



Editor's Introduction

» GRAHAM TULLOCH

This year's issue of *Humanities Australia* continues the tradition of showing the range and vitality of humanities research through articles by Fellows of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. The articles in this issue cover a wide range of topics and, typically for contemporary research in the humanities, they often extend beyond one discipline to interdisciplinary study. We are also proud to feature in this issue articles by the joint recipients of the 2016 Max Crawford Medal, awarded by the Academy to an Australia-based early career scholar for outstanding achievement in the humanities.

Kim Scott's Academy Lecture 'Not Just Warriors or Victims', was given to great acclaim at the Annual Symposium in Fremantle in November 2017. As one of the Noongar people of south-western Australia and as a novelist, Scott draws on his childhood memories, his work in promoting Indigenous identity, and his experience as a creative writer. Beginning with his childhood encounter with Tom Sawyer and the Injun Joe, the ill-treated Indigenous 'baddy' of the story, he explores ways in which Indigenous people can avoid stereotyping themselves as only either victims of colonialism or fighters against it. He turns to the historical record to demonstrate how the productive and proactive engagement of Indigenous people with newly arrived Europeans cannot be confined within these two roles. Nor is it productive, he

argues, for today's Aboriginal people to limit themselves to victims or warriors. Scott then discusses his own involvement with a project of cultural recovery of the Noongar people through exploration of their country and their language.

Tony Bennett's article also explores issues of Indigenous identity but from a completely different point of view. Starting from a very familiar object, the AIATSIS map of Aboriginal Australia, he shows how the work of anthropologists has changed the way Indigenous Australians are perceived, moving 'away from the racial paradigm that had followed in the wake of [Baldwin] Spencer's work and toward the territorial differentiation of Aboriginal cultures.' Norman Tindale of the South Australian Museum is a key figure in this transition in Australia, particularly through his publication in 1940 of a map that, after going through various iterations, became in 1974 the now familiar AIATSIS map. Bennett then goes on to show how widespread and important the influence of the ideas lying behind this transition became.

The two 2016 Crawford Medallists have written articles which put traditional humanities research into close contact with our contemporary world and its issues and challenges. Louise Richardson-Self brings a philosopher's insights to a discussion of the same-sex marriage debate. Having written extensively on the arguments in favour of same-sex marriage, she now turns to the arguments

(above)
Academy
Secretariat,
Canberra, Australia.

PHOTO: AAH ARCHIVES

against same-sex marriage as they were exhibited in the recent plebiscite. She notes that very few of those supporting the “No” case based their arguments on opposition to same-sex relations. Instead, most of the argument centred around issues of religious freedom, education and freedom of expression. Although the majority of Australians supported same-sex marriage, these issues did resonate with some Australians and by deploying them the “No” Campaign achieved a modest success in reducing the size of the “Yes” vote. Richardson-Self ends by drawing out some of the implications of this success.

David McInnis, the other Crawford Medallist, works within what has traditionally been one of the mainstays of English literary scholarship, the study of Elizabethan drama, to consider how new digital resources can help us approach one of the great problems of the study of this period — the very large number of plays which have not survived although we have some record of their existence. The Lost Plays Database, of which McInnis is a co-founder and co-editor, makes available in easily accessible form all that we currently know about these disappeared works. In a striking combination of the old and the new, the database provides, along with other things, images of the manuscript material which provides evidence for the plays’ existence, amongst which are such rare items as the single sheets of paper hung backstage and providing ‘a scene-by-scene roadmap of the play’s action, including entrances and sometimes props or special effects.’ He ends by considering what our knowledge of an absence can contribute to our understanding of what is still present, the splendid body of drama from the age of Shakespeare.

In her article Elizabeth Minchin turns to an even longer standing focus of literary research, the *Iliad*, but she too connects it with contemporary concerns. In the centenary year of the end of the First World War she starts by considering exactly how the dioramas in the Australian War Memorial allow us to imagine the battlefields of a war which still resonates deeply with us. Drawing on ‘insights from cognitive psychology on how we process, and how we generate, narratives that describe spatial environments’ she examines how Homer brings the battlefield of Troy before our eyes with a

clarity which persists through the millennia. By concentrating on a small number of key locations and viewing them from different standpoints Homer is able to fix a picture in our minds of the sites of the Trojan War. His descriptions even allow us to experience in some way the sounds of war, something which the Australian War Memorial now offers through audio recordings accompanying the originally silent dioramas. Homer’s achievement can still speak to us powerfully in the days of our very different warfare.

The creative writing contribution to this issue, Philip Mead’s poem ‘Romadur and Kümmel’, also has its origins in literary scholarship. He has told me that it ‘arose from a conversation with a colleague of mine in a German university who was bemoaning the critical approach of some scholars to early modern texts’ so its origins lie in the same early modern period as David McInnis’s work on the lost plays of Shakespeare’s England. (Tantalisingly, in another connection, the only evidence for one of those plays is a German translation of a work which does not survive in English). ‘Romadur and Kümmel’ with its cheeky title and rich range of allusions leads us along many paths and opens up all sorts of questions.

Susan Broomhall and Yixu Lu both write about Asia, a subject that has had a lot of attention in the Academy in recent years, but their focus is on historical European interaction with the continent. Yixu Lu’s article is based on the Academy’s Triebel Lecture which she gave in Adelaide in November 2017. She reflects on a little known episode in imperial and colonial history, Germany’s brief colonisation of Qingdao (Tsingtau) in China between 1897 and 1914. After a short and hopeless attempt to withstand a superior number of Japanese assailants, with most of the garrison surviving and becoming prisoners of war, Germany lost control of the colony right at the beginning of the First World War, but the resistance lasted long enough for a whole discourse of sacrifice to be built around it, part of the mythology of German imperialism. The article concentrates on the myths surrounding the colony and its loss, demonstrating yet again how big a part mythmaking played in the imperial enterprise (even in defiance of the facts).

Finally Susan Broomhall has taken a topic within her overarching concern with the history of the emotions and deals with the lives and emotions of the wives and children of Dutch men who were sent to Batavia (modern Jakarta) in 1639 when the Japanese expelled them. Against the odds they maintained a connection to their homeland and expressed the emotions they felt in their permanent exile through letters, gifts and wills, even as they adopted new identities within the Dutch community in what was then the Dutch East Indies. At the other end in Japan their relatives also expressed their emotional response to the exiles' efforts to maintain a connection with them. The reality of their emotions and the directness of their expression contrast sharply with the way the experiences of the Germans in Qingdao were transformed from reality into myth in the service of empire.

Although the range of articles reflects the practice of previous years, this year sees one innovation in the content of the journal. Instead of ending the journal with 'Ex Libris', a collage of images of the covers of selected books by Fellows and recipients of publishing grants,

this year the Academy has decided to publish a separate and comprehensive list of such books. Fellows and recipients of Academy grants and awards have been invited to provide details of books since 1 July 2017 for inclusion in a new online publication, the Annual Academy Book List. The new publication will include sole- and co-authored monographs, edited collections, translations, editions and any other separately published items of book length and will provide some indication of the range and depth of scholarly publication associated, in one way or another, with the Academy.

Meanwhile, the articles in this issue of *Humanities Australia* provide a different kind of sample of the many ways in which humanities research in Australia can contribute to our understanding of the world past and present. ¶



GRAHAM TULLOCH FAHA
Editor, Australian Academy
of the Humanities, 2016–