN UNIVERSITY. © JAMES CAMPBELL

1. *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions and the Writing of History*, ed. by Antoinette Burton (Durham NC and London: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 20.
2. Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, Religion and Postmodernism Series (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 4.
3. Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 1.
4. Burton, p. 210.
5. A longer version of this paper will be published soon—Anna Haebich, 'Aboriginal Lives Trapped in the Archives', in *Australian Identity and Culture: Transnational Perspectives in Life Writing*, ed. by Paul Arthur (London: Anthem Press, forthcoming.)

6. Lauren Marsh and Steve Kinnane, 'Ghost Files: The Missing Files of the Department of Indigenous Affairs Archives', *Studies in Western Australian History*, 23 (2003), 111–27.
7. Lynette Russell, 'Indigenous Knowledge and Archives: Accessing Hidden History and Understandings', in *Proceedings of the Libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Colloquium* (Sydney, 2004), cited in Sue McKemmish, Anne Gilliland-Swetland and Eric Ketelaar, "'Communities of Memory": Pluralising Archival Research and Education Agendas', *Archives and Manuscripts*, 33 (2005), p. 20.
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9. McKemmish, Gilliland-Swetland and Ketelaar, 'Communities of Memory', p. 22.
10. Russell, 'Indigenous Knowledge and Archives', and J. M. Flavier et al., 'The Regional Program for the Promotion of Indigenous Knowledge in Asia', in *The Cultural Dimension Of Development: Indigenous Knowledge Systems*, ed. by D. M. Warren, L. J. Slikkerveer and D. Brokensha (London: Intermediate Technology Publications, 1995), p. 479.
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A Whisper in Stone

» KIM SCOTT

I HAD WRITTEN YOU A LETTER WHICH I HAD, FOR WANT OF BETTER...

But I am not writing to Clancy of the Overflow, even though my desired reader is similarly remote and isolated. Instead, I want to send a message of encouragement and support to a prison inmate, an Aboriginal man and—as we say—a *Wirlomin* brother.

It's probably unwise—let alone ethical—to use his name or that of the prison that holds him.

Initially, I thought of writing an open letter beginning, 'Dear X' but, since I've already mentioned Clancy of the Overflow, let's call my ideal addressee Clancy (junior). I'd realised that prison staff would probably be the first to read any private letter to Clancy, whereas an open letter would at least allow for other readers and the potential to enlist allies. And of course, eventually, Clancy would still get to read it.

I gave up on the letter, but not on the idea of writing something about, and indirectly *to*, a very special reader. Writing is such an intimate form of communication that every reader is important. However, on this occasion I intend to emphasise just one reader in particular and it is unlikely to be you. That may seem offensive enough, but—even worse—I will also be shamelessly boasting. For all of this I apologise profusely.

However, as a fair-skinned Aboriginal person, it's not for me to apologise for my concerns being reduced to:

a whole new fashion in academia, the arts and professional activism to identify as Aboriginal¹

I also can't apologise for sympathising with those of whom it is said: they write for their conquerors, write in the coloniser's language and write for an audience of which their home community is but a tiny minority. In such a context even the success of publication, let alone the winning of literary prizes can be strangely debilitating. 'Let us mistrust applause', says Galeano. 'At times we are congratulated by those who consider us innocuous.'²

All of which might help explain why a reader like Clancy matters so much.

Last time Clancy was on parole he called my name across a busy street, and I turned and waited as he danced through the honking traffic. When he arrived he named a book of mine and said, 'I thank you for that book and your journey and you make me proud. I want to shake your hand, Kim Scott my brother.

I made *him* proud?

I have already apologised for boasting.

* * *

There's a story from the early days of the colonisation of Fremantle. An Aboriginal man (a *Noongar*, in this part of the world) was locked up. Under cover of darkness, the Noongar's family and friends crept up to the thick stone walls and knocked and tapped and scratched on the stone to communicate with him. Chased away, they sang their voices across the wall to

comfort him in his isolation. I'd like to think reader and writer can do that too: share words of comfort not only across razor and steel-capped stone walls but also across the vast, yawning chasm that sometimes divides us.

* * *

Clancy came to his father's funeral handcuffed and chained to a security guard. His children wept to see him. They hung from his shoulders and hugged him and he had to shift his arms awkwardly this way and that to keep the shackles away from their bodies.

One at a time, people walked to the space where they could face the mourning crowd and recount their memories of the old man. Many sobbed as they did so. I saw Clancy's frustration, saw him lift his head like a chained dancer measuring his leap...

Handcuffs held out in front of him, he pivoted and, jerking the chain between him and the security guard, walked to the room's power spot. Walked? What is the word to say how he moved? It was too tentative and too graceful to be called a strut or swagger. He hesitated for an instant between each step and held his cuffed hands before him as if the cuffs and looping chain were the stuff of ceremony. The guard, surrounded by Clancy's children, meekly followed as the other

prison staff impassively watched from where they stood among Clancy's brothers.

All eyes were on him as he stood at the small lectern and began calling out names of those who had been important to his father. Then: 'Kim Scott, my brother, dad loved you and what you and him were doing, our history and language.'

Yes, I am boasting, telling you this proudly. Clancy is a reader who matters.

Clancy's father and I spent a lot of time together in the first decade of this century. Clancy's father, Lomas, and aunties Hazel and Audrey Brown offered me stories and sounds indigenous to our ancestral country, and took me to places from where those same stories sprang. We joined their words with fragments in the archives, linguists' word lists and transcriptions and, gathering with other members of a 'community of descendants', began to breathe life into them. 'Too sad and strange', someone said. 'We mostly only ever get together like this at funerals nowadays.'

We had sent the results of our work to Clancy, and he began sharing his growing body of Aboriginal (Noongar, in this instance) language and stories with a few other inmates. For over a year Clancy, with the help of another long-term Noongar inmate, held 'classes'

(below)

Kim Scott with Tegan Roberts, holding an example of artwork by her father, Anthony (Troy) Roberts at the 2011 launch of their books published by UWA Publishing, **Mamang and Noongr Mambara Bakitj.**

PHOTO: MARY GIMONDO.



attended by other, mostly younger inmates. They came to be called ‘culture and healing workshops’, and had the support of senior staff at the prison.

Clancy’s father was a generous man who grieved for what he had not been able to leave his children, though of course Clancy carries something of his father’s legacy of being a black man in a little country town, even after the arrival of citizenship (or ‘drinking rights’). It’s a legacy that includes the experience of drinking with a farmer at the end of the week you’ve

illustrations for some bilingual stories we’d put together. The prison allowed Clancy to select inmates to participate, most of whom had been attending the classes he had organised. One inmate was invited because, although ‘one of us’, he was particularly estranged from clan and country.

For two days inmates and family from outside the prison walls shared the ancient language and stories of their ancestors, those who had created human society in this part of the world.³



spent slaving to clear your ancestral country for him, and then being arrested as you enter town. Imagine it, if you will: the policeman locks you up, grins through the bars, talks about the weekend he’ll spend with your wife.

Clancy and his brothers asked me to be a pallbearer at their father’s funeral. One of the brothers—Geoff—was so free a man that he had no Centrelink number, no bank account, no fixed address. I relied upon Geoff in many ways, and was honoured to be one of those carrying his father’s body that very last time.

Several months after the burial we held a workshop in the prison to generate some

At the end of our time together, Clancy addressed the group.

‘Last bit of time, as you know’, he said, ‘I’ve been in solitary.’

He’d spent the time reading, he said, and then listed all my books. Yes, again, I am boasting.

Wiping his eyes as people prepared to leave, Clancy said, ‘What you doing to me, Kim? I got a reputation to look after in here.’

Those who remained when we left the prison were entrusted with finishing the illustrations. A few days later the inmate who’d been invited because he was ‘lost’ asked Clancy what was in

(above)
A rock waterhole
(‘Ngaama’ in
Noongar language)
along the south
coast of south-
western Western
Australia.

PHOTO: DECLAN SCOTT.

it for him. How much money was being made, anyway?

'I nearly hit him', said Clancy. 'You don't know who you are, I told him. That's why we're here, and we're angry. This is our old people talking, and this is for when we get out of here.'

'Healing' and 'identity' and 'culture' are words he uses.

Clancy talks about how he must control his anger, his drug-taking and violence. His short fuse lets other inmates, and security officers too, goad him into a reaction that gets him back in solitary and delays his release.

We had left some art materials behind after the workshop—good paper, paints, good quality brushes—to finish off the job. Next day all that material had disappeared from the storeroom. Weeks later a security officer told Clancy it had been replaced, and held out a paintbrush.

'A 50¢ brush', Clancy told me. 'We both knew it wasn't like what was left for us, not proper brushes. He wanted me to be grateful. I didn't say nothing. I let it go.'

Clancy has spent a lot of time in solitary. They want you isolated from society, he says, that's why we're here. And then they isolate you again. He was in solitary for two weeks. But it didn't work. 'I wasn't alone', he said, and named characters and people I'd written about. 'Man, I was with all my family and friends in that book you and Auntie Hazel did. Bobby too.'

Clancy choreographed dances from some of the stories we shared, and he and other inmates performed at the prison's NAIDOC celebrations. That made people proud, too.

Clancy's paintings were propped at centre stage for the launch of our bilingual picture books. Afterwards and elsewhere, we sat around a flickering campfire. Clancy was at a distance, but is intrinsic to these pulsing, concentric circles.

And my shameless boasting? An Aboriginal person who would like to be inclusive of his other heritages, I am trying to speak of what it means to be a descendant of the people who first created human society in our part of the world, and trying to tell a story of recovery.

I told Clancy of how *Kayang* Hazel made us stop the car at the edge of the bitumen road, beside an over-cleared paddock. Despite

needing a walking stick she crossed the wire fence and led us across the shifting soil to a rocky outcrop. She pointed, there: a series of neat circles in the rock that grew small, then larger again. '*Yongar* and *Miak*', she said, and told the old story of Kangaroo and Moon. Kangaroo complains of inevitable death, and how his bones will turn grey and crack in the sun as the hill grows around them. And Moon? Moon gets very sick and wastes away, but doesn't die: the moon always returns, and grows strong again.

It is both a responsibility and a privilege to stand beside where that story is imprinted in stone, and hear its ancient utterance. Either side of a stone wall capped with razor wire, at least one reader and writer lean forward, listening, hoping. ¶



KIM SCOTT FAHA is a multi-award winning novelist. He was the 2012 West Australian of the Year, having been nominated in both the Indigenous and the Arts and Culture categories.

A descendant of people living along the south coast of Western Australia prior to colonisation and proud to be one among those who call themselves Noongar, Kim is founder and chair of the Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories Project which, among other achievements, has to date resulted in the publication of four bilingual picture books. He is currently Professor of Writing at Curtin University.

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* * *

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Creators *or* Destroyers?

The Burning Questions of Human Impact in Ancient Aboriginal Australia

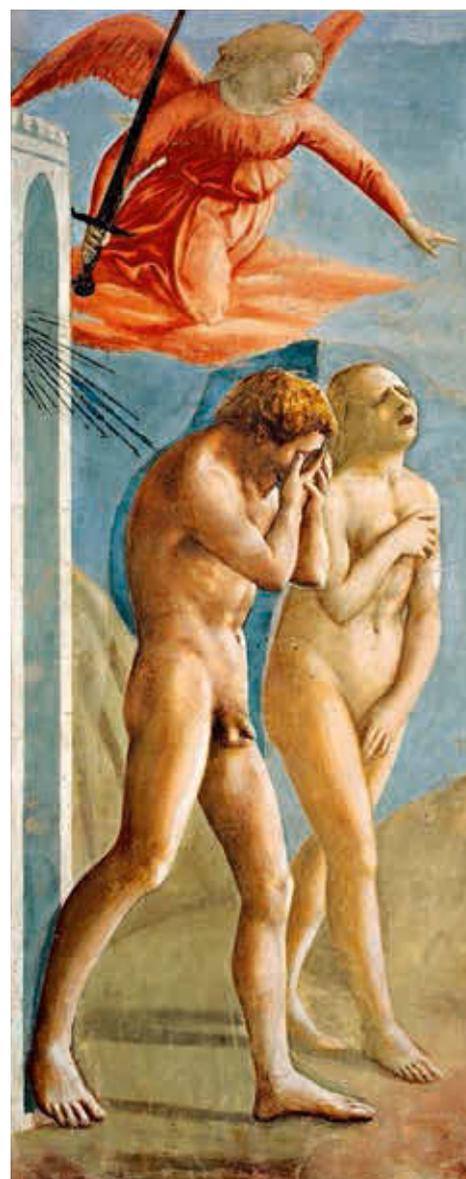
» PETER HISCOCK

INTRODUCTION: QUESTIONS OF HOW AND WHY

*T*he Fall of Humanity depicted in the Book of Genesis portrays traumas associated with the transition from foraging to farming. That transformation of human social and economic life is depicted negatively, and is associated with both suffering and shame. While in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had an abundance of fruits to pick, but after the Fall they and their descendants had to sweat and labour to farm the land for a living. The transformation from a life of ease to one of labour was accompanied by momentous cultural shifts, such as the transformation from peace to murder as Cain slaughtered Abel, a shift requiring the development of elaborate social processes to regulate conflict. This Old Testament narrative illustrates, actually epitomises, long-standing imagery of hunter-gatherers conjured by agriculturalists. Biblical visions of lost Edens emerge in many modern Western stories about the distant past and about the lives of foragers. The story of the Fall provides one fundamental element in the conceptual background of current debates about human impacts on the environment. It is a narrative explored in visions about the nature of life and wilderness at earlier times: either before the coming of humans or before the coming of agriculturalists to the Australian landscape.

(above)
Bush fire at Captain Creek, Central Queensland, Australia.

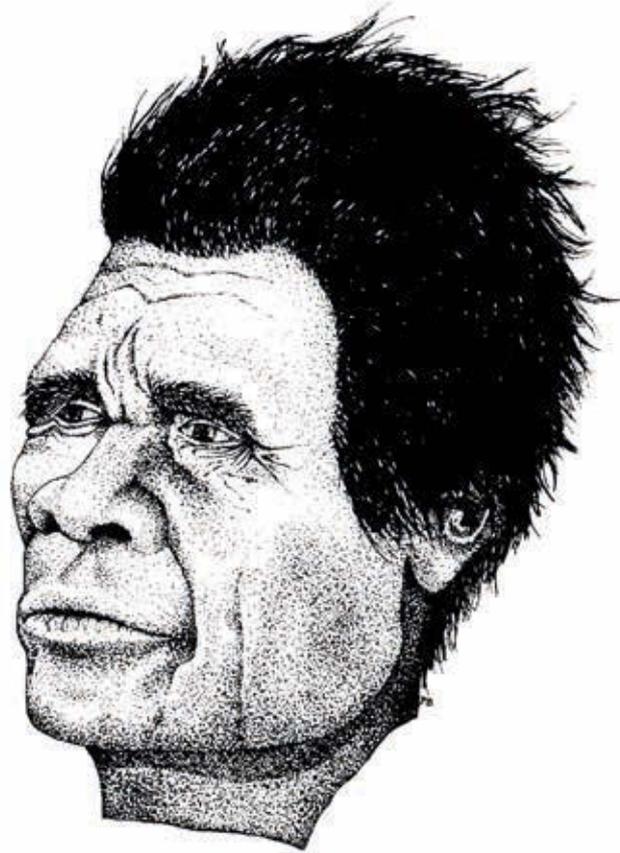
SOURCE: 80 TRADING 24 (OWN WORK) [CC-BY-SA-3.0 (HTTP://CREATIVECOMMONS.ORG/LICENSES/BY-SA/3.0)]. VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



Here I examine recent arguments by historians and natural scientists, as well as archaeologists, who have discussed the transformation of nature after hunter-gatherers and/or agriculturalists arrived in Australia. I focus on human use of fire and its articulation to society and belief. For reasons of time I will not deal with the ongoing debate on extinction of megafaunal taxa and whether it was a consequence of human over-predation.

The propositions that have been advanced range from an argument that Aboriginal people created an Eden-like estate to the view that they destroyed the delicately balanced natural ecosystem they found in Australia. Intriguingly, both arguments adopt the narrative arc of Genesis; they both assert that Australia was once a bountiful, diverse and desirable place before the intrusion of humans. The arguments differ in their assigning of culpability for the Fall. The first reading, that Aboriginal Australia remained an Edenic place until the coming of Europeans, depicts foragers living harmoniously within the limits of their environment, most likely recognising its character and enhancing it, until the intrusion of agriculturalists destroyed the balance and created the Fall. The second reading, that the arrival of humans in Australia led to the extinction of megafauna and subsequent impacts on small fauna and flora, implies that Adam and Eve's self-interest meant they would inevitably violate the rule of the Garden, and that humans are inherently destroyers of their own environments.

These biblical parallels might seem incidental and accidental except that almost twenty years ago Carolyn Merchant, then professor of environmental history, philosophy and ethics at the University of California Berkeley, argued robustly that much Western history about the colonisation of the New World can be coherently read as 'recovery narratives'.¹ That is, as stories of decline from a golden age that finish with hope of redemption in the form of some return to the original Edenic state or at least a reorientation of current environmental relationships to create some simulacra of that state. This narrative arc occurs in some prominent recent Australian publications; indeed it is so explicit



in a few that they are undoubtedly recovery narratives played out in purportedly historical interpretations. I will illustrate this shortly.

A related issue is the constraints on historical interpretations created by imposing vivid images from the historical record upon the distant past. As an archaeologist I explore the immense span of time in which humans have occupied Australia and the rapidity and frequency of social and economic changes that took place during that period. Recognition of substantial change in the cultures that lived across Australia underpins my conclusions, especially those that have proved challenging. Conclusions such as my argument that, obviously, Aboriginal people did not colonise Australia. We know that Australia was colonised by populations of modern humans descended from Africans who had migrated out-of-Africa, moved across South Asia and eventually crossed the water barriers separating the Pleistocene continent of Australia (Sahul) from the Pleistocene continent located in Southeast Asia. These humans were the distant ancestors of Aboriginal people; but as far as we know they would *not* have been recognisably Aboriginal, physically or culturally. Their

(above)
Fig. 1. Peter Brown's evocative artistic depiction of a man from the terminal Pleistocene period, based on Coobool Creek skeletons.
COURTESY PETER BROWN

(opposite)
The Expulsion Of Adam and Eve from Eden. Fresco by Masaccio. 1426-27, Cappella Brancacci, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence.
SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, PUBLIC DOMAIN (PD-ART).

descendants *became* Aboriginal as they evolved, adapting to the continent they inhabited. When confronted with scientific interpretations of the African origins of humans Aboriginal people sometimes object, insisting they came from Australia. In many ways they are right. While their immensely distant ancestors came from Africa, people who were physically and culturally Aboriginal evolved here.

This evolution of Aboriginal life may not technically have been continuous, in the sense that change happened at a constant rate, but the indications in the archaeological record suggest changes occurred repeatedly and sometimes frequently throughout the last 50,000 years. The resolution on cultural change is far higher in recent millennia as a result of the better preservation and easier discovery of archaeological materials. So I will simply give examples from the last ten millennia, the final fifth of the time people have been in this continent.²

At the start of this period in the south-east some populations were still deforming the skulls of their infants so that adults of their group were visibly distinct and distinguishable from members of other groups (fig. 1). This form of public signalling vanished around 9000 years ago and was never again used in Australia.³

Although linguists have struggled to define the date precisely, they argue that the Pama-Nyungan language family spread from somewhere near the Gulf of Carpentaria across the southern 70 percent of Australia, perhaps between 5000 and 10,000 years ago. The precise direction and mode of dispersal is still being investigated, but it is reasonable to consider the impact of this major language replacement on the way people named and thought of their world. I would expect that mythologies, cosmologies and ontologies were substantially reworked, not simply maintained and accurately translated. The alternative possibility is that there may have been dispersals of people, invasions/replacements perhaps, creating cultural disconformities.

Substantial shifts in technology occur in this time period. Ground-edge axes, which had been used in northern Australia for tens of millennia, began being used across much of central and south-eastern Australia for the first

time around 3000 to 4000 years ago. Possibly these diffused in parallel with the Pama-Nyungan spread, but that is not yet established. In roughly the same period some specific implement forms such as microlithic backed artefacts began being produced in vast numbers for a comparatively short time. Around the coastal plains of southern Australia, where they were used as craft tools to work skin, bone and wood, they proliferated between about 3500 to 2000 years ago.⁴ They were manufactured and used in great numbers for about 500 to 1000 years in each region, and then the technology was, gradually, entirely abandoned.

In Northern Australia Paul Taçon and his colleagues have shown that the imagery used in the nineteenth century to represent the Rainbow Serpent, a significant figure in post-contact cosmology, could be traced in the sequence of rock art in Arnhem Land. Versions of the image first appear in the Yam phase, which might be something like 4000 to 6000 years ago, and the images began to look like those used historically probably in the last two or three thousand years.⁵ Rock art from earlier time periods depicts the world in very different ways, with images of half-animal/half-human beings roaming the world with humans, sometimes attacking them. This seems an archaeological signal of a *fundamental* change in world view, including a significant change in religious expression.

In the last 1000 to 3000 years there are notable economic reorganisations in a number of regions. For instance, the intensified earth mound building in Victorian wetlands probably represents not only greater emphasis on exploitation of wetland resources but also increased sedentism. Meanwhile across almost the entire northern coastline, the system of intensive exploitation of rich mollusc beds by moderately large sedentary groups, leading to the creation of large mounds of shell, collapsed as mangroves colonised previously open beaches. The point of my two examples is to emphasise regional differentiation: as one settlement system becomes sedentary another becomes more residentially mobile and diffuse.

Some researchers argue that the last few thousand years is a period of substantial population increase, with associated growth

in the identity and territorial boundedness of groups, eventually leading to some of the patterns seen historically. Certainly, occupation in desert landscapes studied by Peter Veth,⁶ Mike Smith,⁷ myself⁸ and others produced higher amplitude signals that are consistent with more people or more occupation or significantly different modes of occupation in recent millennia.

Reconfiguration of mythology and ritual practice are well documented in the last millennium. In the north east of Australia Bruno David has neatly documented the creation of a mythology that described one landscape feature as dangerous, as revealed by the abandonment of uplands about 700 to 800 years ago.⁹ And in the Torres Strait, David, Ian McNiven, Duncan Wright and others have built a detailed picture of a system of ritual sites being constructed roughly 500 years ago.¹⁰

Culture contact in the period of historical records yields many dramatic examples of social, economic and religious changes, some happening remarkably rapidly. As Scott Mitchell demonstrated, Trepang fisherman from Maccassar and other nearby ports introduced metal tools to Aboriginal groups living on the northwest coast, allowing Aboriginal people to make dugout canoes for the first time and to harpoon marine mammals, so transforming economies and settlement patterns.¹¹ The cultural 'trauma' of this ongoing contact was reflected in language and belief, and was embedded in myths. Notoriously, smallpox, a disease that probably killed far in excess of 70 percent of Aboriginal people in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, resulted in territorial reconfigurations, shifts in gender roles, and even transformations of rituals such as the instances documented by Dick Kimber.¹² There are even cogent arguments that many myths recorded in and after the mid-nineteenth century dealing with floods and the spread of illnesses were expressions of Aboriginal encounters with Christianity and Old World diseases—transformed into stories that had meaning in Aboriginal terms.¹³

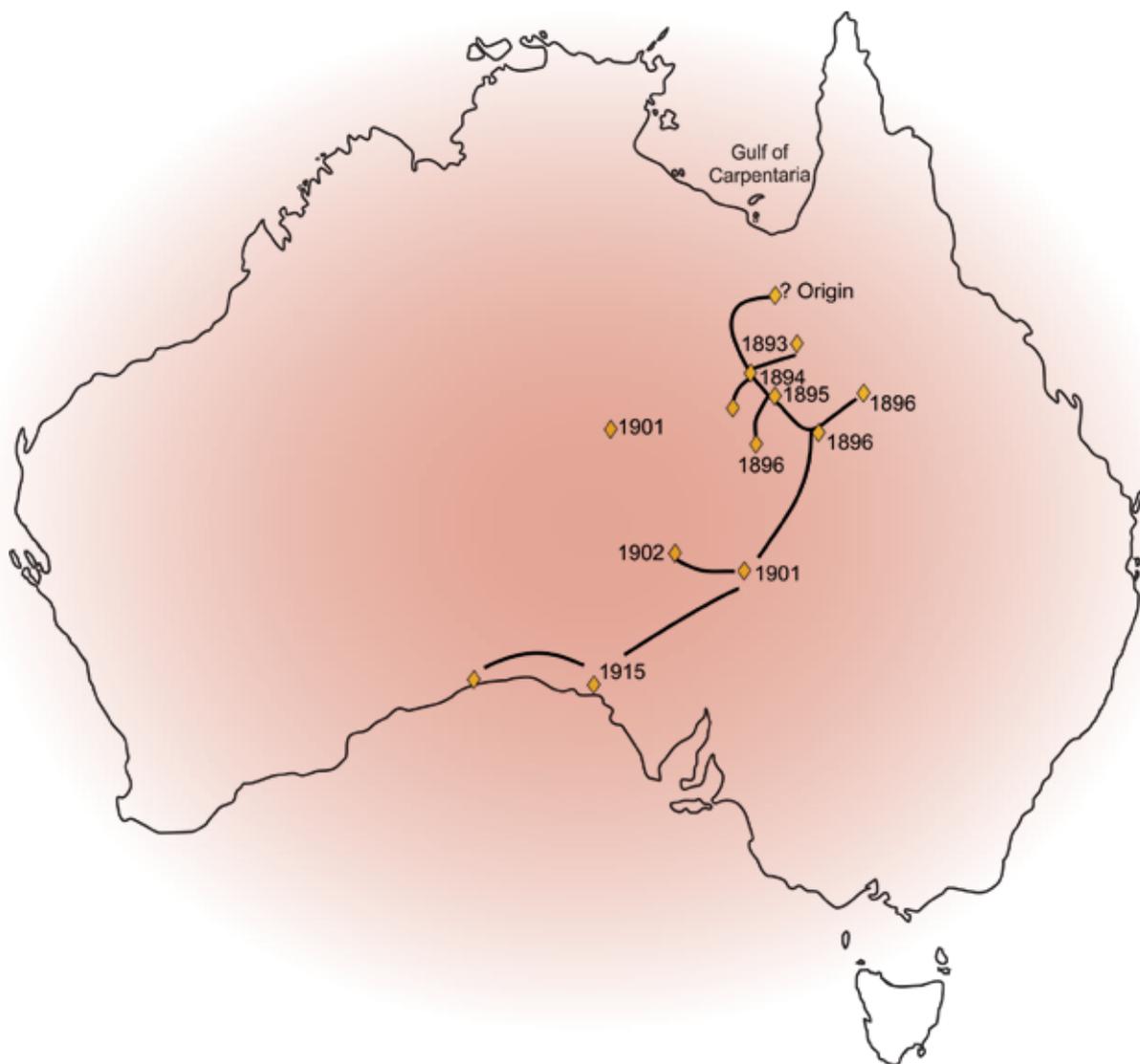
A sketch of one such transformation can give a sense of changes in Aboriginal world views. At the core of Aboriginal religion in

the nineteenth century was the formation and expansion of cults, displayed through ceremonies that were the culmination and focus of social gatherings, often accompanied by stories or mythologies and associated with initiations and the sanctioning of and orchestration of social actions by 'clever men'. This religious process of frequent cultic changes, through the invention of new cults dreamed of by clever men, was well recorded and wonderfully described in the twentieth century by anthropologists such as William Stanner.¹⁴ The capacity of Aboriginal religious frameworks to adopt, integrate and modify new cults, as a normal functioning of religious life, has two meanings.

The changing series of cults and mythological stories that were the basis of religious theatre provided for constant ideological readjustment to circumstances. It is likely that cults were regularly invented and/or adopted, and in the process religious belief was regularly renewed. Consequently, when the environment or economy or social practices changed, those alterations might be reflected in the new religious narratives and rituals. This process would 'renovate' religious life in the sense that cults and mythologies were updated to refer to recent events and social concerns rather than preserving ancient stories intact.

Hence the ritual focus of people typically reflected current concerns rather than presenting stories about events in the distant past. It therefore seems to me that notions that Aboriginal myths faithfully record events from the Ice Ages—say 20,000 years ago—come more from expectations that Aboriginal stories and myth were somehow unchanging, than from ethnographic evidence of cult dynamism.

Take, for example, the spread of the Mulunga cult, visibly expressed through the elaborate and lengthy Mulunga ceremony, which itself was the conclusion of prolonged rehearsals and preparation of ritual paraphernalia. The set for the ceremony included the construction of a two-metre high beehive hut to be occupied by a grandmother spirit, one of the key characters in the narrative. The most detailed description of the ceremony comes from the missionary Otto Siebert who observed it several times at the dawn of the twentieth century in the



lands north of Port Augusta.¹⁵ A central part of the ceremony involved characters holding forked sticks, symbolising white men with guns killing Aboriginal people. In the finale of the performance a hidden and elaborately adorned performer emerged from behind the hut, representing a water-spirit surfacing from a water body, and ferociously attacked the white men in revenge.

This complex and costly ceremony originated somewhere on the Barkly Tablelands, probably at the beginnings of the 1890s. I am persuaded by Tony Swain's suggestion that the massacre theme is a reference to the conflict in the Mount Isa region on what is locally called Battle Mountain where, in 1884, hundreds of Kalkadoon warriors came out of cover, formed ranks and attacked and/or marched towards a contingent of Native Police who shot almost all of them with their carbines. The reverberation within

regional Aboriginal society of this exceptional event found one expression in the creation of the Mulunga ritual/cult.

The cult spread with remarkable speed, transmitted along river corridors and stock routes from near the Gulf of Carpentaria to the southern coastline and thence to Eucla in little more than twenty years, as documented by both John Mulvaney¹⁶ and Tony Swain (fig. 2). The spread was assisted by the relevance of the culture-contact theme to Aboriginal peoples becoming part of the expanding pastoral industry, as well as by the accompanying threat of death, illness or rape to those who did not accept the cult or who wrongly performed the ceremony. While acknowledging that the origins and expansion of the Mulunga cult came from aspirational re-imaginings of intercultural relationships in the complex and disrupted colonial context, I also think this illustrates the *process* of religious

(above)
Fig. 2. Map showing the dispersal of the Mulunga cult, based on information from John Mulvaney and Tony Swain.

COURTESY
 PETER HISCOCK

transformation that prevailed before the arrival of Europeans.

What does all this mean? And how does this relate to my theme of environmental impacts by ancient humans? I offer these examples to emphasise my vision of the dynamism of Aboriginal social and economic systems, probably throughout the entire occupation of Australia. Archaeological and historical evidence indicates frequent social, economic and ideological reorganisation. Aboriginal social systems were extremely capable of change, displaying dynamism that I suspect is probably typical of all the modern humans who emerged from Africa.

What I am emphasising is that the history of humanity in this continent has been dynamic and evolving, and we must appreciate it as such. We should not hide this remarkable record of adaptation and evolution behind slogans such as 'Aboriginal culture is the longest continuing culture in the world', a slogan that implies a lack of cultural change, a Western myth of an ethnographic present stretching back fifty thousand years. This is *not* an issue of cultural authenticity. We do not need to authenticate Aboriginal culture by insisting, like nineteenth-century cultural evolutionists, that it was frozen in time. We can and should hold a view of the history of Aboriginal culture as impressively transformative. I am therefore perplexed by histories that present a fixed, unchanging Aboriginal way of life.

THE GAMMAGE ARGUMENT

In *The Biggest Estate on Earth* historian Bill Gammage has presented an Edenic vision of human-landscape relationships in pre-contact Australia.¹⁷ I discuss his book as an example of current views on Aboriginal history and environmental relationships because its publicity and prizes have made it a powerful influence on popular thinking. Of course, as many of you will know, Gammage's thesis revolves around the practice of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Aborigines setting fires in strategic ways that sometimes enhanced their foraging economy. Now there is no doubt about the reality that underpins that statement; it has been well observed and discussed by

archaeologists and environmental scientists for much of the last fifty years. Gammage argues that extensive and regular use of limited, low intensity fires by Aboriginal people reduced tree coverage, encouraged patches of grass, and created parkland-like landscapes across Australia. His evidence for this comes from two sources: recorded images of landscapes and written impressions of fire in the land.

The expansive compilation of historical references to burning that Gammage has created displays abundant evidence for strategic, planned burning of vegetation by Aboriginal people two and a half centuries ago. And yet there is little in those historical observations that demonstrate his claims for universality of a particular human relationship with fire or a singular social context of burning. It is worth noting that while Gammage has developed his argument from numerous historical texts he does not give similar emphasis to anthropological descriptions of Aboriginal burning, to modelling and fire experiments by natural scientists, to vegetation history reconstructions, or to archaeological data. Instead, his image is carefully crafted to represent the state of human-environmental interactions in 1788 and surrounding decades. But his vision is not simply about the nature of Aboriginal life only in 1788. Gammage implies the nineteenth-century use of fire had a deep history, writing that 'an ancient philosophy was destroyed by the completely unexpected, an invasion of new people and ideas'.¹⁸

In one sense Gammage combines/reconciles the elements of that Genesis origin story, by having the leisurely life of foraging abundance created by the foragers through farming/land management. Gammage expresses this in various ways; he depicts Aboriginal peoples as affluent foragers with abundant food from few hours of labour, even as he presents them as farming the land with fire, leading him to conclude that 'in 1788 people assumed abundance, and so did Genesis'.¹⁹ Gammage interprets Aboriginal fire management as 'farming', an imagery that evokes Alistair Paterson's recent observation that such views imply 'fire was used as a tool—like a farmer's spade'.²⁰ In fact 'farming' is one of many terms Gammage uses to conjure a vision of Aboriginal

people as counterparts to landed gentry in Britain; his claim is that Aboriginal burning created 'estates' comparable to the parklands of rural Britain and that the complexity of social life revealed their 'civilisation'.

My first comment is that such phrasing invokes diverse Eurocentric associations and invites re-evaluation of Aboriginal actions and goals as functionally similar to those in historical Europe. The implication that such a comparison elevates Aboriginal society in our view is a distinctly colonial approach to cultural comparisons. Yet even this characterisation of Aboriginal interactions with the environment in inherently European terms, suggesting that they farmed the land and made it 'civilised', is not the most radical element in the argument Gammage offers us.

His core proposition is that Aboriginal people were inexorably committed to a specific physical and spiritual bond with the environment that was and could only be

that is immensely environmentally varied and has been subject to dramatic environmental shifts during the last glacial, that is Ice-Age, cycle, I find the notion that Aboriginal society persisted through the use of a single, inflexible, unchanging adaptation to be extremely puzzling. It creates a proposition that is difficult to reconcile with the accompanying claim that Aboriginal people were optimally adapted to the landscape, because in an optimal relationship to land that is constantly changing any forager will be required constantly to modify their economic practices. Changes in economy would flow through the interconnected web of social practices and understandings, creating constantly changing cultural systems. From an evolutionary viewpoint, and in such a dynamic land, rigid unchanging societies are simply an implausible fiction.

The value of any 'contract' with fire must have varied geographically and chronologically. We can identify times and places in which fire

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mediated through fire. This bond compelled people to be devoted to the process of fire. In Gammage's view fire provided people with abundant resources and a life of ease, but it also bound them to lives of mobility as they were required to regularly tend all portions of their territory with their firesticks. This pattern was, for Gammage, exacerbated by his view that population size was everywhere maintained well below carrying capacity, obliging groups to forage/firestick across territories much larger than they actually required. His conclusion was therefore that 'It imposed a strict and rigid society, but it was an immense gain'.²¹

Beyond the claims that Aboriginals were universally, constantly and optimally 'farming' their estates with fire, it is this conclusion that Aboriginal society was strict and rigid that most intrigues me as an archaeologist. Such claims have repeatedly been made, and the imagined rigidity implies a fixedness of cultural institutions and social actions that prevents or minimises cultural change. Now, in a continent

cannot have operated in the way Gammage describes. The use of landscape burning at the last glacial maximum, at the peak of the last Ice Age some 25,000 to 18,000 years ago when average temperatures were roughly nine degrees centigrade below today's, is difficult to conceive. During the last glacial maximum, dune systems in the deserts were mobile sand sheets with little vegetation to restrict sand movement or to be burned. Upland Tasmania contained alpine meadows with a mosaic of grasses so fragile and unused to fire that they might easily be damaged. These were environments unlike any in historical Australia and the value of firesticks in them is likely to have been low. Of course the people at those times and places may have operated in ways unlike those in the historic period, creating adaptations that suited their circumstances, but if that were the case such a conclusion contradicts notions of a universal and long-lived 'contract' between fire and a rigid society.

The cultural rigidity Gammage claims in his hypothesis is underpinned by his static and

deterministic vision of Aboriginal society. He builds a story of an articulation between people and environment based on his notion that Aboriginal treatment of land and landscape was a sacred dictate, shaped by the requirements of a Dreamtime law that obliged them to act as they did. Gammage presents fire as the instrument for creating Eden, saying 'It made the land comfortable, comforting, bountiful and beautiful'.²² He also imagines fires as a commandment, saying that 'The Law—an ecological philosophy enforced by religious sanction—compelled people to care for all their country'.²³ This proposition not only misreads the complex cultural dynamic that underpins the construction of and continual transformation of mythology, cosmology and social practice in Aboriginal society, it also effectively dehumanises Aboriginal people and the culture within which they operated by removing any suggestion that they were active agents in their own fate. His statements avoid mentioning the constant debate that would have taken place between individuals about where and when and *how much* to burn, about priorities in a landscape that cannot be everywhere occupied at the same time, about the evaluation of opportunities in an ever changing landscape (such as in a dry year or a wet year). Consequently his discussion does not consider the plausible alternative, which is that the cultural pronouncements about burning he calls the 'law' only exist because people were using fire. Social conventions were constructed to reflect social practice. Fire-lighting strategies did not exist because an abstracted 'law' controlled people; rather the social norms and expectations existed because people employed fires, reflecting the use of fire.

Gammage represents Aboriginal people as having been without choice, obligated to follow a fixed set of actions as their ancestors always had and as their belief system dictated. Curiously, his advocacy of a cultural system compelled to a specific ecological relationship by its own internal rules, creates logical difficulties with the moral point he wants to make. He argues that Aboriginal peoples held a near-perfect ecological position and non-Aboriginal people cannot conceptualise themselves as Australians unless they come

to terms with their relationship to the land in some similar fashion. Leaving aside the obvious point that the concept of being Australian is itself a colonial imposition, there is the more fundamental paradox that Gammage wants to congratulate or applaud Aboriginal people for their fire-farming covenant with the land whilst simultaneously denying them any choice in the matter. We are left with an idolising, actually fetishising, of Aboriginal culture as inherently conservation-minded. This certainly weakens to breaking point Gammage's negative comparison with modern non-Aboriginal society, which does have choice of action and is actively debating how to reduce its environmental footprint. His denial of choice in the matter for Aboriginal Australians threatens to invert the moral that Gammage advocates.

In the end the story Gammage offers, including his assessment of our current position and his call for future reconciliation with Aboriginal views and practices, is a Christian/Enlightenment recovery narrative, in the phrase of Carolyn Merchant. It is a desire for redemption. Gammage constructs the Fall of our land, from pure, productive and well-managed, as occurring when Europeans entered this Eden and failed to nurture it through a disregard for the Edenic rules (which Gammage claims are encoded as Dreamtime laws). He calls on us to rethink our destruction of the Edenic estate and as far as possible return to an innocuous interaction with the environment. This proposition displays remarkable parallels with the version of Genesis (Genesis 1) that advocates that only human labour and stewardship can restore Eden, through tilling the garden and in the process redeeming our souls, or at least moral authority.

FIRE AND SCALE: THE LESSON FROM ARCHAEOLOGY

As an archaeologist I receive a different image of the operation and consequences of anthropogenic fire, because human-environmental interactions are visible at a different temporal scale. In Holocene Australia archaeological and environmental records often have a minimum resolution of hundreds

of years, but we track trends over a very long time, often thousands of years. What we witness is a disjunction between the decision-making of humans for their short-term self-interest and the consequences of their actions for environments and their descendants in the long term. To see this we need to escape from the ethnographic scale and the intuitive understandings of things we bring to short-term events.

My old colleague Phillip Hughes, a geomorphologist turned archaeologist, would always ask people ‘why are the caves archaeologists dig filled with sediment?’. His point was that in valleys and along some cliff lines across Australia there are numerous caves or overhanging shelters that formed long before humans appeared in this land. Many such concavities are probably hundreds of thousands of years old. Typically they are filled with sediment. But the surprising observation is that those sediments often contain artefacts at all levels—there are artefacts at or near the very bottom of most deposits. How can this be? The shelters/caves were largely bare for perhaps several hundred-thousand years, reflecting a rough balance between the input of sediment and the rate at which it was naturally moving out of the shelter (under the influence of gravity or water).

But then humans arrived and two things happened. They occupied the shelters and dropped things on the floor, thereby trapping sediment and beginning the cycle of deposit formation, while at the same time they increased the rate of sediment deposition by changing the environment. Within shelters their hearths created a pattern of fluctuating temperatures while they brushed against, sometimes painted or engraved, the walls, creating increased roof fall. Outside those shelters, in the surrounding landscape, people reduced vegetation, intentionally or unintentionally, creating a vast pool of exposed sediment that could be washed to different places, including into archaeological sites. Hughes showed that archaeological sites recorded the increased mobilisation of sediments in the presence of humans, documenting clear relationships between sedimentation rates and rates of artefact accumulation in both shelters and open sites.

Hughes extended this work in the scarps of Western Arnhem Land where, with Geoff Hope and Jeremy Russell-Smith, he showed that when human occupation began, the floor of valleys in the Arnhem Land Escarpment, such as Deaf Adder George, were thinly veneered with sand.²⁴ Sediments sat on the face and top of the escarpment, providing niches for plant communities which in turn held the sand in place. After humans arrived large quantities of sand were shed from the escarpment, filling the valley floors with sand more than three to four metres deep. Again it was disturbance of vegetation that released the sediment, and the evidence of relic vegetation communities in fire-shadow locations implicates fire. Since the timing coincided with the appearance of archaeological artefacts it is human firing that is implicated.

This is merely one example of the kind of evidence that continues to emerge, as archaeologists dig down through great depths of sediment that contain artefacts, and ask why it is that all this sediment has accumulated since humans arrived? The implications are worth spelling out. In some, perhaps many, landscapes the burning of vegetation had consequences that were not anticipated by the humans who did the burning, consequences that took hundreds or thousands of years to eventuate, and which affected the resources that were subsequently available. In this sense firing of the landscape to obtain short-term benefits in hunting, harvesting or travel was simply an act of self-interest, an act which everywhere altered natural biological niches and which in some times and places created transformations of the land itself. While in some localities the introduction of human fires might have set up new and balanced ecological systems, in others there were progressive long-term transformations as positive feedback cycles were launched. Degradation of soil nutrients, local extinctions of species, and massive erosion and reshaping of the country all occurred, as well as the creation of grassy patches that were bountiful and convenient. The impacts of humans on Australia’s environments were complex and varied. There was transformation, but it was not always Eden that was wrought.

As you can see I am in complete agreement with Bill Gammage that the ancestors of contemporary Aboriginal people transformed the Australian landscape long before 1788. That transformation was in many parts of the continent probably far more dramatic and less predictable than Gammage has depicted. It was also certainly patchier than his story presents. Each kind of landscape would have responded differently to the activities of humans, and the actions of humans would have been different in each environment.

One of the newest archaeological findings in a number of arid and semi-arid landscapes is that even in the last few thousand years people abandoned areas for prolonged periods. The rightfully famous example of this is Simon Holdaway and Patricia Fanning's studies of valleys in western New South Wales.²⁵

change through pollen and plant fossils, and many other techniques. These are valuable but challenging datasets to add to those more familiar to researchers working in the humanities. I will examine just two studies. In the first, published in 2011 in *Quaternary Science Reviews*, Scott Mooney and his colleagues synthesised sedimentary charcoal records from around Australia to characterise the changes in fire regimes over the last 70,000 years.²⁶ Interpreting charcoal fluctuations as a measure of biomass burning, they have documented that the levels of burning in the Australian landscape fluctuated over time in rough synchronicity with the glacial cycle: less burning during cold stages and more during warm stages. They do not see people as responsible, claiming that 'Although there are marked changes in fire activity during

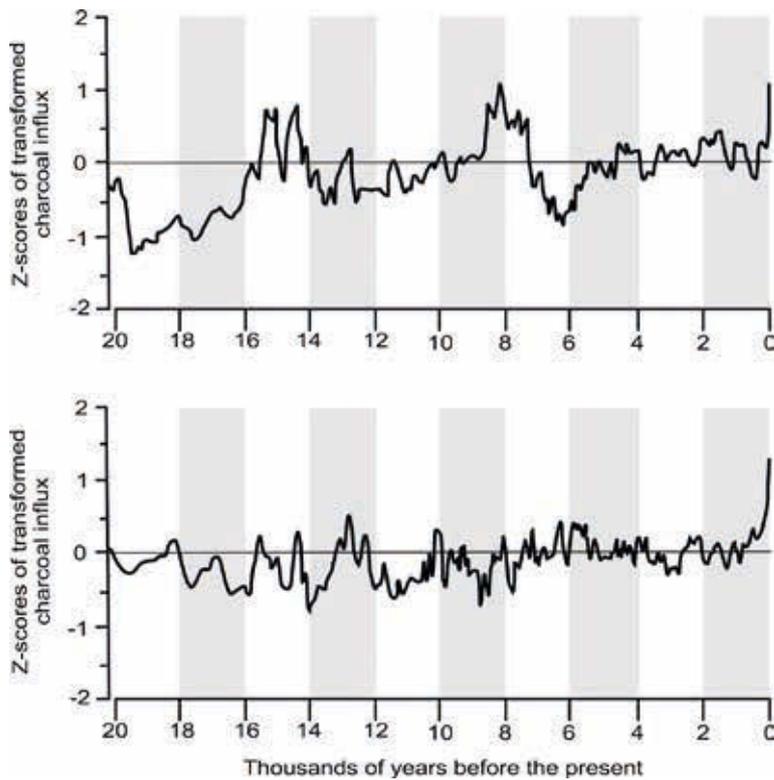
... THE BURNING OF VEGETATION HAD CONSEQUENCES THAT WERE NOT ANTICIPATED BY THE HUMANS WHO DID THE BURNING, CONSEQUENCES THAT TOOK HUNDREDS OR THOUSANDS OF YEARS TO EVENTUATE ...

Dating stone hearths, they established a record of human occupation throughout the last 2500 years. But their study also showed cycles of occupation and abandonment. For instance, it is likely that between 900 and 1150 years ago no hearths were constructed in the region. This was an unusual climatic period, the Medieval Climatic Anomaly, and environmental changes at the time appear to have triggered changes in human settlement. In this case they involved exploiting different territory for a couple of centuries. This is an example of the archaeological evidence that reveals Aboriginal occupation, even in recent centuries, was complex, surprising to people who expected to find a resident group permanently occupying and uniformly exploiting well-defined territories. Territoriality and land use was much more fluid and dynamically changing than Western concepts of residency and use have anticipated.

With this in mind I turn now to the evidence offered by environmental scientists. A wealth of data is becoming available on fire history in Australia, acquired from sedimentary records containing charcoal, studies of vegetation

MIS 3 [...] there is no fundamental shift in the composite charcoal record that could be associated with the colonisation of Australia by Aboriginal people'.²⁷ This statement misses the opportunity to discuss what their evidence may actually show: when humans arrive they do not increase the magnitude of biomass burning. But if humans are burning soon after they arrived, this evidence means they changed the nature rather than magnitude of the burning.

An early change in fire regimes following the arrival of humans in the Australian landscape is suggested in a study published in *Science* in 2012 by Susan Rule and her colleagues.²⁸ They re-examined the famous upper five metres of the deep column of sediment from Lynch's Crater in North Queensland and showed that *Sporomiella*, a fungi found in the dung of herbivores as recognised from spores found in the sediment, largely ceased 39,000 to 43,000 years ago, at the same time as the signal of micro-charcoal magnified. They interpret this as evidence that megafaunal extinction, or at least substantial reductions in numbers of large herbivores, occurred at that time, and that locally high levels of natural



(above)
Fig. 3. Calculated continental biomass burning trends for Australia. Top = Tropical regions, Bottom = Temperate regions. Taken from fig. 4 in Scott Mooney et al., p. 37. Line represents standardised charcoal influx trends smoothed with a 400-year line.

COURTESY
 PETER HISCOCK.

fires were a consequence of the extinction of large herbivores increasing fuel load in the environment and so creating preconditions for wildfires.

This interpretation brings us back to considerations of the complex intertwining of humans with the Australian landscape. In an ongoing debate some researchers argue that humans created the situation because extinctions were a consequence of human hunting. The evidence presented by Rule does not test the role of hunting in the extinction events, but a sequence of increased burning following rather than preceding large marsupial extinctions is consistent with the hypothesis of Tim Flannery, that extinction of megafauna created conditions favouring intensive fire-management regimes amongst people living in some parts of Australia in order to reduce the dangers of uncontrolled bushfires that intensified after the large herbivores disappeared from the environment.

However we can also infer from the new biomass burning data that the pattern and intensity of any human burning activities would have changed repeatedly over time and across space, mirroring the archaeological

evidence of repeated cultural change. For instance, the evidence clearly shows dramatically less burning during MIS2, the peak of the last glacial cycle. In the reduced vegetation cover of that period humans may have been lighting very few fires compared to the level of fire-lighting in the early historic period. This is a clear indicator that the pattern and extent of environmental manipulation in the distant past was almost certainly different to that in the immediate past.

The magnitude of change in burning is indicated by the charcoal influx evidence for recent millennia (fig. 3). Biomass burning inferred from standardised measures of charcoal abundance in dated sediments shows that the burning histories of tropical and subtropical Australia are distinctly different. In the tropics, burning was much less frequent than today during the last glacial maximum, until 16,000 years ago, and again from 7000 to 5000 years ago. There were also periods with burning distinctly higher than the long-term average, such as about 15,500 to 14,000 years ago and 9000 to 7500 years ago. And for the last 4000 to 5000 years burning levels have varied around the long-term mean. Subtropical burning histories display a more subtle variability, but it is still obvious that from 20,000 until about 7500 years ago biomass burning levels were typically less than the long-term average, and from 7500 until the historic period levels resemble the long-term average.

These patterns in biomass burning records suggest, as we should expect, that i) burning in tropical and subtropical landscapes was different, ii) the burning histories of different regions are dissimilar, and iii) the historic patterns of anthropogenic burning are unlikely to be more than a few thousand years old, and may well be substantially younger.

The biomass burning records measure natural as well as humanly light fires, and the composite burning record is primarily a reflection of environmental fluctuations, of fuel load and dryness, as Mooney has shown. However climate cannot have been the only factor involved, and rates of human burning are likely to have varied in response to other factors. For example, the intensity and nature of land management of all kinds,

and certainly fire-lighting, was probably driven by demographic conditions. At low population densities there is neither the need nor the capacity for foragers to undertake intensive management, nor would the returns warrant the investment. At higher population densities the calculation would be different: there might well be the capacity to spend substantial labour in management schemes that would give a worthwhile return on the social investment. That demographic context alone ensures that there will have been transformations of environmental relationships, including the use of fire, over time as human population sizes/densities altered in response to changing environmental productivity.

CONCLUSION

The story of fire is clearly an important one in human history; in Australia we have a particular interest in the role fire played in our environments, and the role humans played in that fire lighting. Fire and land were manipulated, exploited and tended by humans. But humans were the agents that made decisions in that nexus. In responding to changes in circumstance, whether driven by climate or by social life, humans altered the decisions they made.

To understand this long record of human decision-making we need all the evidential strands I have reviewed here. Historians such as Gammage and many others have documented how in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries fire was habitually employed by Aboriginal people in many areas. Palaeo-environmental reconstructions reinforce our understanding that human society operated within and varied in response to the long cycles of our globe. Archaeological evidence reveals something of the frequent and rapid transformations of economic and social strategies involved in land use, as well as the transformations in stories and religious beliefs that emerged from those changing social experiences. Archaeology reveals occupation of landscapes, abandonment of landscapes, fundamental changes in the way people moved through, made use of and thought about their environment. It records that, in actively creating a niche for themselves,

people modified and perhaps enhanced their environment, especially in the short term. It also records that the actions of foragers triggered the release of sediments that flooded valleys and created plains, and filled rock shelters, changing the nature of the land. The ancestors of historical Aboriginal people were simultaneously creators and destroyers, as they, and we, must be.

There is still much to be studied. We do not have a robust record of the history of Aboriginal burning or the way changing burning regimes articulated with changing economies, social worlds, or even the sense of place. But I think what we do know is that the history/prehistory of human life in Australia is a history of transformation—of not only the landscape but also the people who lived within it. The human occupation of Australia is an ongoing and multidimensional cultural evolution. To suggest Aborigines were contracted to a single way of life, that there was but one obligatory ecological relationship which specified the details of daily life and was ruled by an invariant Law, is to ignore the reality of that evolutionary process. The rich conceptual worlds of historical Aboriginal societies, placed in a sense of an abiding existence often called the ‘Dreaming’, were a part of the continuing evolution of Aboriginal life. While the sense of abiding might remain, the concepts of the world could and did readily change. So while there would always have been views of the appropriate treatment of the land, the foods that were accessible and desirable, the identity of potential marriage partners, the stories of how humans came to be and should operate socially, all of these have been transformed time and time again. The study of human evolution is a pursuit to understand change, and the burning question in studying the Aboriginal past is how to shed images of stability and comprehend the processes by which constant cultural evolution occurred.

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Invisible Politics

» TESSA MORRIS-SUZUKI

IS THERE LIFE AFTER POLITICS?

In the late 1980s and early 1990s the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the success of democratisation movements in South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines and elsewhere led to a surge of hope and confidence in the ideals of democracy. The Cold War was over, and the forces of democracy and civil society appeared to have triumphed. There was a widespread belief that the continuing economic growth of countries like China would result in the further unstoppable global spread of democratising forces.

Two decades on, the optimism has been replaced by widespread gloom. China did not democratise, and in many of the countries that possess formally democratic institutions ('old' and 'new' democracies alike), the practical workings of the system evoke cynicism and apathy rather than enthusiasm and commitment. In an article published in 2009, Indian novelist Arundhati Roy evoked this mood by posing the ironic question 'is there life after democracy?'. Referring particularly to the situation in India—the world's biggest democracy' as it proclaims itself—Roy elaborates her initial question with a series of others:

What have we done to democracy? What have we turned it into? What happens when democracy has been used up? When it has

been hollowed out and emptied of meaning? What happens when each of its institutions has metastasised into something dangerous? What happens now that democracy and the Free Market have fused into a single predatory organism with a thin, constricted imagination that revolves almost entirely around the idea of maximising profit? Is it possible to reverse this process? Can something that has mutated go back to being what it used to be?¹

The problem is not just one of democracy. The notions of liberalism, communism and socialism—the notion of revolution itself—all have lost their hold on the imagination. 'Politics' has become such a negatively loaded term that politicians compete with one another to distance themselves from it. United States congressional candidates boost their chances of election by emphasising their lack of mainstream political experience and their distance from the 'Washington establishment'; Asian populist politicians from Japan's Hashimoto Tōru to India's Narendra Modi flaunt their credentials as 'accidental politicians', and offer as their ultimate vision not the promise of better government but the promise of less government.

The quintessential expression of this phenomenon was surely the electoral success in May 2012 and again, on an even bigger scale, in

(above)

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February 2013 of Italian comedian Beppe Grillo, who was swept into parliament by grateful voters on the basis of his years of organising a series of anti-political rallies known as ‘*va fanculo*’ (fuck off) days, and ‘a political movement called *Cinque Stelle* (Five Stars), which seeks to encourage ordinary people in every locality to come forward and speak for the community’s distrust and dislike of mainstream politics’.² In a world where politics itself has come increasingly to be seen as the problem, not the source of solutions, Arundhati Roy’s question might be reframed: ‘is there life after politics?’

In this atmosphere of ‘anti-politics as ideology’, it seems important to reconsider the meaning of politics itself. To echo Roy’s words, we might ask: ‘What have we done to politics?’ How is it that a sphere of human life that, in its earliest Aristotelian formulation, was supposed to be about the collective search for the (materially and morally) good life has become a realm firmly identified with the formal institutions of the nation state, and with the opaque and self-serving actions of their office bearers? The purpose of this essay is to argue for a broader reinterpretation of the ‘political’, and to draw attention to a non-state world of politics that has been relatively neglected, even in the post-1980s proliferation of writing about civil society and social movements.

WHAT IS POLITICS?

The term ‘politics’, so widely used in everyday life, is surprisingly seldom defined, and those who try to pin down its meaning have produced a remarkably diverse array of definitions. In its oldest, Aristotelian sense, the notion of politics had to do with the search by a community of people for the physically sustaining and morally virtuous ‘good life’. Politics was seen as a distinctively human activity, because it relied on the human capacity for speech and reasoned discussion. It was also an activity whose only subjects were free and rational human beings; therefore an activity (in the Aristotelian order of things) that excluded children, women and slaves. Aristotle recognised that a wide variety of human groupings or ‘communities’ (*koinonai* in Greek) might pursue a better life in various partial ways, but it was the *polis* that constituted the overarching communion and sought the good life as a whole. So the *polis* was the ultimate *koinonia politike*, the vessel of politics. As Kostas Vlassopoulos reminds us, though, it is almost impossible for us fully to recapture the mental world in which Aristotle’s ideas were developed, and modern reinterpretations of his ideas are profoundly influenced by the context of their own times.³

Notions related to the search for a sustainable and virtuous community have

(above)

Renaissance Italian Vision of the Ideal Greek Polis: Raphael’s Mural of the Philosophers of Athens, with Plato and Aristotle in the centre. **The School of Athens**. Fresco by Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio). 1509, Stanze di Raffaello, Apostolic Palace, Vatican.

SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, PUBLIC DOMAIN (PD-ART).

existed in a very wide range of other societies from ancient times. Rather than attempting to explore this diversity of ideas, I shall simply illustrate this by sketching some outlines of a non-European set of ideas with which I am familiar—ideas about the ordering of society that emerged from classical Chinese thought and were elaborated and developed in Japan in the centuries before that country was extensively exposed to Western ideas of politics. These ideas are very difficult to summarise, since they were extremely diverse and dynamic. Broadly, though, concepts derived from the philosophies of Confucius, Mencius and other Chinese classical writers offered two ways of thinking about the ordering of human life.

One was a ‘bottom up’ approach, embodied in the vision of the virtuous human being (*C. junzi*; *J. kunshi*; *K. gunja*). From this perspective (expressed in different ways in the work of thinkers like Itō Jinsai, 1627–1705 and Kaibara Ekiken, 1630–1714) a peaceful and prosperous society could only exist if each individual pursued the tasks of moral self-cultivation. Thus the creation of the good community began from the moral human, who existed always in the context of the family.⁴ The second approach was a ‘top down’ vision (vividly articulated in the early nineteenth-century writings of thinkers like Satō Nobuhiro, 1769–1850) which prescribed the tasks of the good ruler as being *keisei saimin*: to bring order to the realm and to relieve the sufferings of the people. From this perspective, the task was to consider the policies and organisational arrangements that would best achieve order and the wellbeing of the population. (From the term *keisei saimin* we derive the modern word *keizai*, which since the nineteenth century has been used as the Japanese translation, not for the English word ‘politics’, but for ‘economics’).⁵

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, first in Europe and then more widely across the world, Hegelian and Marxian social ideas drew heavily on the Aristotelian tradition, while also radically rejecting elements of it.⁶ Both Hegel and Marx were concerned with creating forms of social order that allowed human beings the greatest possible scope to fulfill their innate potential. Politics in this sense remained a search

for the ‘good life’, and could never be reduced to the mechanisms of government. For Marx, the ongoing conflict between political ideas arose out of the structures of everyday subsistence—out of the mode of production and the relations of production through which human societies sustained themselves. The aim of political economy (in which the political and the economic were inseparable from one another) was to understand and work with the contradictory forces that pushed the existing order towards collapse and the emergence of a new order in which human potential would be more fully realised.

In the course of the twentieth century, the growing power of the nation state encouraged the emergence of more firmly state-centred definitions of politics, and ‘political science’ became the study of the way in which nation states are governed and relate to one another. We can see this state-centred focus in two famous, though radically contrasting, mid-twentieth-century definitions of politics—one offered by US political scientist Harold Lasswell and the other by German legal and political theorist Carl Schmitt. Lasswell, in a work whose subtitle constitutes one of the most widely quoted definitions of politics, saw the political as a matter of ‘who gets what, when and how’.⁷ More precisely, he understood politics as the study of ‘influence and the influential’ (or ‘power and the powerful’); in other words, it was the study of elites and of the material, organisational and psychological ways in which elites constituted and maintained themselves.⁸ Lasswell’s view of politics was largely internally directed. He was interested in the constitution of national societies, and his central aim was to redirect attention away from the Marxian focus on social class as a source of power, and towards other factors such as skill, attitude and personality, which he saw as being essential but neglected bases of elite power.

Carl Schmitt’s idea of the political emerged against the background of the rise of Fascism in Europe, at a time when the state itself was intruding on more and more areas of human life, so that every aspect of economy, society and culture was in a sense becoming political. In this context, Schmitt looked for the specific element which characterised political life,

as opposed to other human realms such as aesthetic or ethical life: and he found that element in the distinction between enemy and friend.⁹ While artistic taste distinguishes the ugly from the beautiful, and religion or morality distinguish the virtuous from the wicked, politics (says Schmitt) distinguishes friends from enemies. It is, in other words, an inherently conflictual realm. Schmitt's definition (unlike Lasswell's) has a strongly outward-directed element. The friend-enemy distinction of course operates within the nation state, but also provides the very cornerstone for Schmitt's vision of international relations. The political, according to Schmitt, embodies 'the most intense and extreme antagonism', and although politics does not always involve military combat, 'a world in which the possibility of war is utterly eliminated' would be 'a world without politics'.¹⁰

THE CONCEPT OF LIFE POLITICS

By the end of the twentieth century, as globalisation complicated theories of the nation state, and as non-state social movements attracted growing attention from scholars, the vision of politics tended once again to broaden, opening space for the social and the political to intertwine in new ways. A notable example of this can be seen in the appearance of the notion of 'life politics' in the writings of theorists like Anthony Giddens. For Giddens, power means 'transformative capacity', and its exercise is therefore clearly not limited to governments or elites. Writing in the context of the end of the Cold War in Europe, Giddens identified a transition from 'emancipatory politics', concerned with 'liberating individuals and groups from constraints which adversely affect their life chances', to 'life politics'. In Giddens' sense of the word, life politics (or lifestyle politics) is practised by people who are not bound by tradition or by the desperate struggle for daily existence, but are already emancipated, free to focus on 'self-actualisation'. Life politics therefore involves defining one's identity and lifestyle in a world where tradition no longer provides any clear rules of behaviour.¹¹

Giddens is one of a number of theorists who have helped to expand the vision of politics

beyond the realm of governmental action. Another is Ulrich Beck, who has coined the term 'subpolitics' to emphasise that 'politics is also possible beyond the representative institutions of the nation-state'.¹² But the content and form of Giddens's 'life politics' and of Beck's 'subpolitics' remain quite vague. Giddens himself strongly denies that 'life politics' is confined to middle class consumer culture. He insists that the very poor, as much as the relatively wealthy, are uprooted from tradition and need to seek out their own identities.¹³ But if 'life politics' is practised by people who are largely liberated from the everyday struggle for physical survival, then it is difficult to see what relevance it has for a broad mass of poorer people in today's world. In this sense, it is important to emphasise that Giddens's vision of 'life politics' is quite different from the 'informal life politics' or 'survival politics' to be discussed later in this essay.

It is interesting to contrast Giddens's version of post-Cold War political thought with that of a contemporary but very different thinker: French political philosopher Jacques Rancière, who bases his definition of politics on a reading of Aristotle, but one that stands Aristotle's logic on its head. Rancière's criticises classical Greek thought for presenting an illusory equality: in theory, all citizens have a role to play in the *polis*, but philosophers such as Aristotle allot specific roles in society to the rich and the well-born (the *oligoi* and the *aristoi*), while leaving the ordinary people (the *demos*) with no role and no defined quality except their freedom. Freedom (according to Rancière) being a quality also shared by the *oligoi/aristoi*, is not a special characteristic or role at all. It is merely a role empty of substance, which condemns the *demos* to being 'the part that has no part' in the political order of things.

Modern political thought inherits Aristotle's image of man as a 'political animal', whose ability to be political derives from the power of speech: a capacity which distinguishes him from all other animals. While other animals (Aristotle tells us) use their voices merely to express 'pain or pleasure' (i.e. to make noises), human voices are able to communicate 'what is useful and what is harmful, and also what is just and what is unjust' (i.e. humans can

speak and reason).¹⁴ But Rancière inverts this argument. For him, politics is not founded on a pre-existing division between speaking creatures and noise-making creatures. Politics, by separating those with substantive roles in the *polis* (the rich, the well-born) from the *demos* whose role is devoid of substance, is the process that separates a minority, whose vocal utterances are recognised as speech, from the majority, who are doomed to the ‘night of silence or to the animal noise of voices expressing pleasure and pain’.¹⁵ At its core, politics is a contest over the issue of whose vocal utterances count as speech, and whose merely count as ‘noise’.

This redefinition of the political rests on a distinction Rancière draws between ‘policing’ and ‘politics’. By policing, he does not mean simply the control of law and order exercised by the people whom we normally know as ‘the police’, but rather, much more broadly, the whole ordering of society: ‘the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying’, the creation of ‘an order of the visible and the sayable that sees that a particular activity is visible and another is not, that this speech is understood as discourse and another as noise’.¹⁶ ‘Politics’, on the other hand, is the opposite of policing. It is action that breaks the existing order of the visible and sayable.

Political activity is whatever shifts a body from the place assigned to it or changes a place’s destination. It makes visible what has no business being seen, and makes heard a discourse where once there was only place for noise; it makes heard as discourse what was once only heard as noise.¹⁷

Politics, in this definition, is always transgressive: it involves people ‘speaking out of turn’ or acting in ways which are contrary to their normal, socially sanctioned roles.

ANOTHER POLITICS

The ideas of Giddens, Beck, Rancière and others, in their diverse ways, suggest possibilities for broadening our concepts of the political. Here I want to build on those ideas by offering a somewhat different perspective on

what I call ‘non-governmental politics’. In using this term, I am drawing on the idea of politics as a pursuit of the materially and spiritually ‘good life’ by groups of people. In this sense, I see politics as centrally embodying a sense of movement through time from present to future. Politics is the effort by a communion (*koinonia*) of people to secure a good future—and this is true of ‘conservative’ as well as of ‘reformist’ politics, since human communities do not simply maintain themselves without effort. Even the attempt to prevent change or to restore a previous state of affairs involves future-directed effort.

Drawing on Vlassopoulos’s reinterpretations of the Aristotelian *polis*, we can suggest that ‘politics’ does not exist only at the macro, or state, level. It is not confined to debates about the grand design of all facets of social life. It also exists at the micro level, in efforts to change, preserve or restore more limited aspects of human existence. In modern nation states, and in the modern international order, this form of political activity can be carried out in two ways. The first way may be called ‘governmental’. By this I mean that the subject who takes actions to achieve a future goal is part of the formal machinery of government—whether local, national or transnational government. So, political actions carried out by a town council, by a national government department (with or without a formal resolution from parliament) or by an agency of the European Union are all examples of governmental politics.

But it is important to stress that governmental politics does not simply involve politicians and bureaucrats. Civil society plays a crucial role in governmental politics, by demanding, protesting and lobbying for action, and by organising and educating voters to vote for parties with particular political agendas. All of this civil society action remains ‘governmental politics’ in the sense that it aims to bring about actions by the formal institutions of government.

‘Non-governmental politics’, on the other hand, occurs when people decide to seek a particular social goal, not through demanding action by government institutions, but through their own efforts. We can further divide non-



governmental politics into two versions—philanthropic or humanitarian politics, where one group of people brings about changes in the lives of another group; and self-help politics, where a group of people seeks to change their own lives.

Consider a situation where a group of parents are dissatisfied with the education their children are receiving in the state (or state-sanctioned private) education system. One response to this would be to lobby the local or national government to make changes to the education system—a ‘governmental politics’ approach. But another, ‘non-governmental’, self-help approach would be for the parents to take their children out of the state system and start to educate them by themselves.

We can see from this example that governmental politics and non-governmental politics are not necessarily distinct from or opposed to one another. The same group of people may be involved in both. For example, a group of parents who have decided to home-school their children may at the same time continue to lobby for changes in the state education system. The problem with a rather large part of the ‘civil society’ literature, though, is that its interest has been weighted towards the governmental side of the equation. In other words, it has tended to focus on cases where social groups have aimed to influence

policy or bring about the reform of local and national institutions, and has had less to say about non-government actions—the situations where groups try to shape the present and future of their own lives without recourse to the intervention of the state.

INFORMAL LIFE POLITICS IN ACTION: THE CITIZENS’ RADIOACTIVITY MEASURING STATIONS

My particular interest is in groups engaged in ‘informal life politics’ (or ‘survival politics’) in East Asia. The extensive literature on issues of civil society in East Asia seldom pays much attention to these groups, but their presence is an important element in the rapidly changing sociopolitical world of the region.

By ‘informal life politics’, I mean groups who are impelled by threats to their life, livelihood or cultural survival to engage in self-help, non-governmental forms of politics. A characteristic of the actions of these groups is that they are ‘political’ in Rancière’s sense of being transgressive: in other words, they involve people in activities which are outside the limits of their everyday social roles. Often in a quiet way, they shake up the social order by impelling people to ‘speak out of turn’: to perform tasks that they would not normally

(above)

Mushanokōji’s ‘New Village’ in 1919.

SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA
COMMONS, ABASAA,
PUBLIC DOMAIN.

have been expected to perform. Some examples from Japan can help to illuminate the nature and dynamics of informal life politics. The three cases I shall consider here are driven by very different views of the world, and illustrate the diversity of ways in which informal life politics may be practised.

Japan has a long tradition of grassroots non-governmental political action. While the Japanese government from the Meiji Era (1868–1912) onward focused on the energetic promotion of industrial development, some oppositional streams of thought highlighted the social costs of high-speed industrialisation, and argued for a lifestyle based on self-sufficiency and self-government at the local community level.¹⁸ One prominent proponent of such ideas was the novelist and philosopher Mushanokōji Saneatsu (1885–1976), whose ‘new village’ (*atarashiki mura*) movement was inspired by a mixture of themes from traditional Japanese social philosophy, anarchism and Tolstoyan utopianism. Participants in the movement did not resist the rule of central government, but aimed to create their own self-sufficient and self-governing communities based on agricultural labour, handicrafts and shared cultural activity. Mushanokōji’s ideas were closely linked to those of other members of the prewar ‘White Birch’ (*shirakaba*) group, such as the famous advocate of Japanese folk arts, Yanagi Sōetsu (1889–1961).¹⁹ Though Mushanokōji himself was later to be criticised for his support of Japanese wartime expansionism, the New Village movement had a wide influence throughout northeast Asia, and its echoes are still heard in various parts of the region today. Chinese artist Ou Ning’s plan to create a self-governing rural art community—a ‘microstate’—in the village of Bishan, for example, draws heavily on the ideas of Mushanokōji’s new village movement.²⁰

The search for a politics of self-reliance was continued in various streams of postwar grassroots activism, and survives in Japan today. One of the two ‘new villages’ created by Mushanokōji (in Moroyama, west of Tokyo) was revived after the Pacific War and still exists on a small scale. There have also been recent moves to re-establish the movement in the area of Miyazaki Prefecture that was home to the

first ‘new village’. The influence of this lineage of ideas can also be seen in places such as the Tatsue Peace and Handicraft Folk Art Hall (*Heiwa to Teshigoto Tatsue Mingeikan*), an art gallery and community centre in the small town of Mochizuki in Niigata Prefecture.²¹ Named after Kobayashi Tatsue, a local teacher who was inspired by the work of the White Birch group, the community centre continues to promote ideas of local autonomy, respect for handicrafts and environmental sustainability. Local residents meet there regularly to develop their own proposals for community development, in dialogue with the prominent Japanese environmental economist Miyamoto Kenichi. Their ‘Residents’ White Papers from the Rural Village’, the most recent of which was published in 2013, set out collective visions of their region’s future: visions that have been put into effect in a range of schemes from community medicine to a local currency scheme.²²

The new villages and their contemporary successors embody a coherent ideology of self-made (indeed, hand-made) politics—a mistrust of the state and a desire for an autonomous communion. They seek the ‘good life’ though the building of local small-scale communities far removed from the grand designs of the nation state. In many cases, though, survival politics emerges less from any conscious ideology than from a pressing need to react to a crisis which state authorities are failing to address, or may even have caused. Such survival politics movements focus on specific areas of social life where the government becomes incapable of carrying out its expected

(below)

Interior of the Tatsue Peace and Handicraft Folk Art Hall in Mochizuki.

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functions, or where the actions of government themselves have come to be seen as a threat to the wellbeing of particular communities.

A good example of 'crisis-driven' survival politics in contemporary Japan is the story of the network of 'Citizens' Radioactivity Measuring Stations' which emerged following the Fukushima nuclear accident of 2011. Immediately after the accident, people in a wide area around the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant found themselves facing a terrible dilemma. They were aware that large amounts of radiation had been released from the plant. The government repeatedly assured them that there was no danger to their health, but a wide range of media reports by journalists and scientific experts were issuing wildly varying and often very alarming assessments of the radiation risks. Particularly for families with young children, the choice between remaining in contaminated regions or leaving their homes, jobs and schools to avoid the risk of contamination was an agonising one.

Two key problems quickly became apparent: the first was that the government (both central and local) was unprepared and lacked expertise to deal with the disaster, and was very slow in establishing effective systems of radiation measurement. The second was that the reassurances issued by government agencies soon after the accident lacked credibility. Both national and prefectural governments were reluctant to release information that might cause alarm, and their suppression of important facts about the disaster resulted in a profound

(below)

Inside the Citizens' Radioactivity Measuring Station, Fukushima City.

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public loss of faith in official pronouncements about radiation levels and health risks.

In response to the crisis, on 1 July 2011 the first Citizens' Radiation Measuring Station was established in Fukushima City. The station was staffed by volunteers, and raised donations to buy relatively sophisticated measurement equipment, including a whole body counter imported from Belarus, and to rent premises in a small shopping centre. By the end of the year, a network of ten citizens' measuring stations had been set up in surrounding areas and as far away as Tokyo. The stations measure radiation (particularly that caused by caesium-134 and caesium-137) in food, and larger centres such as the Fukushima City station also measure levels of radioactive caesium in the human body. Anyone can request a measurement, which is carried out for a small fee.²³

A key part of the work of the measuring stations is the dissemination of accurate information about radiation levels. For example, the results of all measurements are posted on the organisation's website, providing a valuable resource of information on the levels of radiation in various foodstuffs.²⁴ The centres also sell books and DVDs on radiation-related issues and participate in workshops and conferences on the Fukushima accident and its aftermath.

Though some of the group's organisers and volunteers had a background in physical or health science, most did not. For example, Tanji Kōdai, who was one of the group's founding members, had previously worked in an organic food cafe owned by his family, and had absolutely no expertise in nuclear science before the Fukushima accident. Like many in the region, he has become a self-taught expert out of necessity. Members of the group participate in activities to lobby the government for more effective responses to the Fukushima accident, but they also see themselves as performing a vital set of activities to protect public health parallel to, but separate from, those of the government.

As Tanji argues, the loss of public confidence in government authorities has made it essential for an independent body with no conflicts of interest to provide information to local citizens. From early 2012 onward the state-run radiation monitoring system has improved,

but local people still often turn to the the measuring stations for a 'second opinion' to verify the information that they have received from government agencies.²⁵ In this sense the Citizens' Radioactivity Measuring Stations work to protect community health and provide public education by taking into their own hands 'governmental' activities that the government has proved to be incapable of carrying out effectively itself.

FROM INFORMAL LIFE POLITICS TO GOVERNMENTAL POLITICS...

Grassroots communions which begin by practising informal life politics sometimes develop into organisations engaged in governmental politics. A good example of this process is the history of the development of the suicide-prevention movement in Japan. During the 1980s and 1990s, the Japanese suicide rate rose very rapidly, and in 1998 the annual number of Japanese people committing suicide exceeded 30,000 for the first time. Reasons for the rise included the pressures of the educational system, declining employment opportunities for the young, and the growing isolation of old people as the support of the extended family diminished. But suicide remained a social taboo: the families of victims of suicide often felt ashamed to speak about their experiences, and politicians were reluctant to take up the issue publicly.

The initial responses from community groups in Japan were therefore to address the problem by themselves, providing counselling and psychological and financial support for the vulnerable. A distinctive characteristic of the Japanese movement was its focus on the plight of children who had experienced the suicide of a parent. From 1998 onward, a group called the *Ashinaga Ikueikai*, which provided support to children orphaned by road accidents and other disasters, began to focus its attention on 'suicide orphans' (*jishi iji*). It organised summer camps and other events at which they could express their sense of grief and trauma, and this led to the publication of a booklet and the making of a television documentary in which young people who had lost a parent to suicide spoke out openly in public for the first time



about the social issue of suicide. Meanwhile, other groups such as the Osaka-based Suicide Prevention Centre (*Jisatsu Bōshi Sentā*) offered telephone counselling and other support services to those at risk of suicide.²⁶

As the movement expanded, though, many members came to feel strongly that a self-help approach was not enough. They wanted to emphasise that suicide was not an individual psychological problem, but rather a social problem which the government should address both at a national and local level. From about 2001 onwards they moved towards a governmental politics approach, working closely with parliamentarians to produce a national Basic Law on Suicide Prevention, ultimately passed in 2007. This change in approach was strongly supported by the work of particular individuals who provided the link between the grassroots self-help movement and national government. One of the key figures was Shimizu Yasuyuki, a journalist with the national broadcaster NHK, who had made documentaries on the 'suicide orphans', and been so affected by the experience that he left NHK to work full-time on suicide prevention, becoming one of the founders of a new movement named 'Lifelink'. Another was Yamamoto Takashi, a former leading figure in the support group for orphans, who became a member of parliament and worked tirelessly to push through the Basic Law on Suicide

(above)

Jisatsutte Ienakatta (We Couldn't Say it was Suicide), Sunmark Publishing Co., Tokyo, 2002. One of the booklets produced by young people associated with the Ashinaga Education Association.

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Prevention. Yamamoto's efforts won widespread respect and support in the Japanese parliament, particularly because he continued to fight for the law's acceptance after being diagnosed with terminal cancer in 2005.²⁷

For Shimizu and others, a focus on the role of government in addressing the causes of suicide is essential. Making suicide a formally political issue is a way of emphasising social and political responsibility for the problem, so helping to overcome the personal burden of shame so often endured by families who have experienced the suicide of one of their members. A national policy is also needed because piecemeal approaches to the problem by medical, welfare and other agencies leave gaps in the support system through which the vulnerable can easily fall.²⁸

...AND FROM GOVERNMENTAL POLITICS TO INFORMAL LIFE POLITICS

But social action can also move in the opposite direction—away from governmental politics towards informal life politics. One of Japan's greatest twentieth-century environmental crises was the Minamata pollution case, in which many thousands of people in the southwestern fishing town of Minamata suffered incurable neurological damage after eating fish contaminated with mercury from waste from a local factory. The human effects of 'Minamata Disease' vary from relatively vague symptoms of dizziness, lack of coordination, blurred vision etc. to total physical and mental incapacity and death. Many children were born chronically handicapped because their parents had eaten mercury-polluted fish. A large social movement emerged in response, demanding compensation from the government and the corporation responsible, through demonstrations, sit-ins and court action. Though the causes of Minamata Disease were identified by scientists in the 1950s, and the main sources of pollution were brought under control in the 1960s, court cases by victims continued until 2010.

Though sections of the Minamata movement continued to focus on demanding recompense from the state, over the course of time some victims of the pollution began to redirect their

attention toward the task of attempting to rebuild a local community based on principles fundamentally different from the 'production nationalism' they identified as the cause of the Minamata disaster.²⁹ One particularly interesting figure in this movement is Ogata Masato, a member of one of the local fishing families drastically affected by the disaster: his father died of Minamata Disease when Ogata was six years old, and he and his seven siblings have all been officially recognised as victims of the disease. Although Ogata spent most of his early life engaged in the struggle to obtain recognition and compensation for himself and other pollution victims, ultimately he came to question the meaning of monetary compensation, and to look for a locally based response to the meaning of the pollution disaster.

The Minamata disease incident has left a question that cannot be dealt with as a political issue. Actually, it is the biggest and most fundamental question. In other words, there is a question that cannot be transformed into a question of policies or institutions. That is the question of the soul.³⁰

Ogata focuses his critique on profit-oriented production nationalism, and seeks to develop an alternative. At one level, this alternative is a personal matter: a new consciousness of one's individual connectedness to the natural world. But it also involves the transformation of the local community, both through the creation of a spiritual sense of mutual responsibility, and through practical projects such as the development of renewable energy sources.³¹

Those who have moved towards a survival politics response to the Minamata crisis express their aims in terms of a desire to have their voices heard as human speech and answered by the voices of fellow humans. Citing one of the victims (referred to only as 'M.') who has been centrally involved in the struggle with the Chisso Corporation, which caused the pollution, Japanese social scientist Kurihara Akira writes:

M. kept insisting that it was necessary to find human beings within the Chisso corporation. But even when M. called out to them, no

human voice came back to him. All that came back to him was the echo of his own voice.³²

It was this longing to go beyond the notion of financial compensation for irreparable injury, and to recreate a mutual acknowledgement of their own and others' humanity, that led some within the Minamata movement towards a local search for a different form of 'good life'. Like many forms of survival politics, their actions are not only a struggle to protect the basis of life and livelihood itself, but at the same time a struggle for the recognition of their voices and their humanity: a fight to 'make heard as discourse what was once only heard as noise'.

SEEING INVISIBLE POLITICS

New forms of survival politics are emerging, not just in Japan but throughout the East Asian region and beyond. Often, though, they remain invisible to the outside world, falling below the radar of those who study politics, and even of those interested in social movements and civil society. Small-scale, local, loosely structured and fluid, they are easily overlooked. To see these realms of invisible politics, we need to step out of some of the conventional frames of academic thought, and to bring together approaches from politics, anthropology, sociology and history. This involves going back to the fundamental meanings of politics, often lost in contemporary political jargon and media rhetoric. Since survival politics movements are themselves often creative and transgressive, learning about (and from) them may also require a capacity to create new approaches to learning itself, and new approaches to communicating what we have learnt. We might consider, for example, the way that the Japan-based Biohistory Research Hall (one source of inspiration for Ogata Masato and fellow Minamata activists) synthesises insights from diverse disciplines and communication media,³³ or the way in which Ou Ning combines artistic imagination with social experimentation in the online social artworks that develop his vision for the Bishan 'micronation'.³⁴

To learn about (and from) survival politics movements is not uncritically to endorse their aims and methods; nor does it suggest that non-

governmental approaches to social action are preferable to governmental approaches.

The purpose, rather, is to broaden our range of vision and imagination of the ways in which people make their social worlds.

One question to be considered is why some groups of people choose governmental approaches to the communal search for a 'good (or at least a better) life', while others choose informal, non-governmental approaches.

What explicit or implicit ideologies underlie survival politics movements? Through what diverse methods are survival politics practised? Can we develop a taxonomy of survival politics movements that will help us to see how they relate to one another? How and where do the worlds of governmental politics and informal life politics intersect?

The roots of informal life politics run deep. From the nineteenth century onward, informal self-help movements have often been the starting point for the emergence of modern institutions that have shaped the nature of formal political worlds—as, for example, in the case of the friendly societies that formed the basis of the modern trade union movement. But in other cases survival politics has remained small-scale and evanescent, yet still helped to change the lives of human communities in quiet ways. Making the past and present of these informal, non-governmental movements visible may open new ways to think about the future, and breathe new life into our vision of the possibilities and the horizons of politics. 🍷



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PHOTO: MAYU KANAMORI

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‘Add Women and Stir’

Gender and the History of International Politics

» GLENDA SLUGA

It is now nearly a quarter of a century since Joan Scott famously bemoaned the absence of women in the history of ‘High Politics’. In the 1980s, Scott, an historian of women and class, was a key protagonist in the cultural turn in the historical discipline, which included the accommodation of post-structuralist theory, and pushed advocates of women’s history towards the study of gender as a ‘useful category of historical analysis’.¹ At the time, her emphasis on gender as a category of analysis ‘was a call to disrupt the powerful pull of biology by opening every aspect of sexed identity to interrogation’, since the insistence on the ‘fixity of that opposition... [on the essential “truth” of sexual difference] is itself the product of a certain history, and not one we should consider inviolate’.² More recently, Scott has refined her view, concluding that to focus on gender ‘is about asking historical questions: it is not a programmatic or methodological treatise’.

Gender was the methodological mantra around which I formed my own historical consciousness of the past. I was as eager as any feminist historian to push aside what we termed the ‘add women and stir’ approach, on the grounds that adding and stirring a new ingredient into our analysis of the past was less sophisticated than coming up with a whole new recipe for writing history. Adding women, it was assumed, did not adequately shift the parameters of male-dominated masculinist

history, since it did not help us understand how men and women were positioned in the past, and why they so often held such distinctive positions. In this essay, I want to argue that we should revisit the methodological value of the ‘add women and stir’ approach because, a quarter of a century after Scott’s call, and despite the ‘gender turn’, women are still missing in action as agents in the history of ‘High Politics’. Indeed, it can be argued that (as many feminist historians long feared) the gender approach to history has tended to reinforce women’s absence from the central events of the past as historical actors, even when they have been there.

Despite available evidence of women as agents and subjects in the arena of international history—whether involving war, peacemaking, diplomacy, or foreign policy—the core narratives of international politics remain notably depleted of women, even in the new international history, particularly as it is now focusing on international organisations. In some recent synthetic English-language histories—from Paul Kennedy’s *Parliament of Man: The Past, Present, and Future of the United Nations* (2007) to Mark Mazower’s *Governing the World: The Rise and Fall of an Idea* (2012)—there are no women in over two hundred years of history. And, unlike some international historians, Kennedy and Mazower do not even address gender. I say ‘even’, since the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that they cover were

coterminous not only with the ‘invention’ of the international, but also with the emergence of what came to be known as the gendered separation of spheres. The template of gender difference that historians associate with the rise of industrialised England was idealised, idolised, and emulated across the European continent as a new bourgeois class sought to distance itself from older aristocratic authority and power. As importantly, aristocratic and bourgeois women were crucial agents of the new ‘international’ politics as well as the new gender norms. Even a little historical research quickly illustrates that women were intellectual as well as social agents in the shaping of international political norms in nineteenth-century Europe, including new concepts such as nationality and humanitarianism, and in the international practices that we think of as diplomacy. No matter what approach you take to international history—whether focusing on the more traditional controversies of political thought and foreign policy, or the creation of international institutions—women were usually involved. In the twentieth century, women’s presence in the realm of international politics expanded along with the opportunities created by the new liberal internationalism that led to the establishment of organisations such as the League of Nations and the United Nations. Indeed, histories of pacifism and feminism have long recorded the engagement of European women with internationalism. However, their evidence and findings are rarely integrated into what non-feminist historians understand as serious international history and the study of *Realpolitik*. Similarly, the gender histories of international politics, many of them concentrating on the Cold War, that have proliferated in the last decade or so have added little to our knowledge of the roles of individual women in these same political scenarios. Instead, in international history gender hardly ever concerns women. Recognising the presence of women has the potential to fundamentally shift our perspective on what is important in the past, as well as to illuminate the role of historians in silencing women, their actions, and their ideas.

The following discussion draws on some examples of the presence of women in

international political histories through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries where they are often assumed to be absent. This is not an argument for throwing gender aside, but a call to remember the usefulness of adding women, of the recovery and reintegration of women *who were there* as political agents into the stories we tell of the international past, even when the historical questions seem, at first glance, to be male dominated and non-gender-specific.

* * *

The history of Versailles and international peacemaking in 1919 after the end of World War One is a staple of international history. ‘Versailles’ and ‘1919’ have become shorthand for the epoch-marking developments that led to the validation of nationality as a principle of international politics, and the creation of the League of Nations as the iconic organisation establishing a new era of cultural and political internationalism. Predictably, in these histories women are rarely mentioned as agents or subjects of significant moment. Yet, once we begin to look for women, they seem to turn up everywhere, organising peace conferences parallel to the main events from which they were excluded, sending delegations demanding for women the same ‘self-determination’ being awarded to nations, usually through their international organisations, such as the International Council of Women, or the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, and being rejected. However, historians who bother to examine the documents of these organisations, alongside more conventional archival records, will discover that even the marginalisation of these women and their demands was central to how the peacemakers understood the international politics in which they were engaged. They will also discover a story that radically alters our understanding of the processes around which the forms of international politics that we take as normative were ‘invented’. When compelled to consider the political status of women in the new world order, key political leaders and experts involved in the peace process insisted that, except as it related to labour legislation and the League of Nations, sexual difference was an issue of ‘domestic’ or national



significance.³ All the delegates that comprised the so-called Council of Ten—the political leaders of the United States, Britain, France, Italy, Japan, and the Maharaja of Bikaner—believed that the status of women was a question for national decision-making. How ironic then that their agreement was proof of an international consensus that women’s status was a marker of national sovereignty.

Recovering or adding women to the history of 1919 and ‘stirring’ casts new light on the reconstitution of the principles and norms of international relations during the postwar peace-making, on the very definitions of ‘sovereignty’ and the constitution of national politics in the realm of international politics. It reveals that women organised to represent their interests, and sought national rights in the domain of international politics; that women’s ‘self-determination’ was as significant (for them) a dimension of the new international postwar order as the principle of national ‘self-determination’; that the political marginalisation of women in the international sphere required ideological work, of a kind that reinforced the international as the domain of masculine interests, and national sovereignty as significantly determined by sovereignty over the status of women. That is, each male-led nation-state could emphasise its difference

and the legitimacy of its sovereignty in terms of how it treated its women, or the kinds of rights women had or did not have for cultural or historical reasons in that specific nation-state. This approach also illuminates as a shared international principle the process of transnational agreement that rendered women subject to national sovereignty.

Adding women and stirring in this same period also reminds us that European women were key figures in the propagation of International Relations as a discipline. In 1919, and in the interwar years, female members of the Institut International de la Paix, the World Congress of International Associations, Institutions Internationales, the Workers Educational Association, the Association for the Study of International Relations, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom and other organisations, as well as individual women such as Louise Weiss, editor of *L’Europe Nouvelle*, and Helena Swanwick, editor of the British Union of Democratic Control’s mouthpiece *Foreign Affairs*, organised summer schools throughout Europe on international politics. They recommended texts by women, including the English author Lucia Ames Mead on patriotism and the new internationalism, and German members of the Women’s International League for Peace and



(above)
Jane Addams on the platform of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, 2nd International Congress, Zurich, Switzerland 1919.

PHOTO: SWARTHMORE COLLEGE PEACE COLLECTION (JANE ADDAMS COLLECTION 00064).



(above)

Fourth Session of United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, May 1950. Before opening meeting, from left to right, are: Mrs Alva Myrdal, Principal-Director, UN Department of Social Affairs, Representative of UN Secretary-General; Mrs Hannah Sen, of India, Vice-Chairman; Madame Marie Helene Lefauchaux, of France, Chairman; Madame Lina P. Tsaldaris, of Greece; and Mrs Olive Remington Goldman, of the United States.

PHOTO: UN PHOTO

Freedom, Lidia Auersperg and Gustava Heymann on psychological perspectives on internationalism.⁴ They nurtured an idealist view of International Relations that by the 1930s was superseded by that of realists who hardened the study of International Relations into a masculine discipline (channelled through the Royal Institute of International Affairs and the Geneva Graduate Institute of International Studies). Just as earlier women's efforts to influence the peace of 1919 were excised from the historical record, women's texts and their preferred subject areas were eliminated from itineraries of international studies.

Once we start looking before and after 1919, it is clear too that women's international organisations have a long history, as does their interest in international politics. What we might call an emerging international public sphere, comprising not only international relations, but international organisations, was crucial to the demands women made for the same national, state or even imperial rights exercised by men and denied them. It is little wonder then, as Virginia Woolf noted in *Three Guineas* (1938), that so many women became advocates of a new liberal internationalism or sought to involve themselves in the new international organisations.⁵

* * *

The end of World War Two, and the emergence of a new and more enduring internationalism

focused on the United Nations and on the conceptualisation of 'human rights', is also told as a story without women, even though women were prominently there. In mid-life, Alva Myrdal trod the road chosen by so many men who have come to stand for the international idealism of the mid-twentieth century. As an employee of the United Nations (UN) Social Affairs secretariat in New York from 1949 to 1950, Myrdal was a bureaucratic cog with the title of (acting) 'Top-Ranking Director' and then, from 1950 until 1955, lower down the pecking order, as Director of Social Sciences at the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in Paris. In both these

positions she remained the most senior woman in that whole labyrinthine organisation. Her high level appointment was completely uncharacteristic of trends until then in the new international world order: she was a woman and a feminist. At the same time, she represented that sector of international civil servants, in the early post-World War Two years of the UN and UNESCO, who had no education in the service of European empires, as well as the aspirations of women for a political voice and a place in the politics of the world, as the novels of Frank Moorhouse have reminded us.⁶

In the 1940s, Alva Myrdal stood at the nexus of a dense web of international networks built around her interests in education, pedagogy, social psychology and social welfare. It was Alva Myrdal, along with her husband Gunnar, who had helped bring into existence the Swedish social welfare model, a symbol of modernisation under the aegis of social democracy. At the close of World War Two, she understood the challenge to world peace and security as the alarming economic and social inequalities between European and colonised societies. During her short tenure, she brought to the UN and its agencies a perspective informed by her feminism and interest in social welfare. She was convinced that the Swedish model of progress from a rural to modern society could be adapted to colonial settings through 'planned social development'. The Swedish precedent had shown, she claimed, that giving women as

well as men a greater stake in the improvement of quality of life had, in half a century, led that country out of its feudal past into a more democratic and modern future.

Myrdal was intent on putting the 'social' into the UN, in a way that would radicalise what she saw as the exciting international social welfare potential of 'Technical Assistance', the concept that institutionally predated 'development' in this period. From 1949, by which time development was being backed by the United States as a Cold War strategy, she was determined to bring to the programme an agenda of balanced modernisation, built out of her repertoire of accumulated social welfare expertise, concentrating specifically on questions of housing, the maintenance of standards of living, social welfare services, the prevention of crime, social care of immigrants, and the status of women.

After her year at the UN, Myrdal worked for five years as Director of Social Sciences at UNESCO, where she brought her feminist agenda to bear on the organisation as much as she could and became involved in the conceptualisation of development in the social sciences. In 1956 Myrdal gave up on international organisations, feeling they had become caught up in their own bureaucracy and that it was too hard to effect change 'on the ground'. Although she had been able to introduce a more women-centred policy, something the first UNESCO Director-General, Julian Huxley, had resisted despite repeated requests from the UN, she had become increasingly disillusioned with developmentalism. In 1964 Myrdal told a reporter that the Western world did not have the right to impose modernity elsewhere. Her argument was in effect a product of her frustration at the level of influence of new American non-governmental organisations such as the Ford Foundation, offering debt-intensive versions of modernisation, on the UN's work in India. Half a century later the UN fully took up her emphases on the importance of working with local communities rather than imposing development from on high, of listening to the women in those local communities, and of working with the standard of living rather than gross domestic product as a measure of



action and success. These became the rationale for the continued relevance of the UN and international institutions we know as Human Security. Myrdal can, in effect, be added to this history as the 'mother' of Human Security.⁷

If we add Myrdal, how does international history as we currently understand it change? Myrdal's story incorporates the significance of feminism as an ideology in this period. That history also reminds us that in this international schema the demands of feminism were often placed in opposition to the demands of anti-racism. That is, women felt they had to compete with other forms of incommensurate differences that hinder opportunities and rights. This was particularly so after 1948, when the new international discourse of 'human rights' again focused on 'self-determination' of

(above)

Anne Louise
Germaine de
Staël-Holstein,
1766–1817.

SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA
COMMONS, PUBLIC
DOMAIN

a national/cultural kind, and women's rights were sectioned off to the Committee on the Status of Women.⁸

Adding Myrdal also links us to the role of women in the history of diplomacy and foreign policy. When Myrdal decided to give up on UNESCO she became the first Swedish female ambassador, and eventually a crucial advocate for local solutions to the challenges of development, funded directly by wealthy national governments such as Sweden. Stirring women back into European history connects us to a longer European story of women's often 'informal' yet conventionalised roles in the history of diplomacy—whether as monarchs, dynastic networkers, or spousal *ambassadrices*—from the early modern period to the modern age.⁹

* * *

Sceptics might argue it is much easier to add women to the international history of the twentieth century, a period when the democratisation of politics and rise of social

'liberalism', 'culture', and 'nationality' are attributed to her influence.¹⁰

The story of Staël as 'thinker' requires reincorporation of Staël's 'diplomatic' roles. The period that most interests me begins while she was in exile, fleeing to Russia, then Sweden, then England, at the heart of her movable salon, knitting together a European culture of ideas and politics through her networks, correspondence and writings.¹¹ By 1813, as Napoleon's forces were in increasing retreat, common parlance in England and on the continent had it that there were three powers in Europe: Britain, Russia, and Germaine de Staël. Her celebrity had been carried across the Continent and Atlantic by her open and unforgiving opposition to Napoleon and the popularity of her novels and her original studies of national literatures and cultures (categorised by some of her contemporaries as a form of 'political science'). Even in an age when women were tolerated as novelists, Staël's status as a female 'genius' was exceptional. She was among

EVEN IN AN AGE WHEN WOMEN WERE TOLERATED AS NOVELISTS,
STAËL'S STATUS AS A FEMALE 'GENIUS' WAS EXCEPTIONAL.

movements gave more women the opportunity to participate in international political life. Yet this modern history merely illuminates the absence of women in a *longue durée* narrative where they were in fact also present, as historical actors in the ideological as well as political constitution of a modern Europe. Which brings me to my last example, the end of the Napoleonic wars, 1814, and the influence of Germaine de Staël on what I think of as the invention of the international as a political space. In taking Staël as my subject, my intention is to also to reflect on the possibilities of both historical 'recovery' of women as political agents, and the relevance of that history for understanding the place of gender in 'High Politics'.

Germaine de Staël's major writings traverse the period of the French Revolution, the Napoleonic wars, and the early Restoration. Her studies of Italy and Germany are still regarded as prototypes of a new cultural nationalism, just as the specific terms

the prominent elaborators of the practical terms of liberty that became the conceptual axis of political debate in the post-Napoleonic world, a consequence not only of her ideas and discussions, but also of the influence she exerted through her salon and her political interventions.

At this crucial juncture in European history, we find Staël at the centre of diplomatic negotiations, working her networks, her correspondence and publications, and her celebrity, in St. Petersburg, Stockholm, London, and Paris, in the interests of forging and maintaining a coalition against Napoleon, and in favour of a new liberal European order to replace his rule. In the context of the larger political shift that historians have identified, in the 'sense of inherent limits, acceptance of mutual rules and restraints, common responsibility to certain standards of conduct and loyalty beyond the aims of one's own state',¹² Staël insisted on the relevance of liberal principles to the domain of international peacemaking that would follow Napoleon's defeat. Included in her political

repertoire of liberal ideas were anti-colonialism and anti-slavery.

In the last years of her life, as Staël railed against the limitations of the Restoration established by the powers that had defeated Napoleon, she wrote *Considérations sur la Révolution Française*, a defining text of liberal ideology, the first conceptual history of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods, and the culmination of her thinking about political liberty. Liberty of person, belief, religion, required and guaranteed the representation of public opinion and mitigation of the arbitrary exercise of power. In effect, political power required regulation through the practices of ‘public liberty’ and ‘the protection of individual rights by establishing a regime limited by fundamental laws and a constitution’. The text elaborated this applied view of liberty, its history, and its universal applicability. She wrote in *Considérations*:

Is the question the abolition of the slave trade, or the liberty of the press, or religious toleration? Jefferson thinks as La Fayette, as Wilberforce [...] Is it then from the calculations of interest, is it from bad motives that men so superior, in situations and countries so different, should be in such harmony in their political opinions?¹³

The story of Staël’s effacement and marginalisation is as instructive for exposing the implicitly gendered character of international liberal theory and its lineages. Staël’s biographers have persistently pondered whether she was more the prompter of liberalism than the maker of a ‘liberal age’. Other assessments suggest that the greatest impact of her work occurred after her death, during the revolutions of the 1830s, the Risorgimento and national liberation movements of the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁴ Few have pondered the significance of her ‘womanhood’ to her precarious intellectual position, even though in her own lifetime it was that fact that caused her the most difficulties. The relevance of Staël’s gender was obvious to her contemporaries who simultaneously reviled and celebrated her work and her political persona.

Since then, the ‘problem’ of Staël’s gender has persisted, as is apparent when one considers synthetic accounts of liberalism, and other ‘recovery’ projects. In the new *Cambridge Companion to Benjamin Constant*, which, as its editor Helena Rosenblatt explains, is intended to salvage Staël’s companion Constant from the margins of liberalism, one author makes the point that it is impossible to discuss the influences on Constant without touching on Staël, although he does it in a specific manner: ‘And leave aside’, says Gauchet, ‘Madame de Staël, with whom he [Constant] collaborated too closely to permit attribution of responsibility for specific ideas. Nevertheless, Constant’s answer was still fundamentally new, if only in the sharpness of its formulation.’ This new answer, it is explained, was the view that the details of liberty are inspired by the need for ways of preventing arbitrariness or tyranny in political power.

In a very recent and separate history of political thought in France since the eighteenth century, Jeremy Jennings follows a long description of Constant’s ideas with a footnote in which he adds that the argument for which Constant is best known—the distinction between the ‘liberty which was offered to men at the end of the last century [...] borrowed from the ancient republics’ and a modern ‘private’ conception of liberty—was first advanced ‘by Madame de Staël in her *Circonstances actuelles qui peuvent terminer la Révolution*, a text written in 1796, but published almost two hundred years later’. The point for Jennings is that Constant was the more ardent advocate of this view and therefore the focus of discussion.

Ironically, if Staël’s work was more seriously considered, it would be difficult to ignore women as the subject of liberalism and political thought, since she herself singled women out as having a specific kind of subjectivity and role in the constitution of a liberal society and state. For example, when Staël evoked the dystopia of arbitrary government, she used as her example women exerting influence in the public sphere for personal advantage, compared with the situation ‘in free countries [...] where] the true character of a woman and the true character of a man can be known and admired’, since there was no need to learn to manipulate individuals when institutions objectively and transparently

INDIVIDUALITY *and* INNOVATION IN GREEK SCULPTURE

» ANDREW STEWART

*W*hen we encounter some new invention or discovery, it is natural to ask who invented, discovered, created, or produced it.¹ The ancient Greeks were no exception. Indeed, their urge to connect every novelty with a famous name seems almost obsessive, even pathological. The gods were first in line. Demeter gave us grain, Dionysos gave us wine, Athena gave us the olive, and so on; then, coming down a notch, Prometheus gave us fire, Orpheus gave us music, and the Cyclopes taught us the crafts.²

By the seventh century BC, a formula was coined: the *prôtos heuretês*—the ‘first discoverer’ of this or that new skill, artefact, literary genre, or social practice.³ The keyword here is *technê*. Basically untranslatable, it is best understood through its two English derivations, technique and technology. *Technê* is the understanding, ingenuity, and skill that one applies to a problem in order to solve it, or to brute matter in order to make something useful of it.⁴

The Greeks soon realised that *technê* was the driving force behind the advance of civilization, and applied the word to any skill, craft, art, or profession that contributed to this advance. Sailing, agriculture, divination, cooking, medicine, carpentry, flute playing, rhetoric, and politics were all *technai* in this sense. And so were architecture, painting, and of course sculpture.

The remainder of this essay, like Caesar’s Gaul, is divided into three parts. Part I sketches and occasionally critiques the scholarship on

individuality and innovation in Greek sculpture from antiquity to the present.

Part II offers a few cautionary remarks about craftsmanship and the limitations it imposed on individual initiative in ancient Greece. And finally Part III presents some test cases from the fifth century BC, in order to examine what individual achievement could amount to in that golden century.

I. SCHOLARSHIP: ANCIENT AND MODERN

Although the invention of the Doric and Ionic orders, and of the two main archaic sculptural types, the standing naked youth (*kouros*) and standing draped woman (*korê*), seem to predate not Greek curiosity per se about inventors and their inventions but its commemoration in writing, later pundits soon filled the lacuna—at least in the case of sculpture. So we hear that either the Rhodian Telchines or the Cretan Daktyloi were the first to make images of the gods, and the first to work iron and bronze in order to do so.⁵



(above)

Fig. 1. Marble kouros from Attica, ca. 600–575 BC.

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK, FLETCHER FUND, 1932 (32.11.1).



(above left)
 Fig. 2. Plaster reconstruction after Roman marble copies of the Tyrannicides Harmodios and Aristogeiton by Kritios of Athens and Nesiotes. Bronze originals, 477/6 BC. Museo dei Gessi, Rome.

PHOTO: SCHWANKE, COURTESY DEUTSCHES ARCHÄOLOGISCHES INSTITUT, ROME, INST. NEG. 84.3300.

(above right)
 Fig. 3. Bronze Apollo from the Piraeus, ca. 500–475 BC. Archaeological Museum, Piraeus.

PHOTO: U.C. BERKELEY PHOTO ARCHIVE.



And Daidalos, no less, invented the kouros (fig. 1). His statues, we are told,

were exactly like living beings, for they say that they could see and walk, and were so completely true to life that the statue produced by art seemed to be a living being. For Daidalos was the first to represent the eyes open and the legs separated as they are in walking.⁶

Perhaps not surprisingly, the century that allegedly saw these discoveries, the seventh century BC, also produced some of the earliest artists' signatures. They appear on a kouros base by Euthykartides of Naxos, and on a fragmentary late geometric sherd from Ischia.⁷ As Alison Burford has remarked, 'During the 7th century BC craftsmen ceased to be anonymous; never again in antiquity did there occur so momentous an alteration in their status or in their thinking as this.'⁸

Now, thanks largely to these signatures and the indefatigable Roman-period traveller Pausanias, we know a certain amount about

archaic sculptors active between Daidalos and the Persian wars. But it was the invention of the classical style and particularly of *contrapposto*, apparently in the 470s, that greatly increased the range of innovation that was possible in sculpture and prompted increasing public and private comment upon it. For once these sculptors had invented *contrapposto*—the counterpoise of limbs and resulting asymmetrical distribution of the body's weight—there was no going back. The whole field of movement and composition, of what the Greeks called *rhythmos*, was now open to individual experiment and innovation. Moreover, other *technai* were taking off at this very time, including medicine, cosmology, physics and rhetoric. It was the Age of the Sophists. So it is not surprising that the first comments about individual style concern sculptors of this period, and the first judgements of quality as well.

Thus we read that bronzes by Kritios and Nesiotes were 'compact, sinewy, hard, and precisely divided into parts by lines'.⁹ The implied comparison is between their



famous bronze Tyrannicides of 476 BC (fig. 2), today known only in marble replica, and the statuesque, kouros-like late archaic bronzes such as the Piraeus Apollo (fig. 3). At about this time Aeschylus, too, supposedly remarked that ‘the old statues, though simply made, are thought divine; while the new ones, though superbly made, have less of the divine in them’.¹⁰ Presumably he was comparing works such as the Piraeus Apollo with the supple and very human ‘musing’ pose of its early classical successors.

The next generation fared somewhat better with the critics. The sculptor Pheidias set such a standard with his Athena Parthenos (see fig. 10) and Olympian Zeus and the sculptor Polykleitos with his Doryphoros (fig. 4) that Socrates, Xenophon, and Aristotle all judged them the best in their respective professions. Just as they ranked Homer the best epic poet, Melanippides the best lyric one, Sophocles the best tragedian, and Zeuxis the best painter, they agreed that Pheidias made the best statues of the gods and Polykleitos made the best ones of mortals. Indeed, Socrates went further, contemptuously dismissing Polykleitos’s sons, who had followed in his footsteps, as

‘nothing beside their father’. Soon, Plato famously turned the entire discussion on its head, declaring that precisely because Greek art changed and developed, it was inferior to Egyptian, which supposedly did not.¹¹

By the early Hellenistic period, these ad hoc value judgements had begun to lengthen into narratives. Thus around 280 BC, Poseidippos of Pella produced this long, recently discovered epigram praising his particular hero, the fourth-century bronze caster Lysippos:

Imitate these works, and the antique laws of colossi,
 Statue makers—yes!—outrun them!
 For if the ancient hands of [Dry]ops or of Hageladas,
 A pre-Polykleitan, wholly primitive practitioner of the art,
 Or the hard creations of [the Daidalids] had entered the field,
 There’d be no reason at all to invoke Lysippos’s new grace
 As a touchstone. But if need should arise, And a contest among moderns occur, he’d thrash them all.¹²

(above)
 Fig. 4. Two reconstructions by Erin Babnik and Andrew Stewart of the Doryphoros by Polykleitos of Argos. Bronze original, ca. 440 BC. The sheathed sword and shield are conjectural.

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In the same period, Douris of Samos produced a series of anecdotal artists' biographies, including one of Lysippos. Douris may be responsible for those anecdotes in Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, composed in the 70s AD, that elevate the artist almost to culture-hero status, the companion and occasionally counsellor of kings like that other gadfly, the court philosopher.¹³

Meanwhile Xenokrates of Athens, a pupil of Lysippos and a practising sculptor in his own right, wrote handbooks on the development of Greek sculpture and painting, apparently based on formal criteria such as the artist's individual contributions to the development of *symmetria* or proportion, *rhythmos* or composition, and *akribeia* or naturalistic detail; and in painting, to the development of line, colour, composition, and perspective. Some of Pliny's stylistic judgements probably are taken from his work.¹⁴

The floodgates were now open. By the end of the Hellenistic period, the foundations for the work of Vitruvius, Pliny, Quintilian, Pausanias, Lucian, and Philostratos—and art history as enshrined in our own textbooks, the present author's included—were firmly in place. It is largely because of them that we are quite well

informed not only about the virtuoso artists and architects, but also about many others whose contributions were far more modest. Individualism is built into Greek and Roman discourse about art from start to finish, so we should not make light of it.

As for innovation, these writers signal it in three main ways. As we've seen, the artist may be described as: (1) a discoverer of a new technique or image type (as its *prôtos heuretês* or *primus inventor*). But like Kritios, Nesiotes, Polykleitos, and Lysippos, he may be singled out also as: (2) a stylistic paradigm, and/or as: (3) the founder of a school. We shall return to these three criteria shortly.

But in the 6th century AD or thereabouts, art history itself stopped, only reviving over a thousand years later. For the discipline's real founding hero was not the sixteenth-century painter and scholar Vasari, nor even Aldrovandi or Ursinus, but Johann Joachim Winckelmann in the mid-eighteenth century. Convinced that 'good taste was born under the skies of Greece', Winckelmann began his career by systematically tackling the issue of the sculptural and pictorial models that contemporary artists should use, predictably endorsing only those that he felt exhibited the 'noble simplicity and quiet grandeur' of the classical ideal—such as, curiously to our eyes, the Laokoon (fig. 5).

Winckelmann's second and most important book, the *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (Dresden: Waltherisches Hof-Buchhandlung, 1764), was the first such systematic account ever. But surprisingly, it says very little about personalities. Winckelmann was of course thoroughly familiar with most of the ancient sources on Greek art, particularly Pliny and Pausanias and their rosters of artists great and small. But his interest in environmental, social, and political factors and his desire to define ideal beauty itself pointed him in other directions.

Notoriously, Winckelmann never went to Greece, and despite the wealth of ancient sculpture on display in Rome, he ventured only eight actual attributions, of which only two—the Apollo Sauroktonos (fig. 6) and Resting Satyr given to Praxiteles—are taken seriously today.¹⁵ Others were less reticent. Reproductions in miniature on the coins of Knidos had already enabled seventeenth-

(above)

Fig. 5. Marble group of Laokoon and his sons, by Hagesandros, Athanodoros, and Polydoros of Rhodes, ca. 50–25 BC. Rome, Vatican Museums.

PHOTO: HANS GOETTE

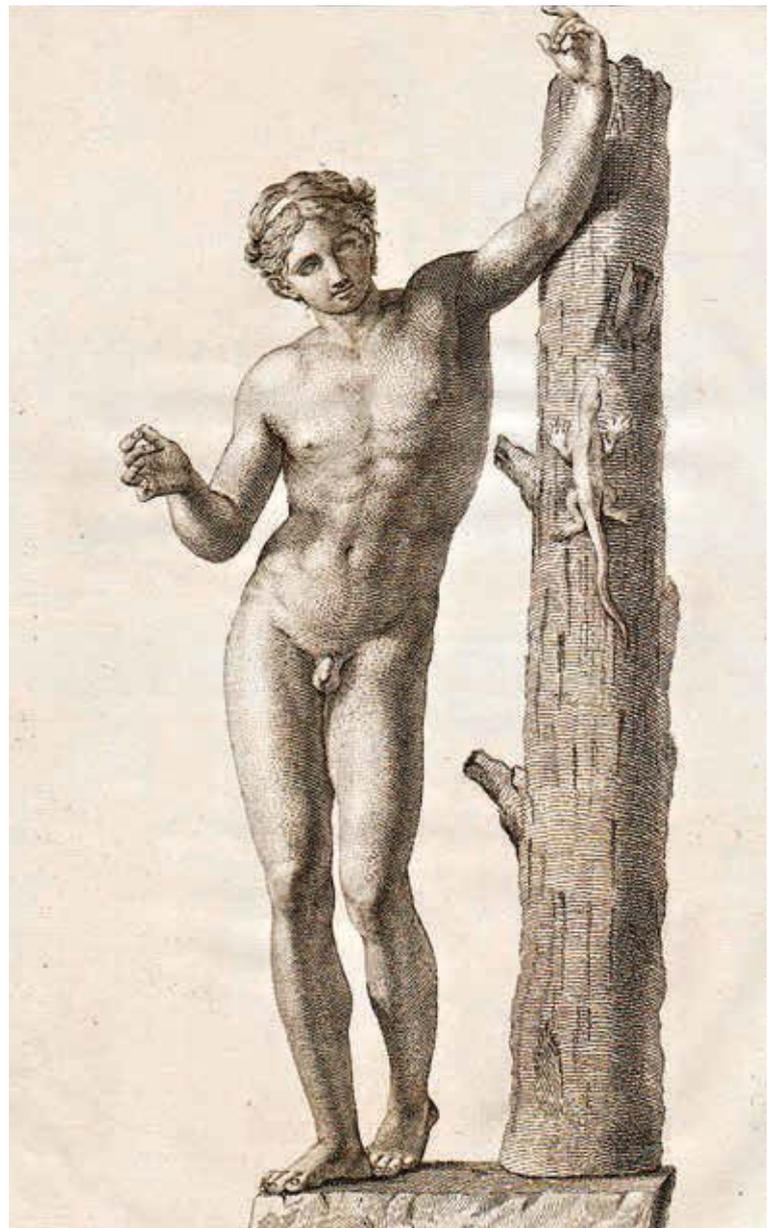
century scholars to identify Praxiteles' Knidian Aphrodite, and by 1800 Emilio Quirino Visconti, then director of the Vatican Museums, had both debunked a number of Winckelmann's attributions and added some of his own.

Visconti's ventures on this front included giving the Lancelotti-type Diskobolos to Myron, the Vatican Ganymede to Leochares, and the seated Vatican Tyche to Eutychides.¹⁶ In each case the ancient critics had described the work in enough detail to enable its identification among the mass of marbles on show; but Visconti was fully aware that he was dealing not with Greek originals but with Roman copies that translated them from bronze into marble. And he also knew that the Ganymede and Tyche were less than faithful copies at that, because both of them were mere statuettes.

It was upon this foundation that the first systematic history of Greek sculptors, published by Heinrich Brunn in 1853, was created.¹⁷ Now Brunn felt somewhat differently than Winckelmann about art and artists. A Kantian, he believed that great art was the product of individual genius. So the individual artist automatically became his focus, and resurrecting him—the process of *Meisterforschung*—became his solemn duty.

By the last decade of the nineteenth century, the rapidly growing corpus of sculptures and inscriptions, the refinement of archaeological positivism with its focus upon the telling detail, and the adoption of the new technique of photography—all these had greatly increased both the scope and the ambitions of the attribution game and its practitioners.

The big breakthrough came in 1893 with Adolf Furtwängler's *Meisterwerke der griechischen Plastik*.¹⁸ This bold attempt to reconstruct the output of the giants of classical Greek sculpture, penned by Brunn's star pupil and dedicated to him, caused a sensation. Furtwängler adopted the methods of the positivist connoisseur Giovanni Morelli (aka Ivan Lermolieff), who from 1874 had published hundreds of re-attributions of Old Master paintings that tabulated and compared the formulae their authors employed for anatomical details, drapery, and so on. In his preface Furtwängler declared that only photographs could sustain such a programme, and



proceeded to document his attributions with an impressive array of them. Yet mere attribution was by no means his prime goal. As he indicated by his choice of subtitle, *Kunstgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* or 'Art-Historical Studies', he wanted to historicise, to trace development, and he carefully subordinated each 'masterpiece' to this agenda. His address to the ancient literary sources, however, was deliberately casual—a slap at the text-based art history for which Brunn's book had been the bible.

From then on, all serious scholars of ancient sculpture began to use photographs as a matter of course—some so recklessly that in 1908 the sculpture specialist and topographer Adolf Michaelis felt he had to protest. While

(above)
 Fig. 6. Apollo Sauroktonos, Vatican. Bronze original by Praxiteles, ca. 350 BC.

SOURCE:
 J.J. WINCKELMANN,
 MONUMENTI ANTICHI
 INEDITI (ROME:
 WINCKELMANN, 1767),
 VOL. 1, CH. 4, P. LXXV, PL. 40

conceding that photographs had been instrumental in converting Greek sculpture studies from a text-based methodology to a style-based one, he warned that Furtwängler's attributions were both inflated and inattentive to the texts, and his imitators were beginning to arrive at wildly contradictory ones for the same pieces. Stylistic analysis without external controls was a perilous enterprise indeed.¹⁹

Furtwängler's critics had also chastised him for his over-reliance on Roman copies. For since Greek originals by the great masters were in short supply—in fact, all but non-existent—both Brunn and he had been compelled to devote most of their pages to works preserved only in copy. Furtwängler had blithely used these copies as if they were Greek originals, whereas it was crystal clear not only that in many cases they translated bronze into marble, but also that often they reproduced details somewhat capriciously—truly a Morellian nightmare. So the next generation began to develop the science—some might call it the pseudo-science—of *Kopienkritik*, 'copy criticism', to overcome these problems, and worked ever harder to refine the attributions based upon it.

Meanwhile still others, disturbed by Michaelis's warning, began to step back and look at the entire scene afresh. Inspired by the great formalist critics Adolf Hildebrand, Alois Riegl, Franz Wickhoff and Heinrich Wölfflin, they sought, in Wölfflin's famous words, to offer the world an 'art history without names'. In Greek sculpture studies, the two favorites were *Stilphasen*, a quasi-deterministic sequence of formal antitheses such as closed to open, haptic to optic, linear to painterly, planar to recessional, and simple to complex; and *Strukturforschung*, which tried to discover the essential structure (psychological and thus formal) of a given culture and its artworks. Gerhard Kraemer was the acknowledged master of *Stilphasen* and Guido Kaschnitz von Weinberg of *Strukturforschung*.²⁰ Kraemer preferred to write articles rather than books, however.

Students of Hellenistic sculpture, largely deprived by the ancient classicising critics of names, dates, texts, histories, and frequently even of copies, found overarching schemes of this kind particularly appealing.

So far, every scholar mentioned in this essay has been German or at least German-speaking. In the rest of the scholarly world both the attribution game and totalising evolutionary schemes such as these were less popular than in Germany, and still are, though monographs on individual Greek sculptors still continue to appear. They include Giorgios Despinis's dissertation on Agorakritos, Olga Palagia's on Euphranor, Paolo Moreno's three books on Lysippos, Antonio Corso's quartet (soon to be a quintet!) on Praxiteles, and the present author's own dissertation on Skopas. Not to mention the recent Praxiteles exhibition organised by Alain Pasquier and Jean-Luc Martinez at the Louvre. All of them rely heavily upon copies.²¹

In the United States, the leading postwar theorist was the charismatic American scholar Rhys Carpenter. A brilliant teacher and powerful writer, in 1960 Carpenter produced a highly influential survey entitled *Greek Sculpture: A Critical Review*.²² Although all but ignored on the European continent, this book took the world of Anglo-American sculpture studies by storm. (One of this author's own professors, Robert Cook, declared it the best thing ever written on the subject, and gave it a glowing three-page review.)²³

Carpenter too was a disciple of Hildebrand and Wölfflin. Although apparently he never cited them, he *must* have known their work: his approach is too close to theirs for coincidence. For he too wanted an 'art without artists' and an 'art history without names' but pressed his case even further. Bluntly characterising Greek sculpture as the 'anonymous product of an impersonal craft', he argued that it was 'strictly conditioned by evolutionary laws which are in turn dependent upon the unchangeable dictates of the mechanism of human vision'.²⁴ Names do, in fact, crop up in his book—Polykleitos, Pheidias, Praxiteles, and Lysippos in particular. But its thrust is quite different—a challenging, highly rhetorical, and often unorthodox sketch of an inexorable, even deterministic evolution from a purely frontal art to a fully three-dimensional one, and from glyptic to plastic form.

Carpenter's most influential pupil was Brunilde Ridgway, who began to teach at Bryn Mawr College in 1960, and in 1977 was named Rhys Carpenter Professor of Classical and Near

Eastern Archaeology at that college. Although Ridgway's approach is more nuanced than Carpenter's and cannot be easily summarised, she too is an enthusiastic debunker, banishing many works formerly attributed to the great masters to the later Hellenistic or even Roman periods, and casting grave doubt upon others.²⁵ Ridgway and her many pupils now constitute what can fairly be called a school.

Yet Carpenter's 'art history without names' has not gone unchallenged. In particular, many historians of ancient sculpture heartily disliked an approach that not only denied the artist's existence as a social being, but also brusquely expelled many works from their cosy niches in the 4th century BC and banished them

The upshot of all this activity, at least as regards current work on Greek sculpture, is that personalities and period styles now coexist quite uneasily. While some foreground the individual sculptor, his teachers, and his pupils to the almost complete exclusion of any overarching vision, others focus upon the big picture to the almost complete exclusion of the individual sculptor. And still others—the present author included—attempt to reconcile the two approaches, often with mixed results.

Moreover, the Roman copies have become quite controversial, at least in the United States. Traditionally the backbone of our reconstructions of the history of Greek sculpture, they are now decidedly problematic. Again following the

... INDIVIDUALITY AND INNOVATION ARE CENTRAL TO GREEK AND ROMAN DISCOURSE ON ART, SO WE ARE NOT ENTITLED TO IGNORE THEM.

to the advanced Hellenistic period. In 1980 Richard Wollheim briskly critiqued this whole enterprise on a theoretical level in his path-breaking book *Art and its Objects*:

[First, these formalist scholars] had far too narrow a conception of the range of devices operative in art [...] Secondly, they had no theoretical means of fitting together stylistic changes on the general or social level with changes of style on an individual or expressive level: Wölfflin's famous program of an 'art history without names' is in effect the denial that there is any need to make the fit since all change occurs primarily or operatively on the more general level. Thirdly, all these writers were confused about the status of their investigation. From the fact that it is in the nature of art that it changes or has a history, they tried to move to the conclusion that the particular history it has, the particular changes that it undergoes, are grounded in the nature of art.²⁶

As regards Greek sculpture, we might add, fourth, that individuality and innovation are central to Greek and Roman discourse on art, so we are not entitled to ignore them.

Germans, this time the 1970s generation led by Paul Zanker and Raimund Wünsche, some now argue that Latin literature should be our guide—especially texts such as Plautus's comedies and Vergil's *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid* that 'emulate' Greek models rather than copy them outright. As this author's former student and now colleague Christopher Hallett has noted,

Our failure to recognise this in the visual arts (so this line of reasoning runs) may be put down mostly to prejudice and a lack of imagination. On this analysis, if we can only learn to overcome our modern parochialism, the genuine *Romanness* of all this material will become unmistakably apparent.²⁷

Yet not only have Zanker, Wünsche, and the others turned away from what one might call this 'irrationally exuberant' *Romanitas* of the 1970s, but both images and texts offer little support for it. Whatever the status of these pieces as Roman art—and here there is certainly much room for reconsideration—their credentials as replicas of Greek originals, more-or-less, are impeccable.

The facts are well known and shouldn't need repeating, but apparently they do. First,

when one lines the copies up it is clear how astonishingly similar they often are, which presumes the existence of a common—surely Greek—archetype. Second, quite a few of them can be matched directly with surviving Greek originals, such as the well known Erechtheion Caryatids and the fragments of Agorakritos's Nemesis so brilliantly rediscovered by Despinis and placed in his reconstruction precisely with the aid of the copies. In recent years, Despinis and other Greek scholars have identified and joined original fragments of more than a dozen classical statues on the Akropolis using this method, some of them masterpieces by named sculptors seen and described by Pausanias in his tour around the citadel.²⁸ The *Romanitas* movement, as one might call it, has ignored this work entirely.

Third, a sculptor's workshop buried by the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79 and excavated in the 1960s has yielded hundreds of fragments of ancient plaster casts. Moulded from Greek bronze originals such as the Tyrannicides, they show that although the marble replicas are legion, in each case a core group of them conforms faithfully to the spirit and often to the letter of its Greek archetype.²⁹ And finally, as Hallett also has pointed out, the crucial Latin word *aemulatio*, 'emulation', seems to mean in fact not 'rivalry by being authentically and obviously Roman' but 'rivalry by being as Greek as possible'.³⁰

So when Pliny describes Nero's commission to the great Zenodoros to make facsimiles of two cups by the classical Greek silversmith Kalamis, he says that Zenodoros 'reproduced them in such a way that there was almost no difference in workmanship between them and the originals'. The word he uses for 'reproduce' is precisely *aemulare*, 'to rival'.³¹ So as Michael Koortbojian has shrewdly remarked, in ancient Rome: 'It is a striking paradox [...] that [...] what made something recognisable as roughly equivalent to our modern notion of a "work of art" was, more often than not, the fact that it was not an original invention but a "copy".'³² Surely it is this uniquely Roman attitude to replication that needs more thought and more work, not the replicas' departures from their Greek models, which often are trivial and probably fortuitous.

So where do we go from here? Not, surely, down the road so often taken, of trying to link every Greek original and Roman copy with a name. Still less should we join those who rush to attribute new discoveries in the same way. Guesses of this sort hamper our address to the work in question, skew our discussion of it, substitute sloganeering for thought, and seldom lead anywhere productive. If the Holy Grail of three centuries of advanced scholarship on two continents and in six languages is simply a name, one may justly ask, 'What's the point?'

So instead of obsessing over names, it is better to reorient the discussion and ask, first of all, what possibilities were available to the individual sculptor in ancient Greece? Second, what did innovation in this medium actually consist of? And third, what can we learn from the monuments and sources about such innovations in the particular case?

II. CRAFTSMANSHIP, ANCIENT AND MODERN

As to possibilities, in ancient Greece (it will be recalled), sculpture was a *technê*—art and craft combined. Moreover, what today's war-gamers would call the 'action horizon' of a Greek sculptor and what sociologists would call his 'power of agency' was quite limited (and of Roman ones even more so, though that is beyond the scope of this essay).

To begin with, the time required to train a good craftsman is often estimated (most recently by Richard Sennett) at around 10,000 hours or about seven years.³³ Or, if one wants to be apprenticed to Jiro Ono, reportedly the finest sushi chef in Tokyo, *at least* ten years—and that is just the beginning, according to David Gelb's superb documentary on him.³⁴ Pliny records a similar training regimen in the studio of the notoriously exacting fourth-century painter Pamphilos of Sikyon: to study with him cost a tidy 500 drachmas per year for twelve years, and involved instruction 'in all branches of learning, especially arithmetic and geometry'.³⁵ Lengthy apprenticeships such as these would tend to turn all but the boldest pupils into plodding conservatives.

Then, once our young sculptor struck out on his own, he faced a society where such

work was always done on commission and was constrained by genre, function, and the need always to please a public. For in ancient Greece and Rome, sculpture was a *public* art form, even when (as later) displayed in private houses. Moreover, the risk involved in experiments that might turn bad—ruining an entire block of marble, losing time, losing money, losing face, and so on—was great. That is why, in ancient art, period style usually eclipses personal style almost completely. So one must expect innovators to be few and far between, and their innovations perhaps not always of the sort that one would expect.

Bearing all this in mind, Part III of this essay selects some test cases from the fifth century BC. Essentially, the argument will be that our view of innovation in this medium is too

narrow, and that a formalist obsession with style often has led to other, more interesting avenues being overlooked or underestimated.

III. FIVE TEST CASES

First, Kritios and Nesiotes, the authors of the Tyrannicides (fig. 2). These statues, originally of bronze and set up in the Athenian Agora in 476 to replace an earlier group stolen by the Persians, are each represented today by half a dozen Roman copies, another half-dozen fragments of plaster casts from the aforementioned copyist's workshop in Baiae, and numerous echoes in the Athenian minor arts. Moreover, part of their original base has survived, plus over a dozen ancient texts that mention them and sometimes even describe



(left)

Fig. 7. Herakles hands Athena the Stymphalian Birds, marble metope from the Temple of Zeus at Olympia, ca. 470–457 BC. Archaeological Museum, Olympia, and Musée du Louvre, Paris.

PHOTO: HANS GOETTE.



described by Pausanias and dated by him to ca. 470–457 (figs. 7–9).⁴⁰ Although he attributes them to Pheidias’s pupils Alkamenes and Paionios, this cannot be right, since these two men lived over a generation later, in the last third of the century. Nevertheless, over the years some diehards predictably have expended considerable quantities of ink in defending this attribution, just because its source is the usually reliable Pausanias: *plus ça change*. But most of us continue to call their author simply the ‘Olympia Master’.

Now this individual could not have carved all these figures himself, and they are not particularly innovative stylistically.



(top)

Fig. 8. Reconstructed elevation of the east façade of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia, ca. 470–457 BC. The contest between Oinomaos and Pelops for the hand of Hippodameia.

SOURCE: E. CURTIUS AND F. ADLER, *OLYMPIA I* (BERLIN: A. ASHER, 1897), PL. 10.

(bottom)

Fig. 9. Central part of the marble east pediment from the Temple of Zeus at Olympia (Fig. 8), ca. 470–457 BC. The contest between Oinomaos and Pelops for the hand of Hippodameia. Archaeological Museum, Olympia.

PHOTO: ERIN BABNIK

their style, such as Lucian’s comment, quoted earlier, that they were ‘compact, sinewy, hard, and precisely divided into parts by lines’.³⁶ So (miraculously) their identity, date, and form are all secure.

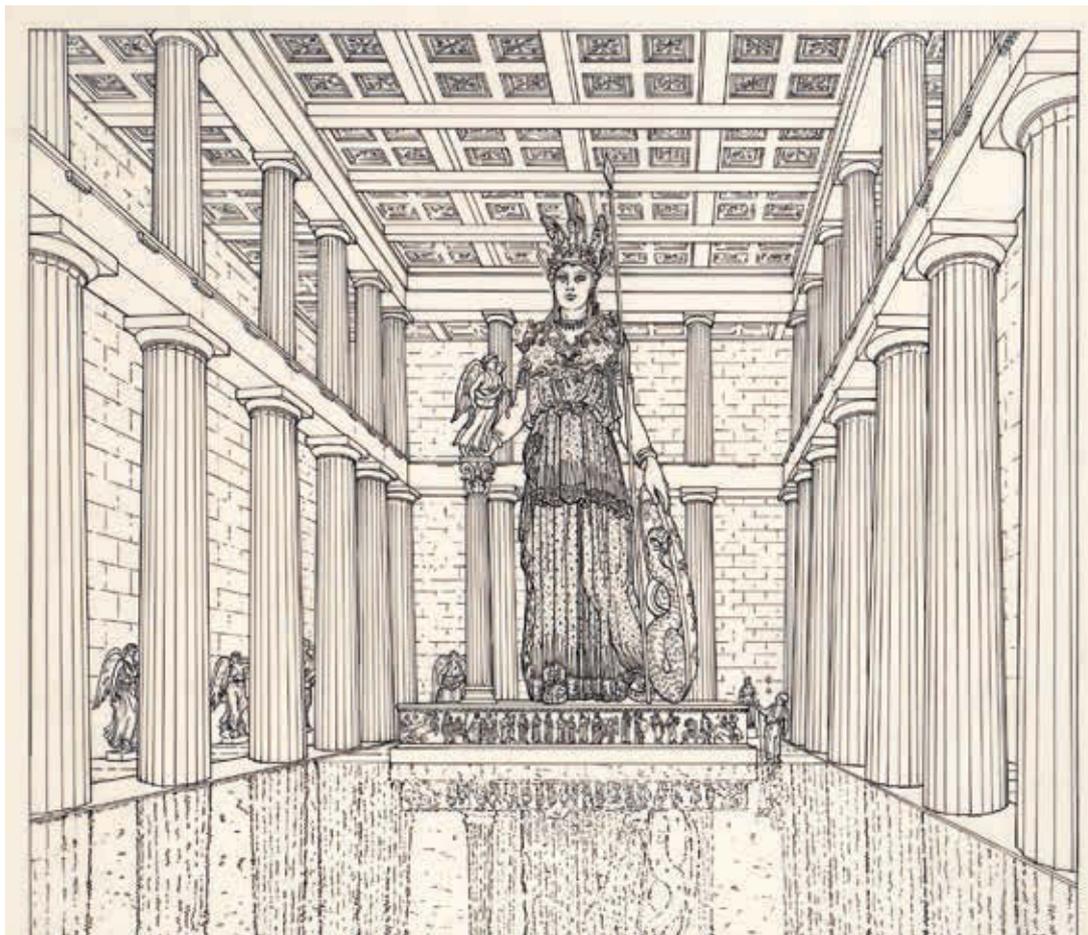
It’s now clear on archaeological grounds that the style they exemplify, the early Classical or Severe Style, postdates the Persian invasion of 480.³⁷ So it seems likely that, in Brunilde Ridgway’s felicitous phrase, they do indeed mark the ‘legal birthday’ of this new Severe Style.³⁸ They break decisively with the sleepwalker pose of the kouros and its derivatives (see figs. 1–2), the mannered formalism of the late archaic period, and the startling realism of some contemporary reliefs and bronze statuettes of athletes. Perhaps this is why Pliny and Pausanias give Kritios and Nesiotes a substantial list of pupils—four generations of them, in fact.³⁹ It is the ancient way of signalling that they innovated stylistically, and that their innovations stuck.

Next, another Severe Style ensemble, the sculptures of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia,

Their contributions to the Severe Style are incremental at best—indeed quite modest when one compares the spectacular bronzes discovered in 1972 in the sea off Riace Marina in Italy, for example.⁴¹ So why include them here?

Simply, because the Olympia Master was the first Greek sculptor to create what we would call a *world*: a rounded, wholly credible *kosmos* of gods, humans, and beasts. His theme is grand: nothing less than the Justice of Zeus.

On the temple’s twelve metopes (fig. 7), Herakles’ inborn talent duly expands under Athena’s mentorship to fill the space allotted to it, taming the earth for humankind. The pediments (figs. 8–9) show the results of such training in the lives of Pelops, Theseus, and Peirithoos, and of their anonymous but obedient families and retainers, when pitted against its opposite, the villainous Oinomaos and the bestial Centaurs. Each class has its own path to tread, its own predetermined destiny to fulfil: *That* is the Justice of Zeus. It is universal, because the gods are omnipresent to enforce it; it is intersocial,



because all responsible participants know and accept their places in it; and it is absolute, as clear-cut as the geometry of the great temple itself. Elitist and conservative, the Olympia Master's sculptures neatly complement and complete the well-ordered fabric—the *kosmos*—of Libon's building. His innovations, then, are thematic and programmatic, not stylistic or iconographic.

Thirdly, we come to Pheidias, generally acknowledged in the ancient world as the greatest of Greek sculptors. But why? First and foremost, perhaps, because of the sheer grandeur of his two most famous works: the Athena Parthenos (fig. 10) and the Zeus at Olympia.⁴² After describing them, Pliny declares that, 'Pheidias is deservedly judged to be the first to have revealed the capabilities and indicated the methods of *toreutic*'.⁴³ Now, *toreutikê* is a Greek technical term. Emphatically not to be translated merely as 'metalwork', still less as 'sculpture', it is the *technê* of metal *embossing* or *repoussé*: of hammering metal sheets into a mould, turning

(above)

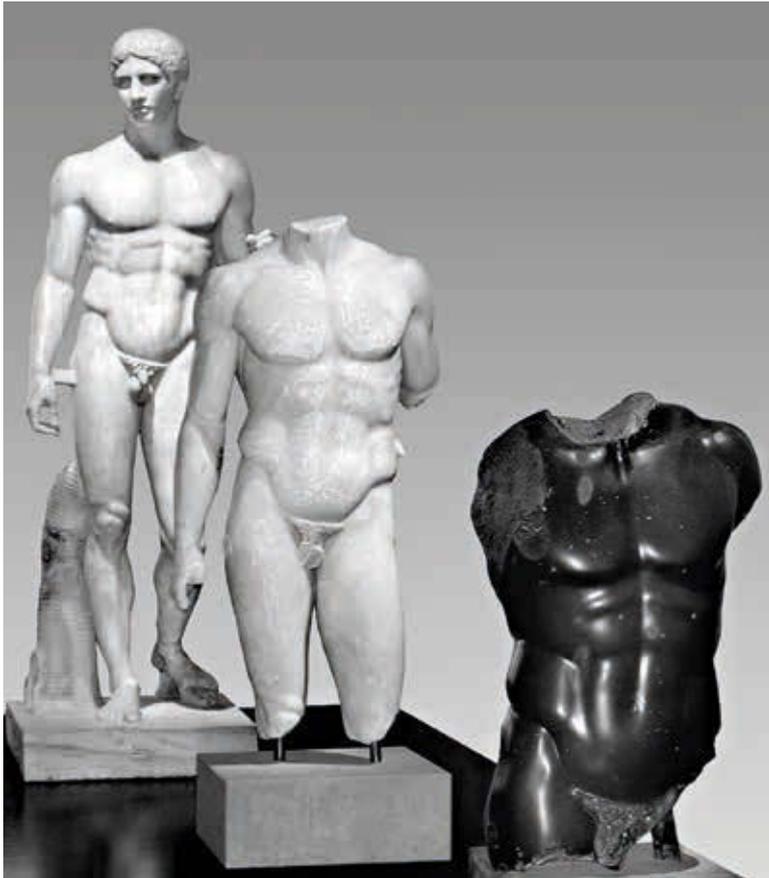
Fig. 10. Reconstruction by Candace Smith and Andrew Stewart of the chryselephantine statue of Athena Parthenos by Pheidias of Athens, 447–438 BC.

COURTESY ANDREW STEWART

(left)

Fig. 11. Silver-gilt repoussé (*toreutic*) sea-shell perfume box from Taranto with a Nereid riding a *ketos*, 3rd century BC.

SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/JULIE WOLF



(above)

Fig. 12. Three Roman copies (marble, marble, and basalt) of the Doryphoros by Polykleitos of Argos, Fig. 4. Bronze original, ca. 440 BC. From left to right: Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples; Staatliche Museen, Berlin; Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Florence.

PHOTO: HANS GOETTE.

them over for final finishing, and assembling them into a larger composition. Used—as it happens—for the Statue of Liberty but rarely practiced today, it receives no space in either the new *Oxford Classical Dictionary* or the new *Grove Dictionary of Classical Art and Architecture*.

Originally a Near-Eastern technique, *toreutikê* is well represented in archaic Greece by works ranging from gold and silver diadems and belts, through the embossed golden drapery of some sixth-century chryselephantine statuettes at Delphi, to the embossed, lifesize silver bull from the same site.⁴⁴ In Classical and Hellenistic times, however, it became a major art form, apparently thanks largely or wholly to Pheidias.

Today, though, only small-scale examples survive, chiefly bronze case-mirrors and Hellenistic silver cosmetic boxes (fig. 11).

So what Pheidias achieved was a tour-de-force of *technê toreutikê* on a colossal scale, using over a ton of beaten gold for each statue, and deftly combining it with ivory, enamel, glass, and other precious and semiprecious materials. The result was two stunning colossi

whose beauty, Quintilian tells us, ‘is said to have added something to the traditional religion; to such an extent is the majesty of the work equal to the majesty of the god’.⁴⁵ Beauty of facture, then, and formal beauty too.

But there is more. The Amazonomachy and Gigantomachy embossed on the exterior and interior, respectively, of the goddess’s shield were but two of the many mythological narratives to embellish these enormous statues. Whereas the Olympia Master had created a world high on the exterior of the god’s house, Pheidias now brought this world inside it, into its very heart. By repeating on the Parthenon several of the temple’s exterior themes (the Amazonomachy and Gigantomachy included), and by adding still others to the Zeus, he both enabled the awed visitor to follow the great chain of being to its source, and channelled the divinity’s cosmic power back to him in response. His innovations, then, were technical, stylistic, iconographic, and programmatic. No wonder the ancient critics regarded him as the greatest of Greek sculptors.

Fourth, Polykleitos and his Doryphoros or Spearbearer (figs. 4, 12).⁴⁶ Here, it seems, we are faced with two innovations, one easily spotted and the other not. The naked warrior had been a staple of Greek sculpture since at least the sixth century. It came in two types: the striding and the standing. Polykleitos’s first innovation was to combine these types into a single, compelling image, by making the statue throw its weight all on one leg, as the pundits immediately noticed and as Pliny duly pointed out.⁴⁷ This posture of mobile repose neatly kills two birds with one stone, proclaiming both the subject’s steadfastness in the landscape and his active engagement with the world.

By contrast, Polykleitos’s second innovation, his perfected proportional system or Canon, which others followed ‘like a law’,⁴⁸ cannot be read directly off the statue (still less its copies)—the reason why no one has yet succeeded in reconstructing it to general approval. At best, it manifested itself only subliminally, unless one read his accompanying textbook. It therefore differs in kind from all the other innovations discussed here. Again, though, such canons were not new. They had been central to Greek sculpture for two centuries, ever since the



first kouros (see fig. 1), but Polykleitos's was apparently the first totally comprehensive and mathematically integrated one. And it was also most difficult to apply: he himself said that perfection comes about 'just barely' through

many numbers, and that 'the work is hardest when the clay is on the fingernail'.⁴⁹

Along with the statue's controlled pose, the Canon enthrones it as an icon of male beauty: the perfectly measured man. This ideal is fourfold, and recalls the sixth-century philosopher Thales' famous statement that he was glad that he was a human being not an animal; a man not a woman; and a Greek not a barbarian.⁵⁰ So:

1. The Doryphoros is a model human being, Nature personified;
2. He represents the best human type, a Greek male;
3. He is a model Greek male, the perfect citizen warrior; and
4. He is an artistic standard or law as well.

A true microcosm—a *kosmos* in a capsule—the Doryphoros was not only innovative iconographically and stylistically, but also represented what any fifth-century intellectual would kill for: a perfect synthesis of nature (*physis*) and culture (*nomos*). Predictably, then, the sources tell us that Pheidias and Polykleitos each inspired a school: two generations of pupils in Pheidias's case, and three in Polykleitos's.⁵¹

Now it may be no coincidence that all these men except for the Olympia Master were metalworkers. Mistakes in this medium are easier to repair, since metals can be recycled and reused but stone cannot—at least, not without considerable piecing and jointing, and sometimes not even then. So in conclusion, we turn to a marble worker, Paionios of Mende. He is known only from two references in ancient literature (one of them almost certainly wrong, as we have seen) and one signed statue.⁵² As noted earlier, Pausanias's remark that he made the east pediment of the Olympia temple can be discarded. This leaves us with his signed Nike erected on a pillar in front of the temple (figs. 13–14).⁵³

Pausanias and the Nike's dedicatory inscription tell us that Paionios made it and the Messenians and Naupaktians dedicated it, presumably after their daring and unconventional victory (alongside the Athenians) over the Spartans at Sphakteria

(top)

Fig. 13. Marble Nike by Paionios of Mende, dedicated at Olympia by the Messenians and Naupaktians, ca. 420 BC. Archaeological Museum, Olympia.

PHOTO: HANS GOETTE.

(bottom)

Fig. 14. Plaster reconstruction of the Nike of Paionios (omitting the 9-metre high pillar she stood on), Fig. 13. Marble original, ca. 420 BC. Archaeological Museum, Olympia.

PHOTO: U.C. BERKELEY PHOTO ARCHIVE.

in 425. Succeeding in marooning a company of Spartans on the island, they achieved a coup hitherto thought impossible: the capture of a hundred and twenty of them alive. The myth of Spartan invincibility had taken a body blow from which it never fully recovered.

Anyone seeing this project in progress must have thought that Paionios had gone completely insane. His statue, carved from a single piece of Parian marble, required a flawless block of it measuring 3 m high x 1.8 m wide x 1.2 m deep, or roughly 10 x 6 x 4 feet. Since marble weighs about 2560 kg per cubic metre or 168 lbs. per cubic foot, this monster would have weighed no less than 16.5 metric tons or 16.25 English tons. How could it be quarried and ferried all the way from the island of Paros to Olympia?

Of course, up to a third of the stone could be removed at source. But roughing out of this kind could only go so far: the delicate projecting parts—wings, cloak, head, arms, and feet—had to be safeguarded at all costs. And when the roughed-out block reached the site, another dilemma presented itself. The Nike had to stand atop a 9-metre or 30-foot high pillar. Cut away too little of the excess, and the task of hoisting and supporting it up there would be all but impossible; cut away too much, and breakage was certain.

So now perhaps we can begin to understand what an awesome feat of sculptural *technê* this was. Paionios's innovations were not stylistic. His bravura drapery style is prefigured on the Parthenon pediments and directly anticipated on the Nike Temple parapet in Athens a few years earlier.⁵⁴ Indeed, if the strong similarities between his work and the Nikai attributed to the parapet's Master B are anything to go by, apparently he pioneered it there.

Instead, Paionios's triumph is a triumph of what art historians call *facture*: of material plus skill. A prudent man would have used bronze, but he chose marble. Yet in his hands, the stone has daringly defied—even negated—its own nature, becoming as supple as bronze and as weightless and insubstantial as gauze. So he has beaten both stone and bronze on their own home turf, just as his Messenian and Naupaktian clients had daringly beaten the supposedly invincible Spartans on theirs.

These innovations are by no means purely technical: they touch the very heart of the

sculpture's meaning and reception. One only has to imagine the eastern sun rising over the sanctuary of Zeus and shining through those translucent marble wings and billowing cloak, in many places less than 1 cm (one-third of an inch) thick, to understand that what he had created was truly an epiphany divine. Bronze could never match it.

Not surprisingly, then, Paionios's inscribed signature deftly exploits all this. Punning on the title of his work, he boasts that he made it 'when he had won (*enika*) the competition for the akroteria of the temple', thus making his clients' victory his own. But even this was not enough. For apparently the first time in Greek sculpture, his Nike brazenly bares a breast. Now this was no innocent 'wardrobe malfunction'.⁵⁵ A culture that instinctively gendered the spectator as male, carefully shielded its women from the prying eyes of strangers, anxiously defended the prerogatives of the gods, and regarded vision as long-distance touch, would see this gorgeous, provocative young woman as ravishingly sexy and inviting. Victory teasingly presents herself in the flesh—and what flesh!

So if this essay has achieved nothing else, it may serve as a reminder of the centrality of individuality and innovation in the ancient understanding of Greek art, and of the need to credit them properly when we study it. Moreover, perhaps it is now clear how varied these innovations could be, at least in the field of sculpture, and how diversely and decisively the individual sculptor could put his own stamp upon his work. ¶



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1. This is an edited version of the Australian Academy of the Humanities' Trendall Lecture given in Sydney on Friday 18 January 2013. I thank Graeme Clark and the Academy for inviting me, and also the Australasian Society for Classical Studies for the warm reception my wife Darlis Wood and I received during our stay in Australia.
2. See K. Junker and S. Strohwalde, *Götter als Erfinder: die Entstehung der Kultur in der griechischen Kunst* (Darmstadt/Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2012).
3. See A. Kleingünther, 'Protos Heures': *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte einer Fragestellung* (*Philologus* supplement 26.1, Göttingen, 1933).
4. See J. J. Pollitt, *The Ancient View of Greek Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 32–7.
5. Diodorus Siculus 5.55, 64; Strabo 14.2.7; etc.
6. Diodorus Siculus 4.76.
7. Euthykartides: A. Stewart, *Greek Sculpture: An Exploration* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 22, fig. 40; J. Boardman, *Greek Sculpture: The Archaic Period* (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991), p. 21, fig. 56. Ischia: Boardman, *Early Greek Vase Painting* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998), p. 53, fig. 162.
8. A. Burford, *Craftsmen in Greek and Roman Society* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972), p. 212.
9. Lucian, *Rhetorum Praeceptor* 9.
10. Quoted by Porphyry, *de Abstinentia* 2.18.
11. Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.4.3; Plato, *Meno* 91D; Plato, *Hippias Major* 290A; Plato, *Protagoras* 328C; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.7.1, 1141a9–12; Aristotle, *Poetics* 6, 1450a25–8; Aristotle, *Politics* 8.5.7, 1340a35–40.
12. Poseidippos 62 ed. Austin and Bastianini.
13. Pliny, *Natural History* 1.34; 34.61 (Lysippos); cf. 35.79–89 (Apelles, Alexander, and Ptolemy I); see Pollitt, pp. 77–8 for sources, bibliography, and discussion.
14. See Pollitt, pp. 74–7 for sources, bibliography, and discussion.
15. For full information on these early attributions and those that follow, see Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500–1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).
16. Stewart, figs. 300 (Diskobolos), 626 (Tyche); Boardman, *Greek Sculpture: The Classical Period* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), fig. 60 (Diskobolos); Boardman, *Greek Sculpture: The Late Classical Period* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995), fig. 29 (Ganymede).
17. *Geschichte der griechischen Künstler* (Braunschweig: C.A. Schwetschke und Sohn, 1853–1859).
18. Adolf Furtwängler, *Meisterwerke der griechischen Plastik. Kunstgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Leipzig and Berlin: Giesecke and Devrient, 1893); published in English as *Masterpieces of Greek Sculpture: A Series of Essays on the History of Art* (London: W. Heinemann, 1895).
19. A. Michaelis, *Ein Jahrhundert kunstarchäologischer Entdeckungen* (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1908), pp. 301–7; published in English as *A Century of Archaeological Discoveries* (London: J. Murray, 1908).
20. See esp. G. Krahe, 'Stilphasen der hellenistischen Plastik', *Römische Mitteilungen*, 38–39 (1923–24), pp. 138–184; and 'Die einansichtige Gruppe und der späthellenistischen Kunst', *Nachrichten von der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, 1927, Phil.-Hist. Klasse 1, pp. 53–91. G. von Kaschnitz-Weinberg, *Die mittellmeerischen Grundlagen der antiken Kunst* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1944); and his posthumously published *Die eurasischen Grundlagen der antiken Kunst* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1961) and *Ausgewählte Schriften* (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann, 1965).
21. G. Despinis, *Symvoli sti Meleti tou Ergou tou Agorakritou* (Athens: Hermes, 1971); O. Palagia, *Euphranor* (Leiden: Brill, 1980); P. Moreno, *Testimonianze per la teoria artistica di Lisippo* (Treviso: Libreria editrice Canova, 1973); Moreno, *Vita e arte di Lisippo* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1987); and Moreno, *Lisippo: l'arte e la fortuna* (Milan: Fabbri, 1995); A. Corso, *The Art of Praxiteles*, 4 vols. (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2004–present); Stewart, *Skopos of Paros* (Park Ridge, NJ: Noyes Press, 1977); A. Pasquier and J.-L. Martinez (eds.), *Praxitèle* (Paris: Musée du Louvre and Somogy, 2007).
22. Carpenter, *Greek Sculpture: A Critical Review* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).
23. *Classical Review* N.S. 12 (1962), pp. 287–90.
24. Carpenter, pp. v–viii.
25. B. S. Ridgway, *The Severe Style in Greek Sculpture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970); *The Archaic Style in Greek Sculpture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977); *Fifth-Century Styles in Greek Sculpture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); *Fourth-Century Styles in Greek Sculpture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997); *Hellenistic Sculpture I–III* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990–2002).
26. R. Wollheim, *Art and Its Objects* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 145.
27. C. H. Hallett, 'Emulation versus Replication: The Art of Roman Copying', *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 18 (2005), 419–35, at p. 419, summarising the work of these German scholars and reviewing (i) *The Ancient Art of Emulation: Studies in Artistic Originality and*

- Tradition from the Present to Antiquity*, ed. by E.K. Gazda (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2002); and (2) E. Perry, *The Aesthetics of Emulation in the Visual Arts of the Ancient Romans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); cf. also (3) M. Marvin, *The Language of the Muses: The Dialogue between Roman and Greek Sculpture* (Malibu: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2008).
28. Despinis, passim; and, e.g., Despinis, 'Klassische Skulpturen von der Athener Akropolis', *Athenische Mitteilungen* 123 (2008), pp. 235–340, at pp. 301–4 (list).
 29. C. Landwehr, *Die antiken Gipsabgüsse aus Baiae: griechische Bronzestatuen in Abgüssen römischer Zeit* (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann, 1985).
 30. Hallett, p. 435.
 31. Pliny, 34.47: *aemulatus est ut vix ulla differentia esset artis*.
 32. Koortbojian, in Gazda (ed.), p. 179.
 33. See K. A. Ericsson, R. T. Krampe and C. Tesch-Römer, 'The Role of Deliberate Practice in the Acquisition of Expert Performance', *Psychological Review* 100.3 (July 1993), 363–406; R. Sennett, *The Craftsman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); for the ancient world, Burford, pp. 87–93 remains fundamental even though many specialised contributions to the subject have appeared in the interim.
 34. *Jiro Dreams of Sushi*, directed by David Gelb, starring Jiro Ono and Yoshikazu Ono (Magnolia Pictures, 2011).
 35. Pliny, 35.76.
 36. Lucian, *Rhet. Praec.* 9. For the evidence, see S. Brunnsåker, *The Tyrant-Slayers of Kritios and Nesiotas: A Critical Study of the Sources and Reconstructions* (Stockholm: Svenska Institutet i Athen, 1971); updates, Stewart, *Greek Sculpture*, pp. 135–6, 251–2, figs. 227–31; Boardman, *Classical Period*, pp. 24–5, figs. 3–9; Stewart, *Classical Greece and the Birth of Western Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 70–74.
 37. Stewart, 'The Persian and Carthaginian Invasions of 480 BCE and the Beginning of the Classical Style in Greek Sculpture', *American Journal of Archaeology* 112 (2008), 377–412, 581–615; Stewart, *Classical Greece*, pp. 52–63 (summary). This lower chronology has been adopted by the new Akropolis Museum for the labels of its late archaic and early classical sculptures, and also underpinned a recent exhibition at the Liebieghaus in Frankfurt: see *Zurück zur Klassik: ein neuer Blick auf das alte Griechenland: eine Ausstellung der Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung, Frankfurt am Main, 8. Februar bis 26. Mai 2013*, ed. by V. Brinkmann (München: Hirmer, and Frankfurt am Main: Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung, 2013).
 38. Ridgway, *Severe Style*, p. 12.
 39. Pliny, 34.85; Pausanias 6.3.5; both misspell his name, respectively calling him Critias and Kritias; a not uncommon name, it is often misspelt this way.
 40. Pausanias 5.10.2–10; Stewart, *Greek Sculpture*, pp. 142–6, 253–4, figs. 262–84; Boardman, *Classical Period*, pp. 33–50, figs. 23–6.
 41. Stewart, *Greek Sculpture*, pp. 147–8, figs. 292–6; Boardman, *Classical Period*, pp. 53–4, figs. 38–9; update, Stewart, *Classical Greece*, pp. 88–101.
 42. Stewart, *Greek Sculpture*, pp. 150–160, 257–263, figs. 361–375; Boardman, *Classical Period*, pp. 110–2, 204, figs. 97–110, 181–2; update, Stewart, *Classical Greece*, pp. 134–43; see, most recently, C. Cullen Davison, *Pheidias: The Sculptures and Ancient Sources* (London: Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supplement 105, 2009).
 43. Pliny, 34.54.
 44. For good colour photographs of these stunning discoveries, see D. Musti et al., *L'Oro dei Greci* (Novara: Istituto Geografico DeAgostini, 1992), figs. 96.1–9; also B. C. Petracos, *Delphi* (Athens: Esperos, 1971), pls. 21–33.
 45. *Institutio Oratoria* 12.10.9.
 46. Stewart, *Greek Sculpture*, pp. 160–3, 263–6, figs. 378–82; Boardman, *Classical Period*, pp. 205–6, figs. 184–7; update, Stewart, *Classical Greece*, pp. 144–8.
 47. Pliny, 34.56.
 48. Pliny, 34.55.
 49. Philo Mechanicus 4.1, 49.20; Plutarch, *Moralia* 86A, 636B–C.
 50. Diogenes Laertius 1.33.
 51. Pliny, 34.50 (Polykleitan school); 34.87; 35.54; 36.16, 17 (Pheidian school).
 52. Pausanias 5.10.6, 26.1; W. Dittenberger and K. Purgold, *Die Inschriften von Olympia (Olympia vol. 5, Berlin: A. Asher, 1895)*, pp. 378–84, no. 259 (Nike: dedication and signature).
 53. Stewart, *Greek Sculpture*, pp. 89–92, 165, 271, figs. 408–11; Boardman, *Classical Period*, p. 176, fig. 139; update, Stewart, *Classical Greece*, pp. 189–202.
 54. Stewart, *Greek Sculpture*, pp. 166–67, figs. 419–24; Boardman, *Classical Period*, pp. 149–50, figs. 129–30; update, Stewart, *Classical Greece*, pp. 198–202.
 55. Coined by singers Justin Timberlake and Janet Jackson on 1 February 2004, to explain the former's bodice-ripping antics during the televised United States Super Bowl XXXVIII halftime show.

FIFTY YEARS OF

Australian Literary Studies

» PHILIP MEAD



In 2013 the scholarly journal *Australian Literary Studies* reached fifty years of publication. At the University of Queensland, in November, at the celebration to mark this notable achievement, Michael Wilding spoke about the history of the journal, emphasising its role as the first ‘fully professional’ journal of Australian literature. Over the years since the journal was founded commentary and scholarship about Australian literature by ‘non-professionals’ like ‘journalists, clergymen, printers and writers’ and by independent scholars like A. A. Phillips or Nettie Palmer, has gradually given way to the work of professional (that is university or university-affiliated) critics, editors, literary historians and biographers.¹ *ALS*, as everyone knows it, has been a dynamic centre of activity within that cultural development. Wilding also admitted that he may have been attracted to buying the first issue in a bookshop by Leonie Kramer’s article on Adam Lindsay Gordon, who had gone to the same school as him.

The first issue opened with J. C. Horner’s defence of Henry Kingsley’s genially imperialist romance *The Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn* (1859). As well as Kramer’s article, it also included H. P. Heseltine’s study of J. Le Gay Brereton and A. G. Stephens’s *Bulletin*, Ellen Malos’s article on themes in Katharine Susannah Prichard’s fiction, as well as notes,

documents and reviews of Judith Wright’s stories, of Rawlings’ biography of Charles Harpur (by A. D. Hope), of Hadgraft’s scholarly edition of the ‘plausible liar’ Henry Savery’s convict narrative *Quintus Servinton* (by Brian Elliott), and of a comparative study of nineteenth-century Australian and Canadian poetry. The serious infrastructural intentions of the journal are signalled in founding editor Laurie Hergenhan’s brief note on the final page about the publication of an annotated bibliography of Bernard O’Dowd, No. 12 in Walter Stone’s series *Studies in Australian Bibliography*. This item presages what would become a core contribution of the journal to the development of professional literary studies in Australia, its ‘Annual Bibliography of Studies in Australian Literature’ (from 1964). The bibliography was an important forerunner of the comprehensive, online *AustLit* Resource (from 2002). The dearness of this aspect of *ALS* to Hergenhan’s editorial heart is obvious from his account of the role of bibliography and book history in his 2013 memoir: ‘[Stone’s series] served as a reminder that amateurs and enthusiasts like Stone, book collectors, printers and antiquarians had helped to keep Australian literature alive at a time when it was neglected by the academy.’² *ALS*, as Hergenhan recounts, ‘was intended as a journal not only of literary criticism but of *information*’.³ I don’t know if

(background)

An appreciative audience at the *ALS* 50th celebration.

PHOTO: ANDREW YEO
FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF
QUEENSLAND LIBRARY

(left inset)

Editor Leigh Dale speaking at the 50th celebration.

PHOTO: ANDREW YEO
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(right inset)

Laurie Hergenhan AO FAHA cutting the 50th anniversary cake.

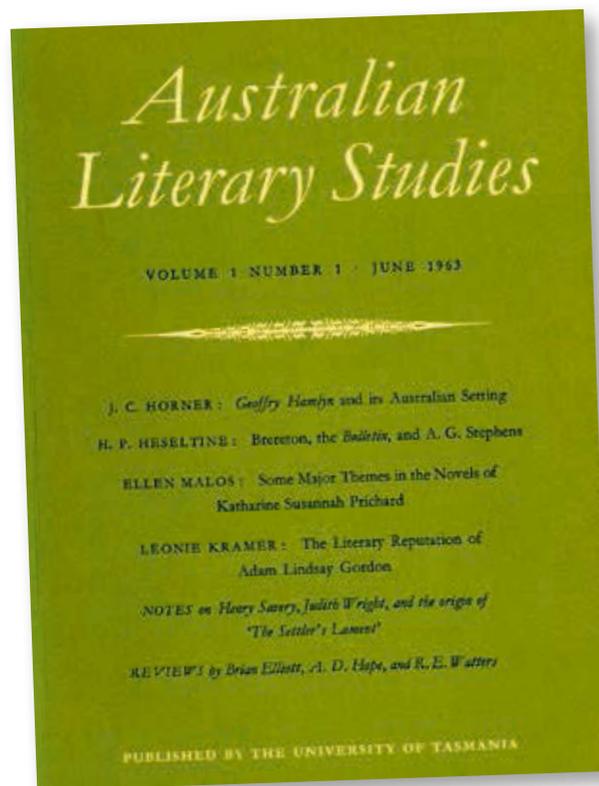
PHOTO: ANDREW YEO
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Hergenhan deliberately designed it that way but the cover livery of the first issue is a version of the 'national' colours, with print in the sere yellow of desert ruins, against a background of drab field-uniform green.

ALS began at the University of Tasmania in 1963, when that university was a dynamic and productive locus of studies in Australian literature, past and present. E. Morris Miller had published his bibliography *Australian Literature from its Beginnings* in 1940 and his *Pressmen and Governors: Australian Editors and Writers in Early Tasmania* in 1952. Laurie Hergenhan was a Lecturer in the English Department. A Sydney and London trained Victorianist, he was then embarking on authoritative critical studies of convict fiction. In his memoir in *ALS's '50 Years of Publication'* issue Hergenhan gives an account of the beginnings of the journal, the 'brain child' of 'two poets and professors, James McAuley and his friend Alec Hope'.⁴ Its first editorial committee included the then University of Tasmania librarian, bibliographer and print historian D. H. Borchardt, McAuley (recently appointed Professor of English), librarian, ex-Vice Chancellor and Professor of Philosophy and Psychology E. Morris Miller, Michael Roe from the History Department and Edward Stokes from English. McAuley had co-founded the polemical *Quadrant* in 1956; Borchardt, also a discipline-builder, would found the scholarly journal *Australian Academic and Research Libraries*, in 1970. A revealing aspect of *ALS's* inception was A. D. Hope's attraction to a North American model of professionalisation

in university humanist studies. As Hergenhan recalls, Hope had visited the United States in 1958 as a Carnegie Fellow to study the university teaching of its literature as providing a guide to what might be done in Australia. In celebrating twenty years of *ALS*, Hope repeated what he had said at its launch, that the pioneering academic journal *American Studies* (dating from the 1920s) seemed to him to foreshadow a possible role for an Australian academic journal in 'providing a centre for the exchange of views and information, a forum for scholarship in the field [...] a record of historical and bibliographical reference'.⁵

That opening article of Horner's about *Geoffrey Hamlyn* would have made writers like Miles Franklin, Joseph Furphy and Prichard splutter with fury, with its partiality to Kingsley's destination marketing, for English readers, of the summery



Australian countryside. But that's not the whole story. Wilding makes the point that Hergenhan's editorial instinct was to avoid a dependency on the critical orthodoxies of the time. Perhaps Wilding's observation is one only a transnational scholar, with a fellow feeling for Adam Lindsay Gordon, and who has made a major contribution to Marcus Clarke scholarship, could make. At any rate, Wilding reads Horner and Kramer's articles on obviously non-native writers as 'against the developing nationalist trend' of the 1960s, a trend that was at the same time driving the slow infusion of Australian literature teaching into traditionally English university curricula. A related provocation, Wilding suggests, was his own article in *ALS* ('DHL in Australia', 1980) about D. H. Lawrence's *Kangaroo*, the

(above)
Cover of the first issue of *ALS*.
COURTESY *ALS*

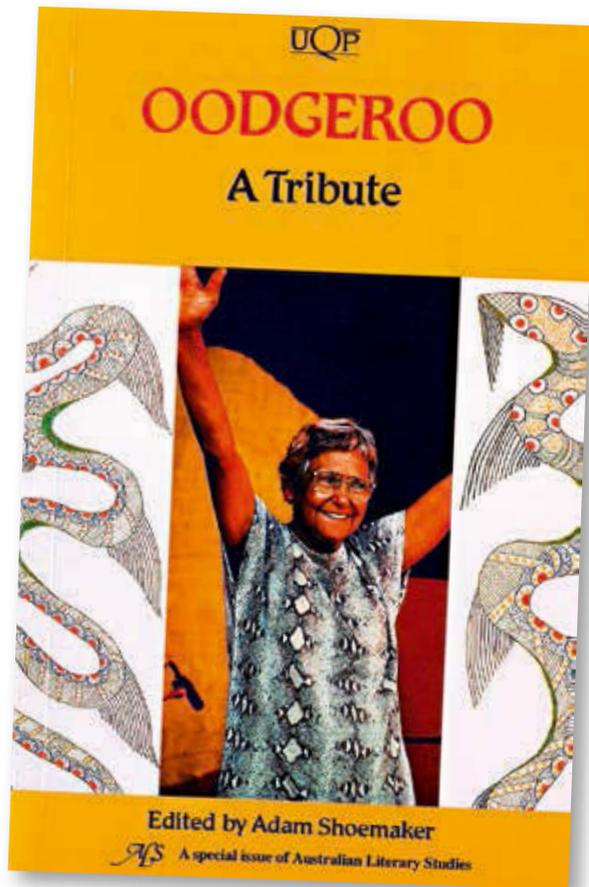
'bête noir of the nationalists'. Referring to a kangaroo as a bête noir is walking on the wild side. Wilding is certainly right to recognise Hergenhan's impulse to 'extend the traditional concerns of literary criticism and [...] the conception of what was acceptable beyond the literary'.⁶ And at the beginning of his memoir Hergenhan emphasises his sense of the journal's responsive and developing career, 'its changing relationship with its readerships, with universities, and with the public promotion of Australian literature'.⁷ This is a legacy of alertness to boundaries and sources of literary and critical innovation that the evolving discipline of literary studies in Australia is deeply indebted to, and that is extended into the present by ALS's second editor, Leigh Dale, of Wollongong University.

Against the New Critical orthodoxy about the irrelevance, to understanding literary texts, of the author's biography or intentions, Hergenhan published interviews with writers (Ann Whitehead with Christina Stead, for example) and incorporated genre writing into serious literary study (Stephen Knight on 'Carter Brown'). For my generation, one landmark issue of the journal was the 'New Writing in Australia' special issue of October 1977 (8.2), with its acknowledgement of American avant-garde influences on writers of the late 1960s. The first line of Charles Olson's 'The Kingfishers', the opening poem of Donald Allen's *The New American Poetry* (1960), was the rubric over this issue: 'What does not change | is the will to change'. Surveys of poetry, fiction and little magazines from Frank Moorhouse,

Peter Carey, Carl Harrison-Ford and Martin Duwell, statements in poetics and cultural politics from John Tranter, Jennifer Maiden, Vicki Viidikas, Robert Kenny, questionnaires from a large sample of new writers of the time, all created a rich dissensus from an exuberant period in Australian literary culture.

Again, there was a useful bibliographical addition of 'A Checklist of New Writing in Australia'. Another memorable special issue was the warmly celebratory Oodgeroo tribute of 1994 (16.4), guest edited by Adam Shoemaker. In 1988 a special issue appeared in the form of *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia* (13.4). Here also Hergenhan's impulse is one of critique: 'why a "new" literary history of Australia

when there has been no lack of histories, including recent ones?'⁸ In this multi-authored volume, unsettled by reorientations about the national that were occasioned by the bicentennial 'celebration', Hergenhan argues that literary historiography needs regularly to re-examine the limits of its provincial and derivative practices. The 'New' here refers to the sense that such 'history needs to be reconceived: that approaches to the past do not simply reveal, they help to create it'. This literary history was designed to balance narrative and analysis and to avoid arbitrary divisions into 'periods predetermined by metaphors of progress or evolution', or rigid generic categories, or assumptions



(above)

Cover of the special issue Oodgeroo tribute of 1994 (16.4), guest edited by Adam Shoemaker.

COURTESY ALS

of hierarchised literary value.⁹ Chapters about melodrama, romance, documentary, speculative fiction, censorship, and literary production were included for the first time in an Australian literary history. Twenty-five years later, Paul Giles's article in the fiftieth-year *ALS*, 'English Studies in Australia: Repositioning the Subject', takes up Hergenhan's counsel with its call for a more 'coherent and characteristically antipodean approach to literary history', with its updated view to North American 'historical literacy' and to Asia's Australia.¹⁰

Hergenhan's impulse to seek archimedean points of observation on Australian literature is also reflected in another special issue, of 1991 (15.2), *European Perspectives: Contemporary Essays on Australian Literature*. This first collection devoted solely to studies in Australian literature by overseas critics drew Australian literature into debates on Eurocentrism and its complicated relations to Commonwealth Studies, national literature/

Gerhard Stilz, Lars Jensen) and by European-based Australianists like Russell West-Pavlov and his empirical study of translations of Australian literary works in the German Democratic Republic.

But there is something else that has very noticeably occurred over the course of *ALS*'s career, and it is clearly signalled in the titles of the fiftieth-year number, 'The English Issue', and of Leigh Dale's introduction, 'Reading English'. Editors Leigh Dale and Tanya Dalziell would be well aware of the estrangement effect of such an emphasis on 'English' in a milestone issue of the canonical journal of Australian literary studies. The change they are signalling is clear. They couldn't be less worried about national literature, or national identity, or national anything. What they *are* worried about, though, is the 'discipline'. Dale's introductory essay frames the issue as providing a series of 'snapshots' of 'the discipline of English at universities in the

CHAPTERS ABOUT MELODRAMA, ROMANCE, DOCUMENTARY, SPECULATIVE FICTION, CENSORSHIP, AND LITERARY PRODUCTION WERE INCLUDED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN AN AUSTRALIAN LITERARY HISTORY.

new literature paradigms, and postcolonial thinking. These European critical perspectives often fastened on to the literary-geographical imagination, not surprisingly, given 'Australia's' outline in the cartographic history of European discovery and exploration, its exotic, imaginary existence at the antipodes. Giovanna Capone, the Bologna-based editor of this *ALS* issue, rightly acknowledged the emergence of Indigenous and 'ethnic' (or multicultural) writers and was quick to recognise the transplantation in Australian writing of European idealism: McAuley's Quiros and his mythical Australia of the Holy Spirit; Patrick White's Laura Trevelyn and her 'Knowledge was never a matter of geography'. Together with the European Australian Studies Association, which had its inaugural conference in the same year, the 1991 *European Perspectives ALS* has fostered an environment for important, independent work on Australian literature by European critics (Xavier Pons,

Australasian region'.¹¹ This comparativist perspective includes articles by English studies scholars in India and New Zealand. It also finds space for acknowledgement of the wider discourse about the modern university, some of 'the most interesting' of which, as Dale argues, comes from North American literary scholars like Frank Donohue, Christopher Newfield and Sheila Slaughter.¹² The depth of Dale's interest in the history of English disciplinarity in Australia is no doubt a motivating factor in this issue. Her *Enchantment of English: Professing English Literatures in Australian Universities* (Sydney University Press, 2012) is essential reading for anyone involved with the humanities in Australia. Dale had previously presented, when Reviews Editor of *ALS*, a 'New Directions' section in a 1999 issue of the journal about the need for 'some "paradigm shifts" in thinking about Australian literary culture'.¹³ Once again the North American paradigm is influential: this set of

three articles (by Dale herself, David Carter and Gillian Whitlock) took its cue from the Modern Language Association's Association of Departments of English section with its focus on the 'state of the discipline'. The concerns in these three perspectives make an interesting comparison with those in the fiftieth-year 'English' issue of *ALS*; all sorts of things have shifted in the intervening years. The fiftieth-year issue provides multiple viewpoints on local variations in English studies, with some more panoramic approaches, like Paul Giles's and Vijay Mishra's. Clearly, the articles here provide a map of new thinking about disciplinarity, *after* the post-disciplinary turn of previous decades. It is significant, for instance, that Anthony Uhlmann's article about the founding of the Australian University Heads of English initiative appears in this issue.

But there is a regretful note in the midst of this anniversary that I think it is important to recognise. In Hergenhan's memoir he devotes considerable space to explaining the context around the final divergence in 1997 of *ALS* and the Literature Board of the Australia Council, which had helped subsidise the journal, an arrangement inherited from the Board's precursor, the Commonwealth Literary Fund (1908–1973). Contributing to this bureaucratic rift were complex seismic shifts in literary and academic culture, publishing, and arts funding budgets and policies. Editorials in *ALS* criticised the Board's decision strongly, but Hergenhan's memoir is concerned to present a balanced view. Can the cultural problem he draws attention to be resolved? How might *ALS* (or any journal of literary research and scholarship, for that matter) that helps to 'conserve a literary heritage' be re-integrated into contemporary Australian cultural policy?

When *ALS* started out as an intellectual and scholarly project in the professionalised study of Australian literature, then marginalised as a sub-literature in the discipline of English, there was virtually no discourse in Australia, at least publically or formally, about disciplines, or departments of knowledge. And certainly not in terms of their local territorialisation and development. English, then, was just a subject, an English subject in every sense, a settled and naturalised bit of educational and

cultural infrastructure. Now, evidently, *ALS* has evolved into (Australian) Literary Studies, a wide-reaching journal of literary studies in Australia. It remains one of the primary resources for (post-nationalising) knowledge about Australian literature but it also continues to be one of the important forums in which the conversation about the history, theory and practice of literary studies, or English as it is trending back to, is conducted in this country. ¶



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1. Michael Wilding, 'History of Scholarly Journals Writ Large', *The Australian*, 20 November 2013, <<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/higher-education/opinion/history-of-scholarly-journals-writ-large/story-e6frgcko-1226763586591#>> [accessed 9 February 2014].
2. Laurie Hergenhan, 'Editing *ALS*: A Memoir', *Australian Literary Studies*, 28:1–2 (May–June, 2013), p. 19.
3. Hergenhan, 'Editing *ALS*', p. 18.
4. Hergenhan, 'Editing *ALS*', p. 15.
5. Hergenhan, 'Editing *ALS*', p. 16.
6. Wilding.
7. Hergenhan, 'Editing *ALS*', p. 15.
8. Laurie Hergenhan, 'General Introduction', in *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia*, ed. by Laurie Hergenhan (Ringwood: Penguin, 1988); *Australian Literary Studies* 13:4 (October 1988), p. xi.
9. Hergenhan, 'General Introduction', pp. xvi–xvii.
10. Paul Giles, 'English Studies in Australia: Repositioning the Subject', *Australian Literary Studies* 28:1–2 (May–June, 2013), p. 36.
11. Leigh Dale, 'Reading English', *Australian Literary Studies* 28:1–2 (May–June, 2013), p. 1.
12. Dale, 'Reading English', p. 5.
13. Leigh Dale, 'New Directions: Introduction', *Australian Literary Studies* 19:2 (October 1999), p. 131.

» IAN TEMPLEMAN



The tilting, slightly melancholy house above the lake, with a half-eaten moon by Ian Templeman. 2013, oil on canvas, 60 x 60cm.

COURTESY
CAROLINE FULTON

Snapshot

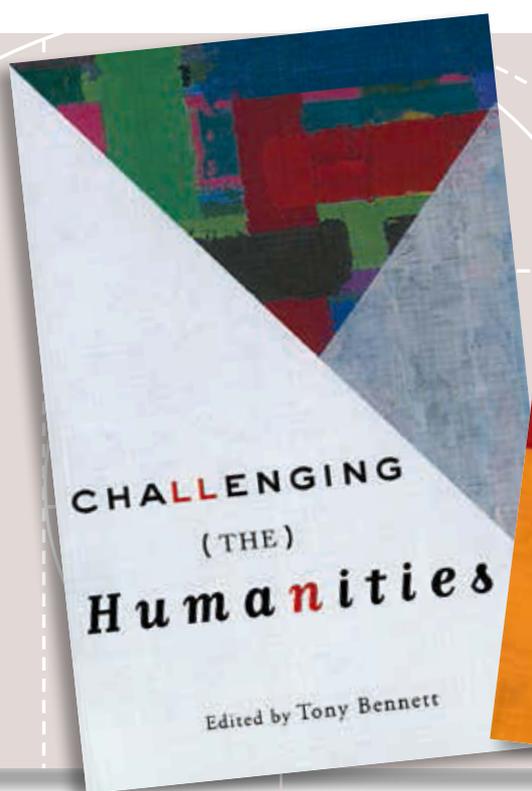
Postcards, maps, snapshots pasted haphazardly
in the scrapbook trace the brief shared years;
falling days when the sky responded awkwardly
to our passion for flight, when childhood fears
muffled laughter or love was given other names.
The photographs trace the incomplete moment,
a happiness is misplaced between exposed frames,
lost is the off-camera dance—intimate vibrant.

Within three summers we built an intricate
honeycomb of images to house the heart's language,
indexed landmarks, heathland, dry thicket
of this border country where we are held hostage.

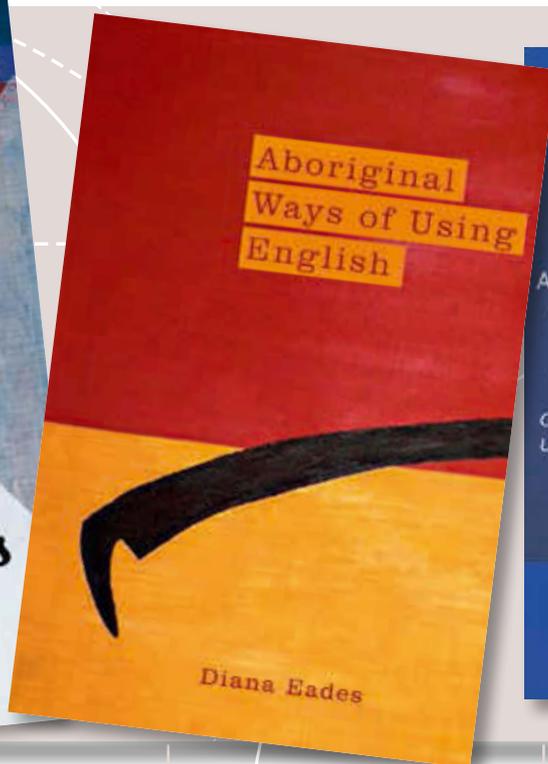
Temporary prisoners we document yesterday,
listen to frontier gossip, travellers' hearsay.

Ex Libris

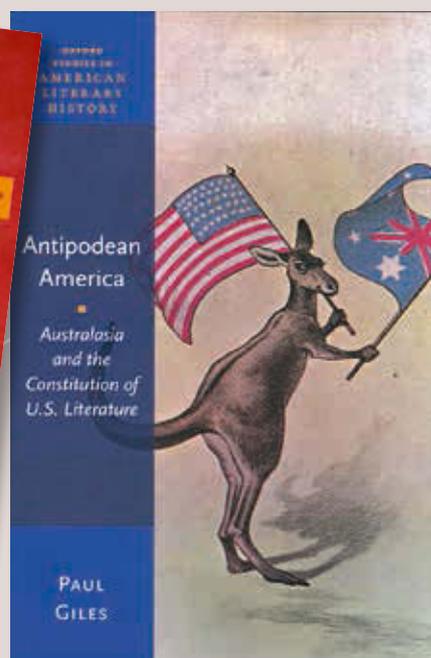
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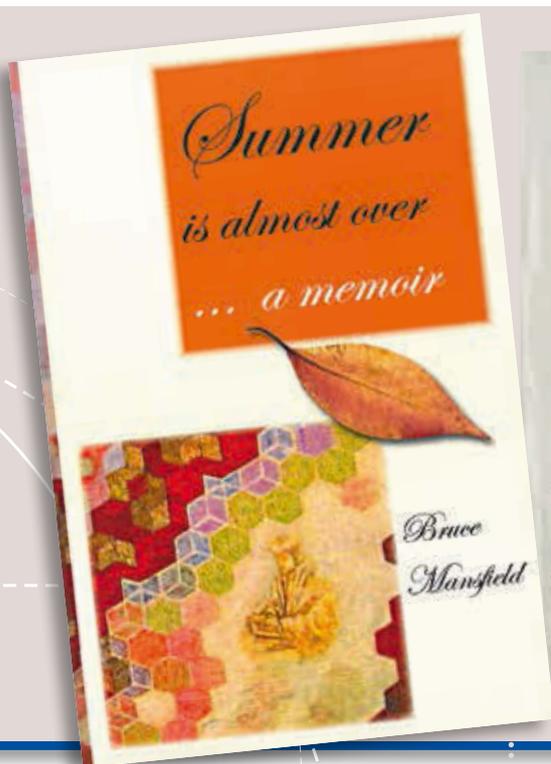


Diana Eades,
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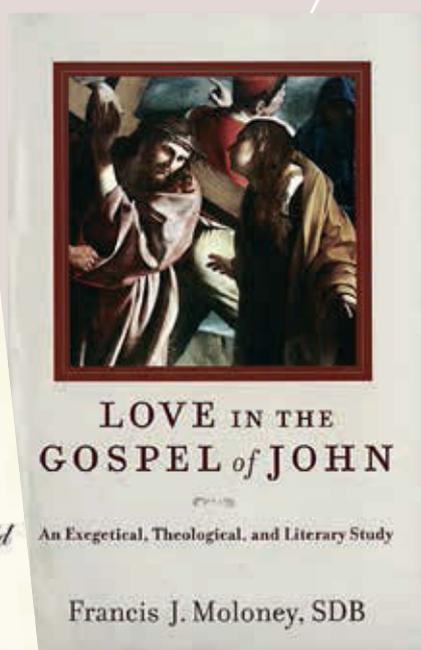


Paul Giles,
Antipodean America: Australasia and the Constitution of U. S. Literature
Oxford Studies in American Literary History series,
(New York: Oxford University Press, 2013)
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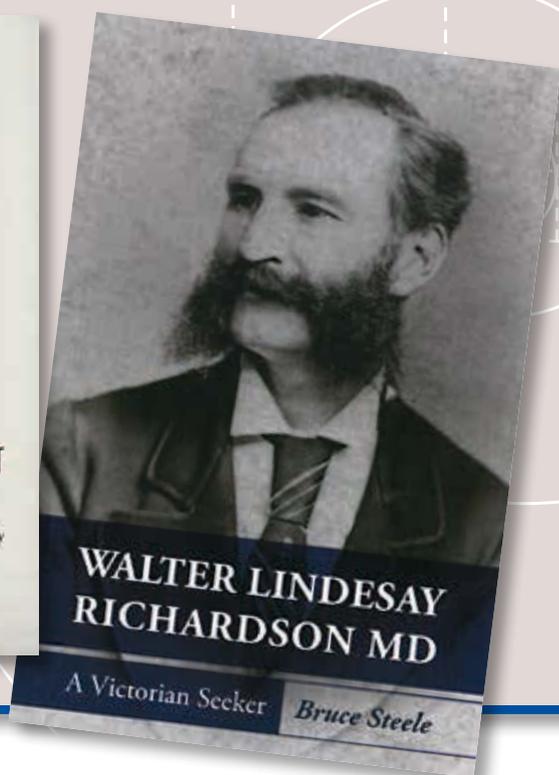
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**Love in the Gospel
of John: An Exegetical,
Theological, and
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(Grand Rapids, MI: Baker
Academic, 2013)
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MD: A Victorian Seeker**
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