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PREFACE

The need to redefine Australia has been particularly urgent in the recent two decades when the image of this antipodean society as almost a model multicultural one, craving for freedom and tolerance, was demolished by growing intolerance and nationalisms. In today's world, torn by conflicts of interests, racial hatred and social divisions, the nineteenth-century concept of a nation and national ideology, which only apparently faded away in the era of the late twentieth-century globalisation, is now being given a new prominence not just by minor politicians who want to win the favour of their electorates (Pauline Hanson and others), but by surprisingly large sections of democratic, egalitarian societies as Australia and New Zealand undoubtedly are.

In the period of national self-definition, i.e. since the 1890s through the time of the Great War to the 1930s and 1940s, Australia produced a specific kind of national consciousness, being in part a response to English colonialism and cultural imperialism, but largely a form of self-produced enthusiasm for the unique native environment and the myths of (white) pioneers who in effect embodied masculine ideals of self-reliance, courage and persistence, which, in time, took the form of the renowned Australian mateship – an egalitarian bond between men based on classless point of view. As a nation of former convicts, migrants and refugees, Australia, since the times of abandonment of its 'white only' migrant policies of the 1960s, served for decades to follow as an example to the world of how to tackle migration problems in a peaceful and rational way, and how to build a democratic, egalitarian society. However, the 2005 Cronulla race riots and mob violence that followed was a rude awakening for most Australians. The riots, which stemmed from tensions between youths from Sydney's Lebanese, Muslim and local Australian population, proved that there exists an extreme form of Australian nationalism – 'Aussie Pride' – the ideology of which has been to fight the 'wogs,' the 'Lebs,' the 'Pakis'; that is, the non-white migrants.

The eleven articles collected in this issue represent, then, a wide spectrum of approaches to the notions of Australia's national identity, its literature art, culture, history and politics. They comprise an insightful, informative and original contribution to Australian studies and attempt to redefine the concepts of national and individual identities. Although the specific contributions approach the issues of historical heritage and contemporary perspectives on Australia differently, they

all complement each other in scrutinising a complex issue of a cultural slash in present-day Australian multicultural and multiethnic society. Among the problems that have been addressed in the volume are the concepts of nationhood, post-war trauma (the Great War), multicultural society and relations between Indigenous people and officials as well as representatives of the white community on the degree of integration of various ethnic groups. Moreover, the criticism of immigration policy reveals a rather disturbing and ugly face of a country which at first might appear as a semi-mythical multicultural paradise and land of plenty but, after a closer scrutiny and a more penetrating gaze at its colonial history, Australia, for instance, turns into a country with a troubled history of building, first, a white and, then, multicultural society. Furthermore, the threat to a more or less stable national identity posed by the 'Other'/'Alien' or simply new immigrant communities and asylum seekers is discussed, which reveals the manner in which they have been (mis)treated and abused by officials. Apart from the difficult socio-political and historical issues, this collection of articles touches upon the Aboriginal art and culture, an interesting genre of bush ballad and traces and maps cultural, historical and literary landscape of the Antipodes. The volume also includes an analysis of the image of Poland in two "ash" poems by an eminent Australian poet, Andrew Taylor, which unavoidably extends its perspective beyond Oceania.

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Uncertain Seasons in the El Niño Continent: Local and Global Views

Abstract

As global climate change shifts seasonal patterns, local and uncertain seasons of Australia have global relevance. Australia's literature tracks extreme local weather events, exploring 'slow catastrophes' and 'endurance.' Humanists can change public policy in times when stress is a state of life, by reflecting on the psyches of individuals, rather than the patterns of the state. 'Probable' futures, generated by mathematical models that predict nature and economics, have little to say about living with extreme weather. Hope is not easily modelled. The frameworks that enable hopeful futures are qualitatively different. They can explore the unimaginable by offering an 'interior apprehension.'

1. Time and Seasons

There are two distinct ways humans have talked about time, all over the world, and in most cultures. The first is the 'arrow' of time, a linear path from birth to death, the time within the individual. The other is the circular path through the seasons, the rhythm of the Earth. The seasons follow the Earth's movement around the Sun – and repeat annually. Seasons anchor nature writing and literary conversations about the environment. Western ideas of spring, summer, autumn, winter, with rebirth again at spring are based on temperate northern places, and have become reinforced through religious and cultural traditions – for example, the 'white' Christmas, of the winter solstice. The Christian Church adopted many of the pagan festivals when it proselytised in Europe. Important celebrations like the birth of Christ became associated with the turning of the year, the dawn of the new longer days, which had long been celebrated in pagan traditions. Christmas and snow are now closely associated even in places like Australia, where Christmas falls in the middle of summer. Christmas cards featuring fir trees covered in snow and European robins are exchanged. When Europeans brought Christian traditions from the north to the southern hemisphere, they elected to retain the calendar date – 25 December, rather than translating its seasonal meaning. Christians

in Australia followed the Gregorian calendar, rather than local nature, in the Church's seasons.

The seasons themselves – the warm and the cold, the sun and the snow – are the felt experience, the shared experiences of communities. They are an important basis for poetry and literature that celebrates local places, nature and how we feel about being on Earth. Yet seasons are not the same everywhere. Tropical places have close to 12 hours daylight every day. People who live in northern Australia sometimes complain that there are 'no seasons,' by which they mean there are no long dark nights, and long evenings as Europe defines them. Local Aboriginal people have seasons and annual calendars, but they are not so much marked by the cycle of the sun as by the coming of different plants and animals, or of winds or rains. March, for example, is 'knock'em' down season for the Jawoyn people of Kakadu – when the last cyclones of the summer come through and knock down the long grass that has been growing through the wet season. Jawoyn people identify six seasons, of different lengths. Whitefellas[1] who live in the north, typically speak of two seasons: wet and dry (wet is hot, dry is cooler). Christmas in Darwin is at the height of the wet season. It is hot and there are cyclones. Christmas Day 1974 was famous for the destruction wrought on the town by Cyclone Tracy killing at least 65 people and flattening 80% of the city's houses. Australia's north demands a different understanding of seasons, and Australia is the only 'first world' country to have a substantial portion (about a third) of its land mass in the tropics (Robin 2007, 124). The north has been separated from 'the rest' because it is exceptional, not just within Australia, but across western traditions.

Most Australians (all but 1%) live in the temperate south, where there is variation in day length, and even snow in winter in the mountains. Seasons seem to cycle in the European way. Australians live and work close to the southern coastlines, mostly in cities of a million or more people. Cosmopolitan Australians are used to ignoring silly seasonal mismatches and perhaps this leaves the impression that sometimes pretends southern seasons do not carry the heavy significance of those in the north. Even international academic journals, like the *Journal of Global Studies*, use "Fall" and "Spring" as volume descriptions, forgetting that these do not apply everywhere. A sense of what the Earth is doing where you are is the first step to a sense of place, of being grounded, of belonging where you live. Even in megacities like Melbourne or Sydney, nature is not far away: there are trees, parks, and the verge in the suburbs is called a "nature strip." But the cosmopolitan world of work, of news and of the internet drains away a sense of local meanings, the sort that are crucial to literary sensibilities in writing the environment. In this paper, I want to explore the idea that Australia, the El Niño Continent, as it is sometimes called, might offer a different seasonal sensibility. The difference could be helpful to places beyond Australia, as planetary weather systems shift – but we all – Australians and visitors – need to learn to recognize

its rhythms and to listen to its arrhythmia. Tony Hughes-d'Aeth argues in his magisterial *Like Nothing on this Earth: A Literary History of the Wheatbelt* that "literary writing" has the power "to suspend the casual (but far-reaching) presumptions of everyday language" (7). Literature offers something different from agriculture, economics, social history and ecology: it offers "the interior apprehension of how life feels to people" (3). Like Hughes-d'Aeth, I want to look to 'witnesses' of seasonal time in Australia, witnesses of seasons that go missing, that are unpredictable and changing, and use them to inform the planetary stories of dynamic variability and shifting weather patterns. Such witnesses are seldom city-dwellers. The best seasonal stories come from the 'Inside Country' (the nineteenth-century name for the pastoral lands inland from the major cities). Good stories come from further inland too: the desert heart of the continent provides a very different seasonal sensibility.

2. Uncertainty and Variability

Central to the idea of seasons in Australia is uncertainty. In a continental land-mass the size of the contiguous United States – about 25 times larger than present-day Poland – there are huge variations in weather, in ecology and in seasons, moving from north to south, or from the deserts at the centre to the coast. Melbourne University professor of zoology, Walter Baldwin Spencer (1860–1929) was the first to put names on the different ecological regions. In his 1896 map he called the tropical north, Torresian, the desert heart Eyrean and temperate south-east Bassian (after Torres, Eyre and Bass who were significant European explorers of each of regions). This map was not widely known beyond the scientific community, since it showed more than 70% of the country as Eyrean desert, something that boosters trying to get people to settle in remote areas did not want publicized. Another scientist, the geographer Griffith Taylor, was chastised by Western Australian leaders for being "unpatriotic" in speaking of deserts early in the twentieth century (Robin 2007, 124).

The old saying is that "climate is what you expect, weather is what you get" (Sherratt 1) There have been good historical reasons for those who wanted to portray Australia as a 'land of opportunity,' particularly for western agriculture, to be wary of explaining too much about Australia's variable and uncertain climate. Even ideas like 'average rainfall' are a problem in a place where, for much of the country, rain might fall in winter or in summer, or not at all. Indeed, as I have been writing this paper, two months-worth of rain fell in just two hours in suburban Canberra. Such an 'event' skews the averages and hides the fact that Canberra had no other rain for the two months before this. In the twenty-first century, the Bureau of Meteorology and the Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics, the national policy advisors, now look at monthly rainfall patterns, recognizing that

even if the average annual rainfall arrives, it is not much use if it is all in a few days at the wrong time for the crops or the pasture. Very heavy falls, punctuated by long spaces create respectable 'averages,' but these are no use to farmers.

One of the challenges of thinking about Australia for the National Museum of Australia, where I have worked for many years, has been to speak about identity in ways that include the diverse people and places of this large land. In a landscape "where creeks run dry or ten feet high" (Friedel et al., 185), the *variability* is the story. Such weather patterns are not shared by all Australians, yet talking about the weather is both a local and a national pastime, and very much part of Australian identity. The Bureau of Meteorology is a national organization, known and loved by farmers and city-dwellers alike, but its advice has to be precise and local: its rain radar maps patterns in 128-kilometre circles, but can be focused closely enough to see if rain will fall on the match at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Our little book, *Boom and Bust: Bird Stories for a Dry Country*, was a way of starting from Australia and looking out, rather than starting with a European model, and writing about exceptionalism. We wanted to find a way to talk about the national and the local together, about the 'boom and bust' rhythms of Australia's ecosystems, that were different from the regimented seasonality of northern Europe. We decided to collect together stories about the birds that live in the Australian desert, gathering writers from many different traditions: Indigenous, ecological, archaeological and historical. Each writer began with the story of a bird and considered the question of how it lived, how it adapted to the vicissitudes of its environment. Writers drew on scientific studies, local Indigenous oral traditions and the tales of nature lovers who celebrated birds in literature and art. The collected short stories offer a 'bird's eye view,' a counterpoint to the culture of 65,000 years of human settlement in Australia (Griffiths et al).

The environmental historian George Seddon argued that Australia "was a land that had a radically new technology imposed upon it, suddenly, twice" (10). First, the land was managed by fire for hunting, then came agriculture – industrial style. The fossil-fuel driven economy arrived with the British. There was no romantic pastoral tradition in Australia as in Europe, and very little romantic pastoral literature either. Agriculture and mining have irreversibly altered the environment. Birds and other animals, plants and people have all had to adapt to live with these changes. *Boom and Bust*'s bird stories interwove the natural and cultural histories of the birds, but they were chosen to showcase the ways in which people have understood natural history in this place through passion for birds. Seasonal literacy is a different thing for environments in the northern hemisphere, so it has taken settler Australians, particularly those with strong ties to other parts of the planet, a long time to recognize the local patterns and to develop poetry, place writings and music that fit the country.

In the "Introduction" to *Boom and Bust,* we began with Dorothea MacKellar's 1904 poem, "My Country." Recognising that the wide brown land's contrasting

"beauty and terror" is not everyone's ideal place, and that droughts and flooding rains are a challenge for more than just humans in Australia, we focused on the successful adaptations to uncertainty that birds have made, and how humans might observe what they do as they await "the drumming of an army, / the steady soaking rain" (MacKellar):

> The time between rains, ruled by 'pitiless blue skies' is a time for holding the nerve, of ecological stretch. Irregular rains are at the core of a creative ecological pulse […] [yet] it has been difficult for European Australian with the expectation of regular cyclical seasons to find a sense of permanence, to be at home in a place where drought and plenty stalk each other in unpredictable ways. (Robin et al., 2–3)

Another poet, A. D. Hope (1907–2000), foundation Professor of English literature at the Australian National University, was born and bred in the Canberra region out on the harsh treeless plains of the Monaro. His poem "Australia" was much less positive than MacKellar's, but nonetheless, he called on European Australians to "turn gladly home / from the lush jungle of modern thought to find / the Arabian desert of the human mind / Hoping, if still from the deserts the prophets come […]." Yet both poems are grappling with the idea of being 'at home' in Australia and not in England, after long periods abroad. MacKellar wrote her paean, *My Country*, as a homesick young woman stuck far away in England. These poems were written decades before the longer 'deep time' history of Australia was uncovered. The new shared dreamings of Indigenous peoples and scientists (Griffiths 2018) and the renewed conversations about reconciliation have transformed people's feelings about the country. No longer the "mongrel country" of Henry Lawson and unsuccessful farming (Robin 2013), Australia now has a far longer human cultural heritage than Europe. There is no longer a reason to start with Europe as the norm, and to find fault with the rhythms of this much older land.

3. Expectations and Hope

Climate change is closely allied with seasonal change. Uncertainty and variability can be frightening: they suggest a loss of control. From Australian deserts we can learn much about water's uncertainty and its very local nature – dry or ten feet high? – this depends on where the storm lands. Stories about climate change need to be nuanced to the local. They are profoundly historical. It turns out that seasons are too – they do not go around in perpetuity any more. They are shifting quite rapidly.

In the hot "Greenhouse Summer" of 1988 (it was winter in Australia, of course), climate scientist James Hansen described the Greenhouse Effect to Ronald Reagan, outgoing President of the United States, about the increases in carbon, methane and other gases in Earth's atmosphere. These blanketing gases bring warming to the planet on average, but the story was more about "unpleasant

surprises in the greenhouse," in Wally Broecker's memorable words (123). Climate change is here, and will affect the future increasingly, probably exponentially. But its effects are uneven. In cold places, where warming climate might seem attractive, the scientists follow Hunter Lovins, co-founder of the Rocky Mountain Institute, and speak rather of climate 'weirding,' with more acute storm and disaster events, rather than an increase in average temperature.

We can't afford to "reduce the future to climate," as Mike Hulme, a geographer and prominent climate change scientist has argued (2011, 245). The future is cultural as well as physical, and the changes wrought by global warming will cause psychological effects as well as physical ones. Environmental changes demand adaptation by humans, and feeling overwhelmed by the problem will obstruct adaptation. Science tends to seek out large-scale, 'universal' solutions to problems. It is the humanities that can offer particular and local responses, that enable people to feel their way through a situation (Robin 2018). History and literature enable imagination, and foster hope and resilience. In the final sections of this paper I explore the global and the local together through literature (fiction and non-fiction), to unpack how 'universal' science haunts culture, place and identity, and sometimes can *limit* the future. I am interested in how literature and creative writing can make big ideas personal, and can record the way local places work in an era of global processes.

4. Hyperniño as Crisis

Kim Stanley Robinson's climate-change thriller, *Forty Signs of Rain* (2004), builds its tension through the foreboding Hyperniño, a massive storm that promises to lash the cliffs of California, eroding the foundations of homes, tipping them into the maw of the Pacific:

> The Hyperniño […] was the fourth in the series of pineapple express storms that had tracked along this course of the jet stream […] all roiled, torn, downdraughted and compressed, its rain squeezed out of it the moment it slammed into […] the sea-cliffs of [San Diego County]. (Robinson 297)

The United States view of El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is all about storms. It is the Apocalypse manifest in the rise of the "beast of the sea" with seven heads and ten horns (*Revelation*s 13:1). *Forty Signs of Rain* is a key book in the new genre of climate fiction – or cli-fi.

NASA – the National Aeronautics and Space Administration – is an independent authority of the United States government. These rocket scientists, because they run a space program, shape the world's perception of itself beyond the USA. Robinson closely follows the climate science of NASA (where he worked for some years). His portrait of the Hyperniño is fictional, but framed by NASA's

modelling. This major 'global' science organization draws its data from the United States (including Alaska and Hawai'i) and strategic places (such as Guam and the Philippines). Much of what is written about the global science of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) phenomenon carries the NASA bias. Not just fictional works, but even histories like Brian Fagan's *Floods Famines and Emperors*, a history of El Niño and the 'fate of Civilizations,' omit Australia altogether: yet ENSO is a major driver of life in the Australian continent, far more so than in north America. NASA's "global science" and Fagan's "global civilizations" treat El Niño as both global and yet curiously American.

Australia's relationship with El Niño is mediated differently. Our science comes from the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM), rather than NASA. BoM justifies its scientific work through its relevance to agriculture in this country. Farmers need to know on a fine scale whether they are in for a long drought. BoM modelling has become very sophisticated and locally attuned over many years, and people know about it and rely on it. In the USA and Europe, farmers do not talk about El Niño over the fence or in the 'pub.' (The 'pub' – the public bar – is the classic test of what 'everyone knows' for Australian politicians). Farmers are not so conversant with climate science in places where public science is less attuned to the needs of the agricultural sector. Development worker, Jessica Barnes, noticed this difference when she worked with scientists in the modelling unit of the Egyptian water ministry, and visited local Egyptian farmers. The scientists all discussed climate change regularly, but, she wrote, "in 16 months of fieldwork in rural Egypt I never heard a *farmer* talk about changing rainfall patterns" (42; emphasis mine). By contrast, "El Niño" (dubiously pronounced) and "ENSO" are household words, at least in regional Australia. They equate not with storms but with drought.

If El Niño science is not 'rocket science,' it can be familiar – part of the daily weather report. Its local character demands more precise science. In 2015, BoM was delighted to show that their model was significantly better than NASA's in predicting the month in which El Niño drought would begin and how Australia would be affected by it. It was not the view from space but rather the view from many places on the land that supported the model's predictions. These are the predictions essential to Australian farmers who need to plan when (or whether) to sow crops.

The crisis of climate change is a catastrophe on a global scale, just unfolding, yet it plays out differently, depending on how one conceives the 'crisis.' This is a "slow catastrophe" (Jones), unfolding over periods longer that it is possible for humans to maintain 'crisis mode' of response: crisis management is not designed for intergenerational action. Rob Nixon has described "slow violence" as the cruelty to the poor of the planet that unfolds over long periods, too slowly to catch media interest, so ignored by the west. The environmentalism and protest movements of the poor, therefore, must work in different ways and on longer scales, Nixon argues. They are not managing a crisis, but a catastrophe.

The Australian droughts extend for too long for crisis management strategies too. A water shortage over two or three months can be called a 'drought' in England, where water managers plan with regular rain. The Millennium Drought in south-eastern Australia (where most of the agricultural crops are grown) ran from 2001–2009. Australian droughts have names – the Federation Drought (1895–1902), and the process of "running out" of water may take place over a decade or more of stress (Morgan). New writing in history, drawing on farm diaries over decades and oral history interviews, is capturing ways of understanding the human toll of droughts, of the repeated failure of annual expectations for rain over many years. The words they choose: "slow catastrophes" (Jones) and "endurance" (Anderson) reflect the psychological states of the individuals, not the patterns of the state. This is the important difference that scholars of the humanities can make to public policy and to understanding stress that is not treatable in the emergency ward of a hospital: it is not crisis management, it is a state of life. Droughts are getting worse, more widespread and are affecting cities. Cape Town, in South Africa, is running out of water as I write.

Climate change is uneven. It is both global and highly localized: it is, in Desmond Tutu's words, the greatest human rights challenge today. The nations and economies that have benefited from the carbon revolution are seldom the places at the leading edge of suffering. In planetary terms, the Poles are losing ice and the Pacific is at the forefront of sea-level rises. These are the places where much of the global scientific effort – and increasingly, the justice research – is focused. Science is a planetary lens through which to understand climate change. Yet responses to crisis are always local and nuanced culturally. Injustice and climate disasters happen to people in specific places, and the "slow violence" of a decade-long famine is often more fatal (yet less newsworthy) than a storm event. The humanities – including history, literature, museums and art – can provide complementary understandings of how humans live with the rapidly changing planetary conditions in specific places; how they feel, how they apprehend and sense disaster.

Australia is a global hot spot for climate change, because of its fragile agricultural economy, old soils and isolated ecosystems. Already it leads the world in mammalian extinctions in the past century. There is little doubt that heat stress is going to be one of the big killers as summers get increasingly angry, and temperature charts acquire new colours – deep purple – to deal with longer and hotter heat waves. The work of Australia's small and, since 2014 crowd-funded, Climate Council is crucial to nuancing global scientific understandings for local audiences. Meanwhile science (particularly climate science) has been systematically cut from the Antarctic division, the CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology. These public science organizations have made major contributions to international science as well as accessible communications for the public, and that is a problem for conservative ideologues with major investments in fossil-fuel industries, who have successfully lobbied for their de-funding.

We undoubtedly need more science in this country, but contributions from the humanities and the Arts also help with imagining new futures. Like the examples from history, literature can tackle the problem obliquely, in ways that help individuals come to terms with something so big as to be 'unimaginable' by offering that "interior apprehension" (Hughes-d'Aeth) that is so hard to talk about (Hulme 2009). Australian literature engages with a truly local appreciation of a global phenomenon. Here the Hyperniño is not a single storm or disaster event, but rather a long, drawn-out, painful, slow catastrophe. A Hyperniño is a decade-long drought that disfigures peoples' lives, eroding hope, and haunting generations. Longer times and bigger places are the frames for Australian literature, so Australians write a different sort of cli-fi. For example, James Bradley's impressive 2015 novel *Clade,* is a disaster-tale across three generations: it takes its story beyond Australia, but recognizes that the time-frame of a single human life is not long enough for such a tale to play out.

5. Eco-Fiction as Long Story

Sometimes Australian literature is more eco-fiction than cli-fi: here a main character is the place, the bush, the land, the Outback. It is a place bigger than the eye can take in, unfolding over more than one human generation. In films too, the Australian Outback is a character, as critics recently commented in relation to Ivan Sen's thrillers *Mystery Road* (2013) and *Goldstone* (2016). These films feature the Australian Outback at its most expansive through the eyes of Aboriginal detective, Jay Swan, played by Aaron Pederson, who like most Aboriginal people juggles the complexity of living in both the mainstream and the traditional worlds. Sometimes there is more than one world in a single place: histories are multi-layered in the Australian story.

By contrast Kim Stanley Robinson's cli-fi screams 'Catastrophe is Imminent.' Robinson sticks very closely to his NASA sources (he works closely with NASA). Geeks and modellers are characters with direct voices in his stories. Nordic nations like Denmark are more psychological, focusing more on effects than causes. The 'dead of winter' environment shapes a foggy, grey noir-thriller: tension builds in the small and intense domesticity, a distorted riff on the *hyggelig* – or "cosy" – Danish world. Australia's new thrillers are environmentally rich, too, but we can find *dead* in any season, and even without seasons. As seasonality twists and transforms with climate change, psychological and physical tensions are added to the old tropes of the Bush and the Outback. Australian action stories are slow-burning, red. The cruelties of intensifying El Niño droughts, and global warming have pushed Australian eco-lit towards writing slow violence. Eco-lit is a genre akin to cli-fi, but with less apocalypse and more tragedy, less action and more psychological trauma. In this literature, the slow-burning emotions fuelled

by El Niño droughts breed a cruel and tortuous violence born of long-endurance and repressed frustration. In a land that is red and vast, people eventually get angry – really angry – and they *see red*.

In Janette Turner Hospital's 1996 masterly novel, *Oyster,* set somewhere in the northern Lake Eyre basin, there is fog, but it is dry not damp. It is certainly not Danish grey. There is no imaginative control in a world where there is no horizon, just a shimmer. The local humour is dry too. The miasma has a name:

> If rain had come things might have turned out differently […]. [Instead there was] mephitic fog, moistureless and invisible, that came and went like an exhalation of the arid earth itself. […] Old Fuckatoo we called it. […] Old Fuckatoo is roosting again. (3–4)

> […] Pete tells Miss Rover "We could all go under to the drought, every last one of us. I mean, all these carcasses […] you must have noticed. The smell of death hangs over us. Or we could all be washed away in flash floods. She's a tough old bitch, is the land. We respect her and that is why we give her no quarter." (393–393)

The same themes of the land being a force over generations as well as a person of sorts, to be reckoned with daily, permeate the 2016 novel, *The Dry.* In it, debut novelist Jane Harper figures El Niño a strong and ever-present character, wreaking havoc on Victoria's Mallee country:

> The drought had left the flies spoiled for choice that summer. They sought out unblinking eyes and sticky wounds as the farmers of Kiewarra levelled their rifles at skinny livestock. No rain meant no feed. And no feed made for difficult decisions, as the tiny town shimmered under day after day of burning blue sky.
>
> "It'll break," the farmers said as the months ticked over into a second year. They repeated the words out loud to each other like a mantra, and under their breath to themselves like a prayer.
>
> But the weathermen in Melbourne disagreed. Besuited and sympathetic in air-conditioned studios, they made a passing reference most nights at six. Officially the worst conditions in a century. The weather pattern had a name, the pronunciation of which was never quite settled. *El Niño.* (*The Dry*, 1)

The sinister, the shimmering, the people whose imagination can no longer grasp what is meant by nature, the Bush, the Outback – these are the literary tropes of the El Niño Continent. Without revealing Harper's tensely constructed plot, by page 318, *The Dry* has turned the Bush from an imagined national cliché to an unimaginable metaphor of life out of control in the Anthropocene. The Bush in a post-Holocene, El Niño drought is a "no-analogue" force to be reckoned with, to borrow from the rhetoric of Earth Systems science (Steffen et al. 94).

Climate and weather – what you expect and what you get – and the mismatch between them, is the big story in a place where seasons are no longer annual,

and seasonal affective disorders may be about too much light, rather than too much darkness. In the El Niño continent, Australia, ENSO spells drought, a slow, drawn-out end. Drought in Australian history and literature offers a parable for living with long slow violence, now increasingly exacerbated by climate change. When the El Niño phenomenon is 'put in its place' – and framed on variable timescales – the complex global 'event' has very different local manifestations. There are psychological implications for imagining a final apocalypse through the slow lens of geological time, rather than through instant rituals of 'disaster management.' In Australia, the poetic equivalent for a Hyperniño is not the sea beasts and galloping horses of Revelations, but T. S. Eliot's *Hollow Men* (1925), where the world ends "not with a bang, but a whimper." It has already begun, but the 'end game' will take time. Life on Earth will adapt, but human life is certain not to survive as 'business as usual.' Survival and adaptation will require imagination, perhaps even more than more new technologies.

Hope is as hard to find in the dark pages of cli-fi and eco-lit as in the pages of the IPCC's successive reports on the state of the planet since 1988. Yet hope begins with, if not a sense of control, at least a sense of being able to *make a difference* to future possibilities. The anthropologist Arjun Appadurai places hope at the crux of injustice: the poor have less control over their future than the rich. Being poor may result in losing one's future, or having it severely compromised. Appadurai writes of a "cultural future" that includes "imagination, anticipation and aspiration" (286). It is not merely mathematically extrapolated from the present. 'Probable' futures, generated by mathematical models that predict nature and economics, have little to say about living in future worlds. Hope is not something easily modelled. The frameworks that enable hopeful futures are qualitatively different. The future is not just a technical or neutral space: it is "shot through with affect and sensation" (286). History and other humanities may enable other, complementary ways of making sense of living with rapid environmental change.

Understanding the El Niño cycles of our 'opal-hearted land' demands science, but it also demands practical learning. Over the *long durée,* the land is both wilful and lavish; eventually we come to terms with the 'far horizons' and the inseparability of 'the beauty and the terror.' Understanding environmental change in the Anthropocene demands the longer-term perspectives of histories at many scales: human, evolutionary and geological. Living in the El Niño continent with the slow violence of Australian droughts, and the sudden shocks of when they break, we may learn some ways to live alongside slowly unfolding catastrophes like climate change.

Notes

1 This is the English word that Aboriginal people use to describe non-Aboriginal people.

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The "Cultural Landscape" of Australia in Bush Ballads: Slim Dusty's *Aussie Sing Song*

Abstract

The concept of the "cultural landscape" designates tangible and intangible elements of human activity, such as the natural environment, material culture, values, behaviours, and language (Taylor 2008, 6; Taylor and Lennon 2011, 538–540; Wierzbicka 1997, 201). These themes are all present in Australian bush ballads – a literary and folk genre that reflects the country's unique heritage and way of life in simple artistic forms. Slim Dusty's *Aussie Sing Song* (1962) – a representative selection of ballads – depicts Australia's fauna and flora, the Aborigines, the beginnings of European settlement, the economy, the Great Outback, and the social role of drinking beer. The popular texts contain condensed and vivid images of the country's culture.

Following Mechtild Rössler,[1] Ken Taylor defines the "cultural landscape" as "a closely woven net of relationships, the essence of culture and people's identity" that functions "at the interface of culture and nature, tangible and intangible heritage, biological and cultural diversity" (2008, 6). It encompasses both static and dynamic elements, for example beliefs, behaviours, and symbols, which the anthropological linguist Franz Boas regarded as the "cultural traits of societies" (qtd. in Taylor 2008, 5). A typical "cultural landscape" is a multi-layered construct which reflects human history and activity: urban and rural elements, the material culture, values, and ideologies; as such, it forms the essence of national identity (Taylor and Lennon 2011, 538–540). It reflects "everyday ways of life" and "the sequence or rhythm of life over time," offers "a sense of continuity," as well as a "context setting for cultural heritage" (Taylor 2008, 5). Boas and other anthropological linguists (Whorf; Sapir) also emphasized the role of language as a vehicle and reflection of cultural values.

The cultural landscape of Australia thus forms the foundation of the country's "sense of identity and Australianness" (Taylor 1994; qtd. in Wierzbicka 1997, 200). It comprises "grandiose homesteads and urban splendours, the Aboriginal

wonders of Kakadu, or the Sydney Opera House […] the memories of European exploration, convict settlements […] gold mining […] and urban areas with rich social tapestry" (Taylor 1994; qtd. in Wierzbicka 1997, 201). Anna Wierzbicka adds language as "a key to Australia's history and an important factor in national identity" (1997, 201). She sees "language as a mirror of culture and a part of culture" (1992, 373). Australian English is closely related to British English (Jenkins 72–74). Kiesling (75–76) mentions "the founder effect" (Mufwene 84) of southeast English and the area of London on it. The language emerged as a result of levelling of varieties of English used by convicts, prison officers, the clergy, and various other settlers (Burridge and Mulder; qtd. in Rozumko 275). As a local dialect, Australian English is similar to Afrikaans/South-African Dutch and American English: the former reflects a cultural landscape different from that of the Low Countries (Dirven; qtd. in Kövecses 188; Branford); the latter has many expressions motivated by the context of the moving frontier and the contact with the natives, for example *to have an axe to grind*, *to face the music*, *to go on the warpath*, *to bury the hatchet*, *to saw wood*, etc. (Baugh and Cable; qtd. in Kövecses 188).

Images of cultural landscapes are present in literature, paintings, myths, and advertising (Taylor 2008, 3). They are common in works of high artistic quality, as well as in popular creations. A ballad narrates a folk story by means of action and dialogue (Abrams 18). The bush ballad, a specifically Australian genre, depicts such aspects of bush life as the nature of the land, the frontier, mining, sheep shearing, and driving cattle. It narrates a story in colloquial, humorous, and idiomatic language, using simple rhymes and melody lines. As an emblem of Australia's popular culture, it is an expression of the spirit of the nation ("Bush Ballad"; "Bush-Ballads"). Andrew B. "Banjo" Paterson (1864–1941) was one of the most famous poets of the bush; Buddy Williams (1918–1986), Slim Dusty (1927–2003), and Rolf Harris (b. 1930) were the most popular performers of those songs. *Slim Dusty and His Bushlanders. Aussie Sing Song* (1962) is a representative selection of bush ballads. Though composed by various authors, the sing-song jointly reflects the cultural landscape of the land.

As the natural landscape is a precondition for the emergence and evolution of the cultural landscape (Sauer; qtd. in Taylor, 2008, 6), many of its elements appear in bush-ballads. Images of fauna, flora, and permanent or temporary landmarks are frequent and often overlap. "Boomerang" mentions kangaroos, which for many people are prototypical Australian animals: "I asked an old dark man where the kangaroo got its tail, / And he told me as only a dark fella can, / They shipped them in on the Birdsville mail" (1962). The Birdsville mail is a major stock and mail route in the Outback ("Birdsville Track," 1962), where the kangaroos are common. "I'm Going Back Again to Yarrawonga," which compares the Australian countryside to Tennessee and Carolina in the United States, ends with a description of the place as "the land of the kangaroo" (1962). Kangaroos appear

among other common Australian animals in "Tie Me Kangaroo Down, Sport," originally performed by Rolf Harris and being a worldwide hit in the early 1960s (Matthews 14). A dying stockman gives advice to his mates:

> Watch me wallabies feed, mate,
> Watch me wallabies feed.
> Tie me kangaroo down, sport,
> Tie me kangaroo down.
> Keep me cockatoo cool, Curl,
> Keep me cockatoo cool.
> N' take me koala back, Jack,
> Take me koala back. (1962)

Cockatoos and koalas may be representative of Australia, but kangaroo is the most popular symbol of the country. Quantas – one of Australia's major airlines – has one as logo on its planes. The expressions *have kangaroos in the top paddock* 'be insane' and *be on the wallaby track* 'be looking for work' (Rozumko 277) are common metaphor-based idioms that describe human actions by means of reference to the animal. "A Pub with No Beer," in turn, mentions dingoes – another animal typical of Australia: "It's lonesome away from your kindred and all, / By the campfires at night where the wild dingoes call" (1962). The stereotypical behaviour of the wild dog also motivates numerous idioms, for example *dingo's breakfast* 'no breakfast,' *turn dingo on somebody* 'betray somebody,' and *put on a dingo act* 'act in a cowardly way' (Rozumko 277). A humorous piece of advice on how to recognize Coolibah trees, common in the bush landscape, is given in "Boomerang": "I asked an old dark man how you tell the Coolibah tree, / And he told me as only a dark fella can, / That they always write it with a capital 'C'" (1962). The same ballad implies that the origin and name of billabongs – isolated and temporary areas of water left behind after a river changes its course in the bush ("Billabong") – must remain a mystery: "I asked an old dark man how the billabong got its name, / And he told me as only a dark fella can, / That he wasn't around when the billabong came" (1962). Both Coolibah tress and billabongs are important features of Australia's natural landscape – the swagman trekking the bush in "Waltzing Matilda" (1962) camps by a billabong under a Coolibah tree.

The dominant attitude of the white settlers to the Aborigines was that they were people having the knowledge of the local lore and the country's past before the European settlement, as well as unique experience of the bush (Rickard 53). Penn says that the Aborigines "had a spiritual and nurturing relationship with the Bush, seeing themselves as belonging to the landscape" (1). The ballads generally reflect this dominant attitude. The man telling his story in "Boomerang" addresses "an old dark man" or "a dark fella" (1962): he is the Aborigine who knows the lore of the land. Though the answers the Aborigine gives are humorous, *he* is the one expected to know about billabongs, Coolibah trees, kangaroos,

boomerangs, and roly-polies. Though the Aborigines were also represented as culturally inferior (Rickard 48–49), Australian English has many borrowings from their languages. They include common and proper names of places, for example *billabong*, *Towoomba*, *Yarrawonga*, *Wodonga*; objects, for example *boomerang*; animals, for example *dingo*, *wallaby*, *wallaroo* 'mountain kangaroo.'

The origins of Australia as a country are linked to penal colonies established there by the British government at the end of the 18th century. The First Fleet, which transported the first group of convicts, arrived on January 26, 1788 in Sydney Cove. Botany Bay, located close to it, was the original destination, so the ballad "Botany Bay" represents the event as it was planned rather than as it was executed (Turner 310):

> Farewell to old England forever.
> Farewell to my rum culls as well.
> Farewell to the well-known Old Bailey,
> Where I used for to cut such a swell.
> Singing Tooral liooral liaddity,
> Singing Tooral liooral liay,
> Singing Tooral liooral liaddity,
> And we're bound for Botany Bay. (1962)

The singers are the convicts transported to Australia – they bid farewell to the London prison of Old Bailey. Further lines make the character of the people even more explicit: "But because all we light-fingered gentry / Hops around with a log on our toes" (1962). Their language is a criminal jargon, or the flash or kiddy language (Fritz 22–23). Its non-standard features, here evident in the omission of verbs and pronouns, clearly set its users apart from the more educated people who arrived with them: governors, clergymen, schoolmasters, magistrates, justices, navy officers, doctors, guards, and even gentlemen convicts (Fritz 16, 24).

The economic development of Australia had many stages and took some dramatic turning points. It began with the early pastoral era; then came the gold rushes of the second part of the 19th century; the economic decline of the late 19th century brought many temporary labourers called swagmen. During the pastoral era, sheep and cattle used to be a vital part of Australia's economic landscape. The pastoral industry and its men were regarded as élites, and the idealization of shearers and drovers as pioneers was a part of Australian legend (Rickard 50–58). "Click Go the Shears" represents many aspects of work on a sheep station, especially the competition and the manner of work of the shearers:

> Out on the board the old shearer stands,
> Grasping his shears in his long, honey hands,
> Fixed is his gaze on a bare-bellied "Joe,"
> Glory if he gets her, won't he make the "ringer" go.

Click go the shears boys, click, click, click,
Wide is his blow and his hands move quick […]. (1962)

Further stanzas also reflect the social hierarchy of the profession: the boss of the board, the old shearer, the ringer, the tar boy, and others. Driving cattle across the country is the theme of "The Overlander Trail":

We're on the Overlander, Overlander trail[2]
Where only sheer determination will prevail.
Men of Aussie with a job to do,
So they will stick and drive the cattle through. (1962)

The quality that the men doing the job had to represent was "tough masculinity" (Wierzbicka 1992, 387) – it shaped the "men of Aussie." Such images of pastoral culture differ from the images of bucolic order and simplicity of the English countryside, shaped by the neoclassical ideals of harmony, balance, and order, which were dominant in Britain during the Augustan Age at the end of the 18th century (Humphreys 424–25; Rickard 47). It was one of the ways in which The Antipodes turned the values upside down: new geography gave rise to new ideas (Rickard 47). The gold rushes of 1851–1875 gave a new direction to the country's economy. The so-called "Yellow Fever" affected many people, but males were especially prone to its impact (Fritz 40–42). "The Whispering Bush" describes the conflicts that were a part of the experience of the men trying to get rich:

And now they sleep there endlessly,
And the whispering bush their secrets keep
Where no one knows and no one sees,
Their bleaching bones lie 'neath the trees. (1962)

They often fought and died in the wilderness that they tried to get under control and from which they wanted to profit. One should add that the gold-rushes also had impact on the language (Turner 324). Such expressions as *grog shop* 'off-license shop,' *cradle* 'net for sifting various substances,' and *to go down to bedrock* 'handle solid facts' are all motivated by the experience of searching for gold. The economic decline of the 1890s and the Great Depression of the early 1930s were two turning points for the Australian economy. The jobs became scarce and swagmen – transient labourers who travelled by foot in search of work on farms and in towns, carrying their scanty belongings in a swag or bedroll ("Swagman") – became common all over the country. A swagman stealing a jumbuck that he accidentally encounters is thus the main hero of "Waltzing Matilda" (1962) – Australia's unofficial national anthem. The ballad was composed by "Banjo" Paterson in 1895, at the time when the country was becoming more and more

independent from the British rule. A swaggie "smothered in dust and flies" is also among the thirsty crowd in "A Pub with No Beer" (1962).

As "landscape is a natural scene mediated by culture," in the early colonial period Australia was perceived as alien, hostile, alive, and disordered (Falcone 124). For the first settlers, it was "empty country – a no man's land, an absence of things, of history and of previous lives" (Falcone 124). The myth of Australian identity was built around "the idea of an untameable land" (Gibson; qtd. in Knellwolff King 110). The narrator of "Boomerang" has little experience of the Outback: "This is the tale of a new chum Jack, / Who'd just come in from the Great Outback!" (1962). A *new chum* is a newly arrived man, different from *old chums*, who were experienced Australians. The frequent use of such expressions, as well as unique hypocoristics and nicknames, for example *arvo* 'afternoon,' *barbie* 'barbecue,' and *Chrissie prezzie* 'Christmas present,' reflects the informal character of the culture (Kiesling 780). It is related to Australian "anti-intellectualism" and lack of "verbosity" (Horne 1970; qtd. in Wierzbicka 1992, 375), as well as the preference for short understatement rather than polysyllabic overstatement (Baker; qtd. in Wierzbicka 1992, 375). This attitude has sources in "the roughness of the early conditions, the need to stay alive, the comparative rarity of cultivated gentlemen" (Horne 1970; qtd. in Wierzbicka 1992, 387). Natives and experienced colonials knew the land – *new chums* still discovered it (Fritz 113–14). "The Man from the Never Never" contains another image of the Outback:

> My legs are kind of bowed from the horses that I've rode
> Through the salt bush and the sand.
> I've got that rock'n'rollin' beat from this rollin' saddle seat
> Because I live in the Never Never Land.
> I've never travelled out to all your high class towns
> Because I'm right just where I am.
> Our town's a pub and general store, what's the use of any more
> Away out in the Never Never Land. (1962)

The contrast between the Never Never Land and the towns is clearly related to the idea of the "frontier" parallel to the one in America (Ward; qtd. in Wierzbicka 1997, 102). The division between the towns and the rest of the country is also reflected in language. For example, the expression *Sydney or the bush!* is a metaphor of a 'do or die' attempt to do something (Rozumko 277). The Outback traditions may be important, but modern Australia is the most urbanised country in the world – 88% of its population lives in towns and cities (Matthews 6).

The bush has long been mythologized in Australian culture. Life in it was a defining theme of the experience of the country. The *Bulletin* magazine, which started in Sydney in 1880, published stories and poems focused "on the Australian bush as the breeding place of the true Australian type" (Fritz 53). "Little Boy Lost" provides an image of life that created such people:

> In the wild New England ranges came the word one fateful day
> To every town and village that a boy had lost its way.
> All the townsfolk quickly gathered, and the wild bush horses tossed
> As they went to search the ranges for a little boy lost. (1962)

Not only does the text describe an event that is a part of everyday life, but it also reflects the ideas of companionship, mateship, and mutual help. The concept of companionship has sources in the gradual and successful conquest of the land. The expressions *mate* 'companion' and *be matey with somebody* 'be their companion' function as a key to Australian culture (Wierzbicka 1997, 101–18, 198). They reflect the experience which entails "spending a lot of time together, doing things together, drinking together […] equality, solidarity, mutual commitment and mutual support […] companionship and fellowship in good fortune and in bad fortune" (Wierzbicka 1997, 102). The "bush ethos" was thus based on the sense of collective experience rather than individualist competition (Bell 5; qtd. in Wierzbicka 1997, 111). Similar images of the bush are common in Australian literature, for example in Henry Lawson's (1867–1922) poem "Up the Country":

> Bush! Where there is no horizon!
> Where the buried bushman sees
> Nothing – nothing! But the sameness of the ragged, stunted trees!
> Lonely hut where drought's eternal, suffocating atmosphere
> Where the God-forsaken hatter dreams of city life and beer. (qtd. in Falcone 125)

Lawson's prose pictures the bush as cruel and unfriendly, but also as an antithesis to towns: the bush is authentic; the towns are narrow-minded and full of social evil (Rickard 62). Aeneas Gunn (1870–1961), the author of *We of the Never Never* (1963; qtd. in Rickard 59), also represents the bush as mysterious, strange, and full of dangers. Patrick White's (1912–1990) novel *The Tree of Man* (1973) describes the harsh life of a farmer's family in the wilderness. Though the myth of the bush has largely disappeared with the emergence of towns and cities (Rickard 45), bushwalking is still a genuine experience of the country for visitors (Matthews 9). Finally, in spite of the collectivist "bush ethos," Australia scores as high on individualism as the United States and Great Britain (Hofstede 9). The factors that led to it may have been similar to those in Tudor and Stuart England (Trevelyan 317; MacFarlane) and colonial America: weak system of transport, long distances, lack of universal education, reliance upon oneself, as well as the economic condition of abundance of land and lack of legal rules constraining its use.

Lawson's mentioning of the beer is no accident – the drink plays an enormous role in Australian life. One of the Mambo T-shirts, popular among young surfers, depicts a demonic monster drinking beer from a can and urinating in the

middle of a sea of beer. The print reads: "Big Aussie Beer Monster Creates the Southern Ocean." The image carries one of the typical features of the constructed identity of Australia: the love for drinking (Boni 205). Drinking beer is egalitarian, masculine, and social, especially if it takes place in pubs rather than at home (Fiske et al.; qtd. in Boni 205). The ballad that best renders the importance of the beer for the Australians is "A Pub with No Beer" (1962). Like Lawson's poem, its initial lines imply a contrast between the loneliness of life in the bush and social loneliness of life without company and beer:

> It's lonesome away, from your kindred and all
> By the campfires at night, where the wild dingoes call.
> But there's nothing so lonesome, so morbid or drear
> Than to stand in a bar, of a pub with no beer. (1962)

What follows is a humorous description of the effects of the shortage of beer on people's psyche: "There's a faraway look on the face of the bum. / The maid's gone all cranky and the cook's acting queer, / What a terrible place is a pub with no beer" (1962). The theme is continued in "Answer to a Pub with No Beer" (1962), whose final lines well underscore the significance of the social ritual of 'drinking beer': "There's the old grey blitz wagon, the one with the beer, / […] / Soon the kegs were rolled in, one was placed on the bar, / It filled all the glasses, every jug and each jar. / Then the word passed around, and they all gave a cheer, / And there was laughter once more, in the pub with no beer" (1962).[3] That is why spending an evening in an Aussie pub is strongly recommended for visitors who want to have a first-hand experience of the country's culture (Matthews 9).

"A Pub with no Beer" (1962) and "Click Go the Shears" (1962) also reflect optimism[4] as another major aspect of Australian culture (King 24; Conway; qtd. in Wierzbicka 1992, 389). A *jolly* swagman is the hero of "Waltzing Matilda" (1962). That is why the common expression *no worries* functions very much as "the national motto" (King; qtd. in Wierzbicka 1992, 388). The equally common expressions *good on you* or *good on you, mate* refer to "the attitude displayed by a certain action rather than to the action itself" (Wierzbicka 1992, 389). The difference between them and *congratulations* or *well done* in British and American culture illustrates the fact that "the Australian ethos values attitudes […] more than success" (Wierzbicka 1992, 390). Horne explains it in the following way: "There is little public glorification of success in Australia" (1964; qtd in Wierzbicka 1992, 390). The few heroes of heroic occasions (other than those of sport) are remembered for their style rather than for their achievement. The early explorers, Anzac Day; these commemorate comradeship, gameness, exertion of the Will, suffering in silence. To be game, not to whinge – that's the thing – rather than some dull success coming from organisation and thought."

The bush ballads discussed above abound in images of Australia's cultural landscape – the fauna and the flora, the Aborigines, the convicts, the sheep and

the cattle, the Great Outback, the bush, and the beer. However, no ballad provides a more concise and comprehensive image of the country's cultural landscape than "Waltzing Matilda":

> Once a jolly swagman camped by a billabong
> Under the shade of a Coolibah tree.
> He sang as he watched and waited 'till his billy boiled,
> You'll come a-Waltzing Matilda, with me. […]
> Down came a jumbuck to drink at the billabong,
> Up jumped the swagman and grabbed him with glee. (1962)

Jolly swagman, billabong, Coolibah tree, billy 'a container for cooking water,' matilda 'a kind of bed roll,' and jumbuck 'a sheep' jointly reflect the elements of the cultural heritage no less important than such iconic landmarks as the Sydney Opera House or Uluru/Ayers Rock (Boni 201).

Notes

1 See Mechtild Rössler's typology of "cultural landscapes" in "World Heritage Cultural Landscapes" (2006).
2 *Overlander* is a man that drives large herds of cattle or sheep across the land ("Overlanders"). "The Overland" is a colloquial name of the train that runs between Melbourne and Adelaide.
3 Everybody meets in a pub for a drink at the end of "Click Go the Shears": "The first pub we come to it's there we'll have a spree / And everyone that comes along it's 'Have a drink with me'" (1962).
4 Horne (1964; qtd. in Wierzbicka 1992, 389) believes that it is related to "the 'assimilation' of the significant number of the ex-convicts."

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"He certainly was rough to look at": Social Distinctions in Anthony Trollope's Antipodean fiction

Abstract

The following article concentrates on the representation of social class in Anthony Trollope's Antipodean stories, *Harry Heathcote of Gangoil* (1874) and "Catherine Carmichael" (1878). Although Trollope was aware of the problematic nature of class boundaries in the Antipodes, he nevertheless employed the English model of class distinctions as a point of reference. In the two stories he concentrated on wealthy squatters' attempts to reconstruct the way of life of the English gentry and on the role of women, who either exposed the false pretences to gentility, as in "Catherine Carmichael," or contributed to consolidation of the landowning classes as in *Harry Heathcote of Gangoil*.

When calculating his chances of marrying Kate Daly, a daughter of a bankrupt squatter, Mr Medlicot, a free selector in Anthony Trollope's *Harry Heathcote of Gangoil*, remarks that "[t]he squatters [in Australia] are what the lords and the country gentlemen are at home" (74). He thus both acknowledges Kate's superior social standing and makes an attempt at translating Australian social divisions into the English class system, with which he was familiar. Trollope's Antipodean stories, including *Harry Heathcote of Gangoil* and "Catherine Carmichael: or, Three Years Running," however, reveal the correspondence between the British and Antipodean class systems to be rather superficial. Whereas in England social divisions were relatively well established and sanctified by a long tradition, Australian and New Zealand society remained more plastic, with the boundaries between social groups uncertain and rather vague. The myth of the Antipodes as a land of new opportunities, where fortunes could be made by any man hard-working and persevering enough, contributed to the blurring of social distinctions between people of different backgrounds, be they adventurers or settlers who came to Australia to make their fortune and improve their position. Since the upward mobility was often seen in terms of economic advancement alone, Antipodean

landowning classes tended to be deficient in the cultural capital in comparison with the English gentry. It is hardly surprising since, as Trollope writes in his *Australia* [1873], some landowners were "butchers, drovers, or shepherds […] but a few years since," even if later they "form[ed] an established aristocracy" (84). Once they achieved financial success, they sought other ways to legitimize their position and made attempts at reconstructing the way of life they identified with the English gentry.

The aim of this article is to show the ways Trollope employs the English model of class distinctions to interpret Antipodean social relations. It concentrates on the representation of the group of wealthy Australian and New Zealand landowners, the ways they negotiate their gentility in conditions so different from the ones in Britain, and on the extent to which they can reconstruct the way of life of the English gentry. Trollope proves particularly sensitive to women's role in determining social position, not only because they can skilfully deploy material signifiers of status but also because they are constructed as repositories of middle-class values. Good material position secured by men appears at best a very insufficient marker of class, which is ultimately determined by women who, in the two stories, either expose the false pretences to gentility, as in "Catherine Carmichael," or contribute to consolidation of the landowning classes as in *Harry Heathcote of Gangoil*.

The landowning classes in the nineteenth-century Antipodes fall into two groups, squatters and free selectors, who compete for land and influence. The squatters form the wealthiest group, they are "men of property," as Nicholas Birns indicates, "whatever [the term's] undertones of arbitrary encampment in the context of traditional tenured landholdings" (11). In contrast to free selectors, often seen as "more roving types who approach the landholding game in a more scattershot and *ad hoc* manner" (Birns 11), squatters were seen as "aristocracy of the Australian colonies, both because of their wealth and their connection to the land," so that the term "squattocracy" was applied to describe them as a group (Elliott 223).

Yet, the Australian and New Zealand squatters, whose lives are represented in the two stories by Trollope, constitute a group that is far from homogenous. Dorice Williams Elliott points to tensions "between newly arrived English emigrants with built-in gentility and those who were still attempting to attain it" (30), which is evident in fiction of the period, and to the differences between those in possession of cultural capital even if deficient in wealth and those who possessed economic capital without sufficient cultural capital. "Squattocracy," then, includes people like Harry Heathcote, a man of good birth and a small fortune, who decided to leave England as a young boy to "make or mar his fortune in the new land" (*Harry Heathcote* 5), and who later became "well known west of the Mary river in Queensland" as the owner of 30 000 sheep, a magistrate, and a man "able to hold his own among his neighbours whether rough or gentle" (4). His

roughest neighbour, Old Brownbie, also calls himself a squatter, even though, as the narrator hastens to add, he is "a squatter of a class very different from that to which Heathcote belonged" since "[h]e had begun his life in the colonies a little under a cloud, having been sent out from home after the perpetration of some peccadillo of which the law had disapproved" (55). In other words, the narrator continues, Old Brownbie is a former convict transported to Australia who, after serving his term, settled in the colony as a squatter. However, although "[i]t must be owned on his behalf that he had worked hard, had endeavoured to rise, and had risen," Brownbie's past was never quite forgotten and "there still stuck to him the savour of his old life" (55). His five sons, described as "uneducated, ill-conditioned, drunken fellows, who had all their father's faults without his energy" (55), also saw themselves as belonging to the same social group as Harry:

> They were squatters as well as he – or at least so they termed themselves; and though they would not have expected to be admitted to home intimacies, they thought that when they were met out-of-doors or in public places, they should be treated with some respect. On such occasions Harry treated them as though they were dirt beneath his feet. The Brownbies would be found, whenever a little money came among them, at the public billiard-rooms and race-courses within one hundred and fifty miles of Boolabong. At such places Harry Heathcote was never seen. It would have been as easy to seduce the Bishop of Brisbane into a bet as Harry Heathcote. He had never even drank [sic] a nobbler with one of the Brownbies. To their thinking, he was a proud, stuck-up, unsocial young cub, whom to rob was a pleasure, and to ruin would be a delight. (57)

Whereas the Brownbies aspire to a degree of camaraderie with Harry Heathcote because in this way they would rise in their own estimation, Harry feels superior to them and he perceives any associations with them as a stain on his honour. By abstaining from the rather vulgar entertainment favoured by the Brownbies, he further underlines his own social and moral superiority. Possession of land, which distinguishes squatters from other social groups in Australia, therefore, is not a sufficient indicator of high social standing in Harry's eyes, especially that it is not connected with respectability and not even with possessing ready money.

The Brownbies's position might be seen as a result of the upward mobility – from a convict to a squatter – possible in the Antipodes. Yet, the novel makes it clear that the high rank once it is achieved is neither stable nor secure, so that any misfortune may threaten and destroy everything that a squatter managed to achieve and degrade him to the position of an ordinary worker. *Harry Heathcote of Gangoil*, in fact, shows the protagonist trying to save his land from the fire that could easily spread over his whole property in the hot Australian summer and destroy his life's work. Harry can only dream of "some happy squatting land, in which there were no free-selectors, no fires, no rebellious servants, no

floods, no droughts, no wild dogs to worry the lambs, no grass seeds to get into the fleeces, and in which the price of wool stood steady at two shillings and sixpence a pound" (117). Trollope thus stresses the precarity of the existence of the squatters, who might easily fall from their elevated position to the very bottom of the social hierarchy. The fear of bankruptcy and possible downfall is, indeed, evident in the story which features the character of Mr Bates, "a man who had been a squatter once himself, and having lost his all in bad times, now worked for a small salary" (11), and which makes Mrs Heathcote "the orphan daughter of a ruined squatter" (6).

The class of free-selectors, represented in *Harry Heathcote of Gangoil* by Mr Medlicot, is similarly heterogeneous. Although initially Harry has a rather contemptuous attitude to Mr Medlicot, he finds out in the course of the story that he was much mistaken. Indeed, Mr Medlicotis a relatively wealthy man, so that he can buy a large portion of land and establish his sugar cane plantation together with a sugar mill. Although he knows he is not to be included into the class of squatters, who "regarded him as an interloper, and as a man holding opinions directly averse to their own interests – in which they were right," he was also aware that "the small free-selectors, who lived on the labour of their own hands – or, as was said of many of them, by stealing sheep and cattle – knew well that he was not of their class" (27). In other words, Mr Medlicot was "not either fish or fowl" (27). His position, as the big employer and the owner of the sugar mill could perhaps be compared to that of the rising class of capitalists in England. In any case, both his appearance (so much resented by Harry who considered him a fop) and his behaviour signify his gentility immediately recognised by Mrs Heathcote and her sister Kate Daly.

The social mobility evident in the Antipodes made the boundaries of rank and class much more imprecise and fluid than they were at 'home.' Social distinctions in both stories by Trollope are further complicated by the lack of correspondence between economic, cultural and social capital as well as by the absence of signifiers of social position, which could be competently read by the English. For example, when Harry Heathcote is first presented to the readers, he is described as:

> The young man who had just returned home had on a flannel shirt, a pair of moleskin trousers, and an old straw hat, battered nearly out of all shape. He had no coat, no waistcoat, no braces, and nothing round his neck. Round his waist there was a strap or belt, from the front of which hung a small pouch, and, behind, a knife in a case. And stuck into a loop in the belt, made for the purpose, there was a small brier-wood pipe. (4)

The description points to the absent parts of clothing which would distinguish a typical country gentleman in England. To an English reader, therefore, Harry's appearance might signal a man of a rather inferior social standing, so that the narrator is obliged to explain that "[a]s he dashed his hat off, wiped his brow, and

threw himself into a rocking-chair, he certainly was rough to look at, but by all who understood Australian life he would have been taken to be a gentleman" (4). Not only does the narrator thus signal the differences between Australia and England as regards social distinctions, but he also indicates that English readers must learn to adjust their conception of class and their idea of signifiers of social position in order to be able to read social standing of Antipodean characters properly. Paradoxically, Harry's choice of attire is a sign of his conservatism rather than his slovenliness: he is described as "an aristocrat [who] hated such innovations in the bush as cloth coats and tweed trousers and neck handkerchiefs" (29). As Elliott indicates, Harry's appearance signals that "he is not merely a supervisor or master, but an active participant in all the tasks necessary in running a sheep station," an occupation which, "[f]ar from disqualifying him as gentry, as this kind of physical work would in England, it is part of his claim to that position in Australia" (31). Harry's apparent disregard for gentlemanly appearance suggests that his gentility does not depend so much on the external appearance as on his character, but it might also imply that the task of upholding the genteel practices rests on women, who by dressing for dinner or keeping a family prayer signify their gentility (Archibald 84–86).

Rather than through his personal appearance or through his material position, which is in any case hardly secure in the Australian bush, Harry Heathcote negotiates his social standing and his gentility through domesticity. Indeed, as Elizabeth Langland shows in her *Nobody's Angels* (1995), domestic ideology plays a crucial role in forming Victorian class relations and Victorian domestic women are "key players in consolidating power" of the middle classes and guardians of social borders (9). Consequently, "a mid-Victorian man depended on his wife to perform the ideological work of managing the class question and displaying the signs of middle-class status, towards which he contributed a disposable income" (Langland 9). In the Antipodes domestic ideology acquires yet another dimension. In her *Antipodal England. Emigration and Portable Domesticity in the Victorian Imagination* (2009), Janet C. Myers argues that domestic ideology, apart from being strongly implicated in the question of class and respectability, was also "inextricably bound up with conceptions of English national identity" (7). It could both "play a crucial role in creating unity within the dominant settler group in Australia" (7) and serve "as a corrective to the licentiousness and unbridled mobility" (9). Recreating an ideal home in the Antipodes becomes essential for emigrants who can thus construct their national and class identity.

Mrs Heathcote and her sister in Trollope's story exemplify the struggle to maintain the ideal of domesticity in conditions so different than in England. Although they were probably born in Australia, they nevertheless see England as their home, and like other women of their class they attempt to "establish a 'home' in the Australian countryside by modelling that home on the British domestic ideal" (Archibald 81). Indeed, as Diana Archibald points out:

> By faithfully reproducing the cherished cultural practices of England – no matter how nonsensical such practices appeared under the Southern Cross – women, in a sense, "exported" England to their new country, and used those cultural devices to construct "real" homes. Such, basically, was the argument of these ladies of Australia: since home is England, and the essence of England is its culture, then one can have a home outside England as long as one can properly maintain British cultural practices. (81)

In spite of the external circumstances, which contribute to "the extreme difficulty, if not outright impossibility, even for the white, upper-middle-class 'ladies' of Gangoil, of achieving this 'home'" (Archibald 81), Mrs Heathcote does her best to reconstruct English domesticity. In spite of its imperfections (Archibald 82–84), the Heathcotes' home nevertheless fulfils its ideological function by constituting a refuge from the hardship of work on the farm and a feminine domain associated with physical ease and safety. Although the family life concentrates on the veranda, not allowing for proper compartmentalisation characteristic for an ideal English middle-class home, it nevertheless is presented in terms implying perfect domestic comfort:

> The principal edifice, that in which the Heathcotes lived, contained only one sitting-room, and a bedroom on each side of it; but in truth there was another room, very spacious, in which the family really passed their time; and this was the veranda which ran along the front and two ends of the house. It was twelve feet broad, and, of course, of great length. Here was clustered the rocking-chairs, and sofas, and work-tables, and very often the cradle of the family. Here stood Mrs. Heathcote's sewing-machine, and here the master would sprawl at his length, while his wife, or his wife's sister, read to him. It was here, in fact, that they lived, having a parlour simply for their meals. (11)

The house is, then, rather modest and simple but gives the impression of cosiness, furnished as it is with all the sofas and armchairs. Indeed, the veranda becomes a perfect place for Mrs Heathcote to display her feminine virtues, with the cradle signifying her maternal nature, the sewing machine pointing to her industry for the sake of her family, and the books implying cultivation. Mrs Heathcote and her sister Kate Daly struggle to perform the role of domestic angels and to cultivate the manners and habits of a civilised society (like dressing for dinner), making their best to reconstruct the way of life of the genteel classes in England. Their attempt at maintaining what they see as polite good manners corresponds with their 'civilising' power, which subdues even the imperious Harry Heathcote, who "though he had assumed the bush mode of dressing, still retained the manners of a high-bred gentleman in his intercourse with women" (69).

The household without the presiding spirit of a genteel woman capable of bringing the best in men and subdue their brutish instincts necessarily implies a moral inadequacy of its inhabitants, and consequently, their inferior social

standing. The Brownbies' ill repute, for example, is stressed by the description of their household evidently devoid of domestic comforts:

> The house itself was a wretched place – out of order, with doors and windows and floors shattered, broken, and decayed. There were none of womankind belonging to the family, and in such a house a decent woman-servant would have been out of her place. Sometimes there was one hag there and sometimes another, and sometimes feminine aid less respectable than that of the hags. (57)

The absence of a respectable domestic woman seems to explain both the neglected state of the house and moral degradation of its inhabitants.

Like the Brownbies, Peter Carmichael in Trollope's "Catherine Carmichael: or, Three Years Running" led a wifeless and rather lonely existence in a distant New Zealand farm for several years. In contrast to them, however, he proved to be a successful squatter whose hard work, thrift and perseverance helped him accumulate enough wealth to make him believe himself to be socially superior to his impoverished relatives and friends. Yet, although the narrator in the story gives him his due describing him as "a just man, in his way," he nevertheless indicates that he was also "coarse and altogether without sentiment" as well as "hard of hand and hard of heart – a stern, stubborn man, who was fond only of his money" (495), thus pointing to his moral inadequacies disqualifying him from a pretence to true gentility. Consequently, Peter Carmichael's plan to marry Catherine, a relatively well-born but penniless woman, comes as a surprise. It is not clear whether his decision is dictated by a sudden awakening of his sympathy for the young woman and his wish to help the daughter of his former associate, or perhaps by his desire to crown his material success by marriage and to improve his otherwise lonely life in the distant farm. Whatever the reasons for this marriage, Peter Carmichael seems to remain unaffected by it. Not only does he make it impossible for Catherine to create a truly domestic atmosphere in Warriwa, where they live, but he also resists her moral influence. His marriage, in fact, exposes his moral deficiencies rather than "civilising" or bringing the best in him.

Peter Carmichael's ungentlemanly nature becomes evident when he is contrasted with his wife and her mother. Although the circumstances in which Catherine lived as a girl were very difficult, since her father was a gold-digger in New Zealand, she "showed traces of gentle blood from which she had sprung" (496). Indeed, her mother, a daughter of a laird, was "ever decent in language, in manners, and in morals" (492). Interestingly enough, she hardly had a proper home, since the family was obliged to move from one place to another, so that "[e]verything around the young Bairds was rough" and they were "frequently changing their residence from one shanty to another [and] the last shanty would always be the roughest" (492). Yet, if the lack of proper home and proper domestic arrangements affected Mr Baird, who "became more and more hardened", the

women of the family retained "a taste for decency" (492). Her father's "precarious and demoralizing trade of a gold-digger at Hokotika" (492) did not demoralise or degrade her. Neither does hard physical work seem to diminish Catherine's claim to in-born gentility. Although she has no time for leisure activities pursued by young middle-class women, she nevertheless has a selfless spirit of an angelic woman:

> Of the amusements, of the lightness and pleasures of life, she had never known anything. To sit vacant for an hour dreaming over a book had never come to her; nor had it been for her to make the time run softly with some apology for women's work in her hands. The hard garments, fit for a miner's work, passed through her hands. The care of the children, the preparation of their food, the doing the best she could for the rough household – these things kept her busy from her early rising till she would go late to bed. But she loved her work because it had been done for her father and her mother, her brothers and sisters. (496)

Not only does the story point to women as the repositories of middle-class values, which they struggle to maintain in the most extreme conditions, but it also seems to confirm the Victorian ideology in presenting them as morally superior to men, who are represented as more easily succumbing to circumstances forced as they are to fight their way to maintain their families. Moreover, Trollope's story suggests that material factors, important as they might be, do not determine a person's status. True gentility would make itself evident even in the harshest circumstances.

Indeed, Mr Peter Carmichael evidently fails both to understand that there are other than material aspects to social position and to recognize his wife's moral superiority. His nouveau riche status is reflected in his domestic arrangements and his utter misunderstanding of the roles of a wife in an ideal middle-class household. When Catherine arrives at Warriwa, she finds her new home well preserved and solid enough but far from pleasant:

> [Peter Carmichael] boasted that things were tidier there than she had known them at the diggings. The outside of the house was so, for the three rooms on to the wide prairie-land of the sheep-run had a verandah before them, and the place was not ruinous. But there had been more of comfort in the shanty which her father and brothers had built for their home down the gold-gully. (498)

Catherine knows that material wealth itself does not offer domestic comfort, or, as she phrases it, "[c]ould she have made herself happy with mutton she might have lived a blessed life" (498). Her new home is for her just a number of objects which do not have any significance for her since she does not feel they belong to her or that they have any meaning through association with a person she loves:

> A woman can generally take an interest in the little surroundings of her being, feeling that the tables and the chairs and the beds and the linen are her own. Being her own, they are dear to her and will give a constancy of employment which a man cannot understand. […] There was not much there for a woman to love; but little as there was, she could have loved it for the man's sake, had the man been lovable. (497–498)

Catherine's home, then, is for her not much more than a place to eat and sleep in, as well as transacting business with the farm hands, who could buy provisions stored in the house. Not only is the domestic realm not separated properly from the business of running the sheep farm, but Catherine herself is treated much like a farm worker. She is not granted any freedom in organising the domestic realm, she is not given the store-room keys, which in Victorian fiction function as the symbol of the power of the mistress of house, and even her own provisions are weighed for her just as for the farm workers.

Peter Carmichael's marriage and domestic life are thus far from happy nor do they in any way contribute to enhancing his social position. He fails to understand that his wealth itself does not constitute any grounds for the status of a true gentleman since his economic capital does not correspond with his cultural capital, rendering it impossible for him to comprehend Catherine's role as a wife. Both "Catherine Carmichael" and *Harry Heathcote of Gangoil* represent gentility as a moral and cultural concept rather than one simply based on economic position, and they construct social distinctions as maintained and determined by domestic women. Therefore, whereas Harry Heathcote is presented as a born and bred gentleman, whose wife manages to bring out the best in him, Peter Carmichael lacks a gentleman's virtues, and his marriage can hardly affect his unrefined nature. In other words, whereas Harry's wife in the novel helps establish his gentility, Catherine Carmichael exposes her husband's moral and social deficiencies.

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"The White Experiment": Racism and the Broome Pearl-Shelling Industry

Abstract

With the Federation of Australia, aspiration for racial homogeneity was firmly established as being fundamental to national identity. Therefore, increasing criticism was directed against Asian employment in the pearl-shelling industry of Broome. It was not least against the backdrop of population politics, that several efforts were implemented to disestablish the purportedly 'multiracial enclave' in 'White Australia.' These culminated in "the white experiment," i.e. the introduction of a dozen British men to evince European fitness as pearl divers and initiate the replacement of Asian pearling crews. Embedded in these endeavours were reflections of broader discourses on 'white supremacy' and racist discrimination.

"Broome is, in fact, as far removed from Australia as if it were at the other end of the China Sea," stated a Victorian newspaper in 1901. In the year of the Federation, the settlement on the north-eastern coast was "in all respects an Eastern town." It was, however, not its geographical distance to the Australian metropolises but its inhabitants from various countries that triggered this assertion. The vast majority of the population came from Asian nations to work in and around the local pearl-shelling industry. That it was at the same time "one of the most prosperous places in the Commonwealth" (*Geelong Advertiser* 4) only aggravated the chagrin of all those who endorsed a 'White Australia.'

During the latter quarter of the nineteenth century, nation-building in Australia had been decisively shaped by societal and political processes that aimed at securing racial homogeneity and upholding the ideal of white supremacy. In this context, the 'multiracial enclave' Broome occupied a prominent position in the discourse on the national development, not least, because it was one of two industries that deviated from the continent-wide racist exclusionism.

To this day, the secondary literature considers the historical case of the pearl-shelling industry a "rare exemption from the White Australia policy" (Martínez 231).

The Australian Government's official website even locates this special status geographically and states that "Broome was made an exception to the White Australia Policy" (Australian Government 2007). However, the notion that Broome and its social landscape were, in fact, an outright "hole in 'white' Australia" (McQueen 2004, 69) seems to be a too simplistic assumption and understates the complexity of the processes which defined and affected the everyday relations of the people and the relationship between Broome and the rest of Australia.

The racist mechanisms that shaped the national mood did by no means spare the north-western town. Most of the local politicians and master pearlers – more often than not the same person – were professed advocates of white supremacy and endorsed the broad anti-Asian attitude. These circumstances beg for a closer exploration of the social, political and cultural processes that shaped the pearl-shelling industry and the interactive constructionism on the local and national level that informed and influenced the industry. This investigation is, in fact, an extensive project, comprising a historico-sociological analysis of racism as a social relation, which uses as a historical example the pearl-shelling industry in Broome.[1]

As a part thereof, this article investigates a temporary episode in the long history of racisms in the north-western town: the (failed) attempt to 'whiten' the most important industry at Broome by replacing the Japanese pearl divers with professional divers recruited in England. In doing so, it employs discourse and process analysis by looking at the existent body of secondary literature and complementing it with primary sources for original tone. In the following, the article will initially set the scene by contextualising the particular situation in which Broome found itself at the end of the nineteenth century in the light of 'White Australia,' outline the history of and labour situation in the town, and, lastly, depict the rise and fall of the 'white divers' and the racist dimensions inherent in this endeavour.

1. 'White Australia'

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, national identity in Australia was firmly associated with 'whiteness' as the predominant feature. Through the course of the eighteenth century, it had become the marker of civilization and progress. With the establishment of race theories, and their popularization in the nineteenth century, the hierarchization of humans "generated a space of whiteness, open to different classes," especially in settler colonies (Hund 70).

Hence, from the perspective of historical racism research, the societal processes in Australia are of utmost interest. They express the continuation of a firm belief in white supremacy. Nevertheless, they also represent the acknowledgement of a challenge to the purported peak position of Western cultures. Uproars in the colonies around the world compelled the recognition that, at the

beginning of the twentieth century, white supremacy had to be defended against what seemed to be "crises of whiteness" (Bonnett 18), brought about by the "rising tide of colour" (Stoddard 1920).

The Federation of the Australian colonies in 1901 was the culmination of a development that had gained momentum in the late nineteenth century. For years, a "conflict of interest" with the British mother country, not least regarding the defence of the continent, had been smouldering (Meaney 1976, 6). With the broad support of the working class, which strongly emphasized its 'whiteness' (Faulkner and Macintyre 15), the call for isolationist principles resulted in legislation which reduced, if not completely suppressed, 'undesirable,' i.e. primarily Asian, immigration and superelevated the continent as a possession of European settlers: the 'White Australia policy' with its Immigration Restriction Act.

This was not a mere political construct but was additionally backed up by an institutional embeddedness in the social reality of its citizens. Racism "expresses itself in the practices, institutions, and structures that a sense of deep difference justifies or validates"; it "directly sustains or proposes to establish a racial order" (Frederickson 6). On the southern-most continent, it also took the form of a 'White Australia culture' which found entrance into the everyday life of its population: amongst other things, theatrical pieces, poems, and songs propagated the ideal of white supremacy and the desire for racial homogeneity. In terms of literature, there existed a whole genre of invasion literature which proved especially popular in Australia (Affeldt 2011, 223). It was dedicated to the notion that the size of the population was not sufficient to claim the whole Australian continent and developed possible scenarios of hostile take-overs by foreign powers and dire notions of an "Asian future" (Walker 325). The alleged threat – a factual discourse mirrored in the literary genre – was in particular seen in the surplus population of the neighbouring Asian countries in the north. These were predicted to avail themselves of the purportedly under-populated landscapes of the northern coasts: the so-called 'empty North.' Chinese and Japanese immigrants, based on their alleged numerical superiority, would 'swamp' the country and jeopardize racial purity through miscegenation (Aly and Walker 204). Even worse for the proponents of 'White Australia,' the intruders would certainly join forces with the Indigenous Australians and lay claim to the continent the European settlers deemed their rightful possession.

It was, therefore, more than mere economic fears that spoke against the employment of Japanese and other Asians in northern industries. Against the backdrop of Western anxieties regarding the 'yellow peril,' Australia found itself in a special situation. With its cultural closeness to Britain and its geographical closeness to Asia, Australia was seen as the "last resort" of the "white race" (Pearson 17) and was thus considered to be at special risk. Not only was, to Australian minds, the military power of Japan worrisome. Its victory over Russia at Tsushima in 1905, and the later claim to racial equality in the negotiations on the Peace Treaty

in 1919, caused a stir in the Western societies and challenged (once more) the idea of white supremacy in the world. In addition, with the relocation of the imperial navy, Australia felt that its relation to the British Empire was challenged and the continent's security was decisively compromised (Meaney 2009, 10).

At this time, for the outpost of European civilization the Far East had become the "Near East" (Miles 366). With the constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia, the reduction of Asian immigration and the fostering of the 'British element' were adopted as national aims. While the Immigration Restriction Act regulated, or rather virtually abolished, the arrival of Asian migrants, the Pacific Island Labourers Act, as the second pillar of 'White Australia,' solved the 'black labour' problem in the other northern industry.

The employment of workers from the South Sea Islands – the so-called Pacific Islanders – in the sugar cane field of Queensland had provoked intensified debates during the pre-Federation proceedings and almost impeded the colony's admission to the new Commonwealth. The latter act, mandating the repatriation of the Islanders, constituted the first step to a much demanded 'whitening' of the sugar industry (Affeldt 2014, 357–424). The transformation of the sugar industry was crucially pushed forward by the labour movement, which was applying notions of cross-class 'whiteness' to insist on the employment of European workers under suitable living and work conditions for the benefit of 'White Australia' (Affeldt 2010, 119).

These processes decisively affected the arguments for a similar reconstruction of the pearl-shelling industry. Broome, with its population consisting of ten times more coloured than 'white' inhabitants, posed a special problem for a nation that aspired to racial homogeneity and claimed the whole continent "for the White Man," as one of the journalistic mouthpieces of 'White Australia,' *The Bulletin*, did after 1908 (London 153). Under its former masthead, "Australia for the Australians," the paper had already defined whom it considered Australians: while the "term Australian" was by no means exclusive to those "who have been merely born in Australia" but – with reservations regarding, not least, class, religion, political views, and mental condition – related to "all white men who come to these shores"; it was certain that "[n]o nigger, no Chinaman, no lascar, no kanaka, no purveyor of cheap labour is an Australian" (*Bulletin* 2.7.1887, 4). The paper thus not only demonstrated an aversion to non-'white' labour but also explicitly criticized those who were the employers of such workers and challenged their being 'true' Australians.

Initially, this did not interfere with the master pearlers' recruitment of Japanese and other Asian workers. Despite the restrictions on immigration into the Commonwealth, which posed a potential problem for the employment of Asians in the pearl-shelling industry, for the first decade of the twentieth century, the pearlers' lobbying was effective enough to successfully press for exemptions and special regulations regarding their divers and pearl-shelling crews.

2. Broome

When, shortly before Federation, a journalist with the Melbourne newspaper *The Age* visited Broome, he was taken aback by its apparent cosmopolitanism. In a nation that actively pursued racial homogeneity, the distant town on the north-western shores of the continent must have seemed like a 'multiracial enclave,' thronged with people from Japan, Malaysia, Manilla and other neighbouring islands and countries.

"Willy Willy" – tellingly, the journalist took his pen name from the tropical whirlwind that was common to the region and permanently threatened to annihilate the town – described Broome as a "mixing of nationalities and hybrids" that would "utterly puzzle the cleverest ethnologist" (*The Age* 16.8.1899, 7). The journalist was especially concerned with what he considered the racially detrimental power of the high number of Japanese and Chinese living and working in Broome. In his view, Japanese divers closed off the labour market to European workers; since the foreign workers transferred their earned money to their respective countries of origin, no profit in any form could be reaped for Australia from their employment (*The Age* 26.8.1899, 4). Asserting that continuing the employment of Asian workers in the pearl-shelling industry meant prolonging a "suicidal" system which constituted a "menace to the future of the continent" and "national progress" (*The Age* 26.8.1899, 4), he made a strong case for the 'whitening' of the Broome pearl-shelling industry. To him, replacing the encroaching and race-adulterating Asian labourers with European, preferably British-Australian crews seemed the only sensible move.

Fear of a Japanese 'seizure' was neither exclusive to the Broome situation, nor was it limited to the few years after Federation. Thursday Island, too, had long been under the suspicion of "becoming a Japanese colony" (Frei 80–81); the "complete control of the pearling industry will pass into Japanese hands shortly" (*Toowoomba Chronicle and Darling Downs* 18.5.1899, 4). This warning was heated in Western Australia and repeated at least until 1920, when it was stated that "Thursday Island is practically run by Japanese" and "pearling is largely monopolised by Japanese" (*Western Argus* 22.6.1920, 25). But Thursday Island was not part of Australia's mainland nor did the number of Japanese come near that of Broome.

Historically, pearl-shelling had begun in the north-west of Australia in 1868 as a venture of European pastoralists who had newly arrived on the northern shores (Streeter 144–145, 156–157). The first shells were collected during low water without diving. As soon as these easily harvestable deposits became exhausted, groups of Indigenous Australians were (forcibly) recruited to dive for shell in depths from two to four meters. After they had acquired the necessary swimming and diving skills (Bartlett 83), they did not use any special diving equipment and sought for shells by sight. In the mid-1880s, legislation in Western

Australia limited the arbitrariness with which the local Indigenous groups were deployed by the European graziers and pearlers; in particular, it prohibited the employment of pregnant Indigenous Australians as divers. Pearl-shell diving was further professionalized when the search turned to deeper waters and diving suits were introduced to the industry in the 1880s. With this, the 'skin diving' of the Indigenous Australians was ended and the era of 'helmet diving,' with its turn to Asian men as divers, began (Bain 26–29).

Broome was founded in 1883. Already by the late 1880s, it had become the pearl capital of the world, providing more than three-quarters of the global amount of pearl-shell produced (Bailey 102) – which was then used for buttons and buckles, hair combs and for the decoration of furniture. By then, its population was already highly diverse, with Japanese pearl divers, ship crews with Malays and other foreign workers in local shops and institutions.

The purportedly romantic life of the pearlers continues to be a subject of (fictitious) writing until today. Broome has "more novels written about it than any other town in the Commonwealth" (Cowan 76).[2] Given the number of books that have been written on its history and inhabitants, Broome "must remain an integral part of the Australian legend" (Drake-Brockman 32). The impression of a close-knit community had been created already early on in the history of the town. One of the earliest accounts on pearl-shelling at the north-western coast talked about the "'Pearlers' or 'Nor-Westers' [...] hard and dangerous but healthy life," regulated by an "unwritten code of honour that is seldom broken." The remoteness from the rest of Australia functioned as a social cohesive for a community that was shaped by an absence of the "amenities and restraints of more civilised life" (Streeter 147). Thus, from the start, life in Broome has been deemed rather different from that in other Australian cities: ostensibly a rougher and tougher but also a more pure life.

At first glance, Broome seems to have been a racially inclusive settlement that stood in contradiction to the exclusivist political movements in the rest of the nation. Compared with the nationwide aspiration for racial homogeneity, the atmosphere could be interpreted as rather anti-discriminatory. Consequently, some of the secondary literature sees in Broome an "exciting pocket of humanity in the drab textures of 'white' Australia" (Bartlett 25). The employment of high numbers of Japanese and Asian crews far into the twentieth century seem so in contradiction with the racist sentiment against Asian immigration that Broome was even declared "the exception that proved the rule" or considered to be the "antithesis of a 'white' Australia" (Ganter 66, 70).

However, the population of Broome, in general, was highly segregated. 'Whites' were shunned if they were seen in the Japanese, Chinese or Malayan parts of the town. The jobs were based on the racial hierarchy in the town, with those identified as 'Koepangers' or 'Manillamen' and Indigenous Australians having to do menial tasks. As divers, Japanese men could acquire a high reputation – at sea,

they were also entrusted with the command over the pearl luggers and were largely responsible for picking their crew. It was, however, the 'white' master pearlers – called 'veranda pearlers' because most of them refrained from personally sailing out with the luggers – who reaped the profit and behaved "in a manner close to that of white expatriates in the tropical colonies of the British empire" with "aboriginal boys and girls for rough, unskilled work, Chinese gardeners, Malay housekeepers, Japanese cooks" (Reynolds 124).

At the heyday of pearling – which coincided with the years of the strongest nationalism and racism in Australia – skin colour was still the identifier of those deemed members of the 'superior race' in Broome. But this was not the only signifier. A reporter witnessed that the "white" in Broome are the "lord dictators and the rich men," they were united in their dress, the "white duck suit," which was worn by both the cart driver and the wealthy pearl-buyer and which "covered up outward differences of social status" (*The Sun* 10.7.1910, 7). This societal pyramid not only mirrored assertions of white supremacy and the unifying aspect of racism directed against the racialized 'Other' (Allen 32) but also evidenced that Asian labour was the crucial fundament of the pearl-shelling industry in Broome.

Nevertheless, in the decade after Federation, the master pearlers' emphasis on the need for an amendment of the Immigration Restriction Bill in favour of their industry began to clash with the Labor Party's long-term opposition to 'coloured labour.' The latter argued not only in terms of the socioeconomic effects – an undercutting of 'white' workers' wages and a substratification of the working class – but also brought in biologistic and culturalist arguments (McQueen 1975, 36). They, too, argued on grounds of "racial contamination" and eugenics – as one Labor politician did in the negotiations on the Immigration Restriction Bill (Watson 1901).

The first national Labor Party entertained as their foremost goal the retaining of 'White Australia' (Burgmann 1980; McMullin 46–47). Likewise, the mouthpiece of the labour movement, *The Worker*, proclaimed that a "colored population is, as civilisation goes, always a menace and a positive injury to any white community." The often-voiced claim that "[t]here is no more in the cry that white men can't dive than there was in the statement that they couldn't cut cane" (*The Worker* 16.2.1911, 15), is a significant interjection in the debate about the reluctance to employ European pearling crews, because "the best patriotism for Australia is the maintenance of this continent as a heritage of a purely European people" (*The Worker* 31.12.1914, 11).

This, of course, meant the cessation of Asian employment in favour of 'White Australia,' even against the objections and will of the master pearlers. Added to this were the increase of Japanese agency in Broome and the consequent emergence of 'racial conflicts' between several foreign groups. At least three times during the first half of the twentieth century social tension in the settlement erupted into 'race riots,' which saw Japanese attacking other Asian workers (Choo 466). These

disparities further contributed to the pressure on the master pearlers to employ European workers in their industry. The intensification of prolonged debates on the 'whitening' of the Broome pearl-shelling industry eventually resulted in the implementation of "the white experiment" (*The Age* 10.6.1916, 17).

3. White Divers

In early February 1912, eleven British men landed in Broome. They were hoped to be 'living evidence' to refute the long-held axiom of Japanese uniqueness in the craft of pearl diving. Eight of the new arrivals – William Webber, Frederick W. Beesley, Ernest S. Freight, Fred Harvey, Stephen Elphick, Stanley J. Sanders, John Noury, and James Rolland – were highly skilled former British Navy divers, the other three men – William Reid, Harry Hanson, and Charles Andrews – were tenders, who, as experienced mechanics, were responsible for the diving equipment and monitored the dive by regulating the air feed and communicating with the divers via the life-line. They were joined in the following month by a twelfth British man, Reginald V. Heckliss, who was also employed as a deep-sea diver.[3]

Their employment was an attestation to the racist aspirations of the time; the men themselves were meant to be signifiers of the superiority of European superiority over Asian divers. Nevertheless, the eventual recruitment of these British men for the work in the pearl-shelling industry had been preceded by much debate in parliaments on local and national levels (Bailey 9). As early as 1905, Labor politicians had emphasised the urgency to restructure the pearl-shelling industry as a 'white' industry. But it was not until 1911 that the Fisher government passed a statutory regulation to foster such transformation, ruling that, after December 31, 1913, Asian crews were only permitted if both the diver and the tender were European (Layman 41).

The labour movement had lauded this decision taken under Labor prime minister Andrew Fisher, as it seemed like the first step in their continuous fight against 'coloured labour.' In the year preceding the 'white experiment,' the labour movement's mouthpieces regularly called out renowned pearlers for their reluctance to employ Europeans. It claimed that "the antipathy of the Broome pearling firms to unionists, and white labour in general, is well known" (*The Worker* 14.6.1911, 2) and that it was "better the pearl shell industry go under than be carried on as it now is" (*The Worker* 16.2.1911, 15). Locally, this view was quite disputed, as one of the pearlers disclosed that "[t]here is really no foundation for what is said that some of the pearlers have an objection to work with white divers." They were "ready to give the white man a chance" but found that, due to the climatic and work conditions, Europeans refrained from applying for jobs in the pearl-shelling industry (*The Northern Times* 18.3.1911, 5).

Broadly, even amongst the pearlers, the debate was split between those who were willing to approve at least of a temporary recruitment and those who uncompromisingly denied the possibility of 'white labour' in the pearl-shelling industry. Generally, the master pearlers were rather convinced of the non-feasibility of this endeavour (Bailey 130–131). Not only because, as they argued, the pearl-shelling industry would be ruined if wages adequate for European workers had to be paid, but also because the Japanese divers were very experienced and proficient in discovering and collecting shell from the ocean floor. Nonetheless, in return for a further deferral of the phasing out of Japanese divers and tenders, the local Pearlers' Association agreed to employ the British men on one-year contracts, pay them wages deemed adequate for European ship crews, and assign them pearl luggers and crews.

Disputes about the employability of 'white divers' continued during their employment. Outside of Broome, it seemed almost a self-evident fact that with the taking effect of the 'White Australia policy' the gathering of shells and pearls was to be done by 'white' men only. With the pearl-shelling industry as the last industry to still employ non-Europeans in such a high number, its unusual position became even more urgent. Expectations were thus high that this vanguard of 'white divers' would be able to pave the way for an industry reliant only on European divers and tenders (with Asian crews, if inevitable). In addition, the firm sponsoring the divers' equipment continued to assure that the British divers would "prove quite equal to the strain" given their "intelligence, indomitable pluck and endurance" (*The Daily Post* 1.2.1912, 4).

The subsequent months made clear that the recruitment of the 'white divers' had been a spectacular failure. Despite the explicit professionalism gained whilst doing underwater engineering work in Britain, "diving for shell was way beyond the previous experience and training of the English divers" (Bailey 95). Because of a lack of the two-year period seasoning and training, the Japanese divers commonly had and due to different underwater techniques, the British men failed to produce the tons of shell the pearlers were customarily expecting.

Considering the high mortality rate amongst the pearl divers – before 1914 one of ten divers a year succumbed to diver's paralysis or met with a subsea accident (Bartlett 210) – it is not surprising that such a fate also befell the British divers. It is, however, a bitter irony that William Webber of all people was the first fatality of "the white experiment." The sparse information made public the unfolding of the accident suggested that it was the non-observance of the concerning Admiralty Tables that had led to the occurrence of the decompression sickness to which he succumbed (Norman 1912). These preventive measures to ensure a secure ascent had been developed only a decade before in Scotland (Bailey 143) and it was Webber who, as an experimental diver, had made decisive contributions to the development of the guidelines (Burke 1999, 108). He died on board of the pearl lugger in the early hours of June 7, 1912.

All of the European divers had experienced slight bouts of paralysis during their employment in the pearl-shelling industry; besides Webber, for two more these were eventually lethal. The second fatality was Frederick Beesley who, despite attempts of resuscitation, also died from paralysis in the morning of February 18, 1913 (Department of External Affairs 21). He was followed by Stanley J. Sanders who, as the "last white diver" substituted for a sick colleague and died from the decompression sickness (presumably) on August 20, 1913 (*The Register* 26.8.1913, 6).

By the end of August 1913 – a mere eighteen months after the arrival of the 'white divers' – a governmental memo provided the sobering realisation that the attempts to prove the Europeans' fitness for pearl-diving had failed completely (Customs and Excise Office Broome 30.8.1913, 6–7). It reported that out of all participants only the former tender William Reid had remained in the industry and was then working as a shell-opener. Two of the surviving divers and one former tender put on record that though "they had been given every opportunity while engaged in the industry, and were quite satisfied with the pay [...] the risks were far too great, space cramped and life monotonous" (30.8.1913, 6–7).

It is difficult to pinpoint why exactly the 'white experiment' had failed. The master pearlers continued to claim that European divers did not have the necessary instinct for discovering shell on the ocean floor.[4] This had resulted in a curious incident that was circulated in the national papers: in an attempt to confirm these allegations, one master pearler attempted to press a British diver to make an admission of failure. Stanley J. Sanders was forced by pearler Sydney Pigott to "sign a paper declaring that white men were not suitable for pearl diving" (*The Argus* 9.8.1913, 19). Upon learning that Pigott planned to publish this acknowledgement, Sanders attempted to forcibly retrieve the piece of paper. This led to his arrest and the conclusion that, in a town led by pearlers, the British divers "challenged the rule of the master pearlers at their peril" (Bailey 192).

Others – in particular members of the labour movement – claimed that the efforts of the 'white divers' had been sabotaged by the master pearlers (Bailey 286–287). Such assertions were further substantiated by the report of a committee. After an investigation into the details of the trial employment, it concluded that the Pearlers' Association had not encouraged the introduction of European workers and that "many obstacles were placed in the way of the white divers, as they were given unsuitable boats and gear, and were not allowed the same freedom of choice as the Japanese divers, nor were they properly tendered"; "given the same opportunities and facilities as the aliens, there was no reason why they should not be equally successful as divers" (*The Brisbane Courier* 10.2.1913, 5).

The practical implementation of the 'white experiment' in Broome was accompanied by a broader investigation in the pearl-shelling industry. It also determined the situation in the two other, yet less prominent, pearl-shelling locations: Thursday Island in Queensland and Darwin in the Northern Territory. All

of these "highly multi-cultural" centres were "in stark contrast to most other Australian communities of the time" (Saenger and Stubbs 4), but it was in particular Broome with its disproportional number of Asian workers that incurred criticism from the agents of racial homogeneity.

The Royal Commission was appointed in the context of the planned suspension of Asian divers and tenders in early 1912. Amongst other things, it inquired into "the practicability of white labour being introduced" and "the means to be adopted to encourage employment of white labour" in the pearl-shelling industry (Hunt 627). The interim report – published in 1913, after the commission had visited the pearl-shelling centres in Queensland – was quite confident that pearl-shelling with 'white labour' was possible and made recommendations on the improvement on the industry (Bailey 197). However, when the Commission resumed their investigations after the First World War and relocated to Broome, the initial opinion was revised. In their final report, published in 1916, the commissioners discouraged making crucial changes to the pearl-shelling industry of Broome. They stated that even though they were "opposed to the continuation of coloured labour," there was no possibility to dispense with it. The commissioners asserted that "the White Australia Policy will be neither weakened nor imperilled by allowing the pearl shelling industry to continue as at present conducted." Even more striking regarding an analysis of the racist argumentation inherent in the social and political discourses of the day were the commissioner's deliberations on who could (not) be expected to cope with the living and working conditions in the pearl-shelling industry. They affirmed that:

> diving for shell is not an occupation which our workers should be encouraged to undertake. The life is not a desirable one, and the risks are great, as proved by the abnormal death rate amongst divers and try divers. [...] [T]he life [is] incompatible with that a European worker is entitled to live. (The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia 6)

This obvious recourse to the idea of the higher living standard Europeans were entitled to strongly invites further investigation of the white supremacy in the context of the pearl-shelling industry.

The employment of Japanese divers and Asian crews continued throughout the first half of the twentieth century, despite the national aspiration for racial homogeneity, the restrictionist provisions on Asian immigration, and the broader anti-Asian atmosphere of the time. Two periods of declining demand for pearls and pearl-shell during the World Wars, the fluctuating prices, and the development of artificial cultivation of oysters contributed to the eventual retreat of Australian pearl-shelling in the 1960s.

Conclusion

On their way to Federation, the Australian colonies drove a hard bargain as concerned questions of immigration and 'alien labour.' Nation-building was fundamentally based on a constitution that took into account the maintenance of a racially homogeneous society. Against this backdrop, it seemed certain that the pearl-shelling industry would have little chance to assert itself against the demands to replace the Japanese, Malayans and other non-white workers, including the diminishing number of Indigenous Australians, with British and other European workers. Yet, despite several attempts to transform the industry – most notably "the white experiment" – the master pearlers' resistance, and the ostensibly empirically proven impossibility of 'white labour' in the industry, Broome ended up having the multicultural population, comprised of many Asians, Indigenous Australians and Europeans, it is renowned for today.

Nevertheless, the intricate negotiations surrounding the employment of European workers in the Broome pearl-shelling industry, the hardly veiled notions of racial hierarchy in the argumentations on all sides, and the need to balance the anxiety of the 'yellow peril' and concrete fears of invasion with the possibility of dooming the industry to failure by mandating demographic reorganisation substantiate the pearl-shelling industry's complex history of social and political tensions on the local and national level. These circumstances urge further examination of the racisms active in this context and the relation between Broome and 'White Australia.'

Notes

1 My research project "Exception or Exemption? The Broome Pearling Industry and the White Australia Policy" is a three-year, DFG-funded in-depth exploration of the north-western industry and its cultural, social, and political implications in the light of Australian racism in the late 19th and 20th century (http://gepris.dfg.de/gepris/projekt/403220357?language=en).

2 Amongst these, two accounts of the 'white experiment' stand out. Peter Burke's *The Drowning Dream* (1998) retraces, unfortunately not always historically correct, the events surrounding the experiment's first fatality as a mystery story. Hilary Bell's *The White Divers of Broome* (2012) takes John Bailey's historical account and, with a proper portion of artistic licence, fleshes it out as a theatrical play.

3 The spelling of the names varies; I follow that of the archival files, see Department of External Affairs 1913, 15.

4 As an aside: similar perceptions have persisted until present times. A Swedish scientist claims that "a population of sea nomads [...] have developed an underwater visual acuity that is more than twice as good as that of European

children"; nevertheless, "European children can be trained to achieve the same level of acuity underwater as the Moken children" (Gislén 2003). This conclusion, however, did not stop popular media from sensationalizing underlying investigation and, in a dichotomous tone not unlike that found with the master pearlers, claim that "[i]n the sea, most of us are half-blind – but the Moken are king" (Pilcher 2003) as well as simultaneously place them in and beyond nature by having "super-human, dolphin-like abilities" (Bush 2017).

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Scaling Colonial Violence: One Day Celebrations in Fremantle, WA

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyse the Fremantle City Council's decision to celebrate One Day on January 28th 2017 instead of the usual Australia Day on January 26th, as well as the ensuing media debate between its supporters and opponents, especially Noongar leaders and WA Government. The discourse is examined in the context of the disruption of colonial violence. The City of Fremantle, as a place, itself serves as a point of reference for the analysis. Although today Fremantle is often perceived as a "progressive island" in a largely conservative Western Australia, the Fremantle prison and nearby Rottnest Island are stark reminders of the maltreatment of the Whadjuk people after the formation of the Swan River Colony in 1829.[1]

In December 2016, I attended the International Australian Studies Association's conference in Fremantle, Western Australia (WA). The conference was titled "Re-imagining Australia: Encounter, Recognition, Responsibility." Going there, I had little knowledge of Fremantle itself, and it was my first visit to WA. I read up on the city's history and was looking forward to visiting the famous Maritime Museum and Fremantle Prison. It was not until I met my hosts, whom I found via a traveller website that I heard about, how progressive Fremantle was supposed to be, especially compared to the rest of Western Australia. The couple seemed to have quite a liberal approach to issues such as immigration, personal freedoms, etc. On the following day, prompted by the news on TV, they told me about the Fremantle City Council's decision to move the celebrations of Australia Day from January 26th to January 28th in 2017. They were outraged and insisted that the celebrations of Australia Day had nothing to do with the history of genocide, and that they were about the wonderful and multicultural nation that Australia has become. I was perplexed not only by the argument itself, but also by what seemed to me like a dissonance in their attitudes toward immigrants and the Indigenous Peoples of Australia. Later on in our discussion, it also turned out

that their attitudes toward the issues faced by Indigenous communities, such as crime, incarceration or alcoholism were definitely not ones one would normally associate with left-wing views. They not only blamed Indigenous communities for their fate, but also saw Australian society as the saviour of the Indigenous victims of crime and neglect saying, for example, that if some Aboriginal children had not been taken away from their families, they would have died.

The National Australia Day Council, which was founded in 1979, views Australia Day as "a day to reflect on what we have achieved and what we can be proud of in our great nation," and a "day for us to re-commit to making Australia an even better place for the generations to come" (National Australia Day Council; qtd. in Korff 2018). Australia Day is supposed to be a commemoration of Captain Arthur Phillip's formal possession of the colony of New South Wales, on January 26th, 1788, when he raised the British flag for the first time in Sydney Cove (Korff 2018). It became a public holiday in 1818 and in the early 1880s, it was known as "First Landing," "Anniversary Day," or "Foundation Day." In 1946 the Commonwealth and state governments agreed to unify the celebrations on January 26 and call it "Australia Day" (Korff 2018). Since 1994 all states and territories celebrate Australia Day together on that day, during which citizenship ceremonies are held. People also celebrate with barbecues, contests, parades, performances, fireworks and other fun events.

1. 'Change the Date' Debate

However, for many Indigenous Australians, there is not much to celebrate. Quite the contrary, it is a commemoration of a deep loss for them: "loss of their sovereign rights to their land, loss of family, loss of the right to practice their culture" (Korff 2018). As stated by Aboriginal activist Michael Mansell, "Australia Day is 26 January, a date whose only significance is to mark the coming to Australia of the white people in 1788. It's not a date that is particularly pleasing for Aborigines" (qtd. in Korff 2018). Such sentiments have been present for a very long time. In 1938, on the holiday's 150th anniversary, William Cooper, a member of the Aboriginal Progressive Association, declared it a "Day of Mourning," referring to the annual re-enactment of Phillip's landing (Korff 2018).[2] Cooper, together with Jack Patten and William Ferguson organised a conference to "grieve the collective loss of freedom and self-determination of Aboriginal communities as well as those killed during and after European settlement in 1788" (Korff 2018). By 1988, the re-enactments were stopped.

Today, the day is called "Invasion Day," "Day of Mourning," or "Survival Day" by many Aboriginal people. In 1992 the first Survival Day concert was held in Sydney. On this occasion, Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists play music or dance, information is made available about Indigenous issues, arts and crafts are

sold, and one can buy food and bush tucker. The name "Survival Day underscores the fact that Aboriginal culture is still strong despite all that has happened (Korff 2018). In major cities you can visit alternative concerts where mostly Aboriginal people gather. Since 2006, the name "Aboriginal Sovereignty Day" has also been used to emphasise that "all Aboriginal nations are sovereign and should be united in the continuous fight for their rights" (Korff 2018).

Survival Day concerts and Indigenous activism have led to an increase of public awareness about the controversial nature of Australia Day, and have fostered a discussion about 'changing the date.' Many Indigenous Australians, including Mick Dodson, Aboriginal Law Professor and 2009 Australian of the Year, are hopeful that Australia will be celebrated on a different day: "To most Indigenous Australians, it really reflects the day on which our world came crashing down. Many Indigenous people regard it as Invasion Day," he said bluntly (2010, 21). He continued: "And if we look at the recent survey that showed 90 per cent of people are saying Australia Day should be inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, I firmly believe that someday we will choose a date that is a comprehensive and inclusive date for all Australians" (21).

There have been several local responses to the debate, e.g. Flinders Island council in Tasmania decided to end its January 26 celebrations in November 2013, and instead support the three-day-long Furneaux Islands Festival held in January and organised by the Flinders Island Aboriginal Association Incorporated (FIAAI). Fremantle City Council's decision to celebrate One Day can definitely be seen as one of such local responses to the 'change the date' debate.

Although the Fremantle City Council had announced that it would be hosting a special event to celebrate Australia on 28 January 2017, already a year before, the story made headlines towards the end of November 2016, with the Council's proclamation of the celebrations of One Day. This "free, family-friendly event is a culturally-inclusive alternative to traditional Australia Day celebrations" was to see "some of Australia's finest artists take the stage" ("World-class artists" 2016). On the one hand, the Council's decision was met with praise from the traditional owners of the land, the Noongar people, and Australians who condemn the celebration of the anniversary of the arrival of the first fleet of British ships to Port Jackson in 1788.[3] On the other hand, the proclamation sparked outrage in Western Australia, threats on the part of the federal government, and was widely commented nationwide. The issue was also discussed during the conference, and a special panel was held, with Robert Eggington, Noongar Elder, and Executive Officer of Dumbartung Aboriginal Corporation, as well as a member of the City Council, and other members of the community participating.

This paper aims to analyse the Council's decision as well as the ensuing media debate between its supporters and opponents, especially Noongar leaders and the WA Government in the context of the disruption of colonial violence. The City of Fremantle, as a place, will itself serve as a point of reference for the

analysis. As aptly put by Suvendrini Perera, "Certainly, this small Indian Ocean town suddenly finds itself at the forefront of the Change the Date movement which is gathering daily momentum in the media" (2016). Nonetheless, many Whadjuk and Noongar people living in the area see the celebrations of Australia Day and the strong reactions to their cancellation by the Fremantle City Council not only as an obstacle to creating an Australian society that would be inclusive of its Indigenous population, but also as a reminder and continuation of the violence that they have endured since the creation of the Swan River Colony in 1829. Therefore, the author sees it as important that the discussion around the announcement of One Day celebrations is not only considered as part of the national Change the Date debate, but that it is also viewed in light of the local history of colonial violence, particularly Aboriginal imprisonment and removal from land in what is today Fremantle and its surrounding area. The study considers online articles in the regional WA News as well as in the national media outlet SBS. The examination of colonial violence is carried out in view of Tanganekald Meintangk Boandik scholar Irene Watson's considerations of the issue, who argues that "the greatest tensions arise out of the state's justification of the theft of Aboriginal lands and the absorption of Aboriginal lands into western property paradigms" (Watson 2009a: 2). Of equal importance, she claims, is the state's "failure to acknowledge Aboriginal sovereignty and the absorption of Aboriginal political identities into the 'one nation' Australian state" (Watson 2009, 2).

2. One Day Media Debate

In response to the Council's announcement, West Australian Liberal MP Ben Morton flagged his concerns about the Council's actions in a letter to the Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Alex Hawke, who in turn wrote a letter to the city in which he claimed the Council would be banned from holding citizen ceremonies because it breached the Australian Citizenship Act of 2007 by "politicizing" its fireworks ban. He stated that the government's position was very clear and "if the council are unable to reconcile their political views with their civic duty, I will consider revoking authorization from those persons in the City of Fremantle who can currently receive a pledge of commitment at citizenship ceremonies" (2016; qtd. in Fremantle Australia Day fireworks). He also noted that a similar situation had occurred twice in the past decade and the Government would be "monitoring the situation closely" (2016; qtd. in Fremantle Australia Day fireworks).

Fremantle council fired back, saying it would not be bullied by the Turnbull government into moving its One Day in Fremantle event back to January 26. The council assured that its decision "was not to denigrate Australia Day or those who celebrated it, but to hold an event on January 28 that would be "more respectful and inclusive for the entire community" (qtd. in Young 2016).

Different public figures and local groups also reacted. Not wanting to miss out on one of the biggest trading days of the year, businesses jointly raised the $50,000 needed to salvage the traditional fireworks display on Australia Day. Visitors and residents thus had a choice: the fireworks, which were part of a four-day fiesta called "Australia Week" or the council's alternative event "One Day in Freo" on the 28th (Moodie 2017). In addition, far right groups Reclaim Australia and the United Patriots Front planned to congregate in Fremantle on Australia Day to protest against what they called "an act of betrayal against Australia" (Moodie 2017).

Brent Fleeton, Councillor for nearby Bayswater, slightly less radically, although still showing ignorance of the Indigenous community's argument, stated "[I'm] sick of being made to feel guilty for wanting to celebrate Australia on the anniversary of the first British settlement," and "Not everyone likes this day for various reasons, I understand that, but that doesn't mean the rest of us should be shamed into wearing black armbands and apologizing for being here" (qtd. in Young 2016).

Western Australia's Premier, Colin Barnett, on the other hand, asked in a much more accusatory manner: "Maybe they are going to ban Christmas because Muslims don't celebrate Christmas; what's next?" (qtd. in Young 2016). He also called the move "unAustralian" and, by twisting the cause and effect of the council's action, an "exaggerated" attempt to prevent people taking part in citizenship ceremonies on a day that meant something to them (qtd. in Young 2016). "I think it's a selfish act by the Fremantle council to deny new people to this country the right to become Australians on Australia Day" he stated (qtd. in Young 2016).

Robert Eggington responded to the Premier stating that "Comparing the decision to banning Christmas and then attaching the Muslim face is absurd. You would expect it to come from the mouth of an uneducated redneck, not the Premier of Western Australia" (qtd. in Young 2016). He also poignantly noted that "Deep in the minds of people who are accessing their citizenship rights through these ceremonies would be a consciousness that this country has been founded on the dispossession of Aboriginal people […] especially since many come from countries that are war-torn and may know what it's like to be impoverished, or face genocide" (qtd. in Young 2016). He went on to praise the Council's decision: "This is a historical moment; the first time the status quo of celebrating Australia's identity, its nationhood, has been challenged by any government instrument" (qtd. in Young 2016). "We are upon the oldest ceremonial grounds on the planet. For people to savagely attack him like this just shows that they don't understand the nature of this land, its beauty and its indigenous practice" (qtd. in Young 2016).

However, not all Indigenous voices in Western Australia were unanimous about the council's decision. For example, Noongar elder, former West Australian of the Year, and ambassador for the Australia Day WA Council, Robert Isaacs, disagreed, stating that his fellow Indigenous Australians were causing divisions

by opposing Australia Day. "We're one nation of people and we've just got to try and not forget that we need to go forward and don't look back" (qtd. in Moodie 2017). Dr Isaacs was scathing about the City of Fremantle's alternative celebration and argued that hundreds of Aboriginal families attended Perth's Skyworks each year after a "survival concert" in the city centre (qtd. in Moodie 2017).

3. A History of Colonial Violence in Fremantle

Indigenous Australians have long used terms such as Shame Day, Invasion Day and Day of Mourning to describe this date. According to Professor Suvendrini Perera, a resident of Fremantle of fifteen years:

> Among non-Anglo migrants and refugee Australians, the sickening rise in racist slurs and attacks in the lead-up to January 26 is an all-too-well-known experience. Changing the date may well lead to an initial increase in these kinds of abuse, but even as we dread the influx of flag-waving racists into the streets of Fremantle, […] the council's decision is undoubtedly one that moves us forward into a less racist future. (2016)

She examines the council's move in a local context, seeing the Change the Date push as an example of how, "at the edges of […] frightening and well–worn scripts, others are being acted out, and new stories are being written." She gives several other examples of such "new stories," e.g., the inscription of Kim Scott's poem "Kaya" in Noongar language on the walls of the new Perth Stadium, "literally, into the concrete façade," greeting all manner of motley arrivals to Whadjuk Country; the NoongarPedia project, "a living testament to the survival and sharing of the language of the place"; the projected display of the state's maritime heritage featuring the Bremen, a boat that successfully evaded extensive surveillance to sail straight into Geraldton Harbour in 2013, carrying 67 asylum seekers from Sri Lanka (2016). She also states that the same urgent imperative to "find possibilities for the country" shaped the conference, Reimagining Australia that took place in Fremantle from December 7–9 2016 (2016). The "well-worn scripts" on the other hand, are expressed in WA's plummeting economy caused by a recurring crash of the mining industry and, consequently:

> fly-in fly-out ghost towns fuelling support for One Nation and a Trump-style politics of white grievance; of a state government scandalously indifferent to shocking Indigenous suicide rates in the Kimberley and elsewhere; to the recent racist violence in Kalgoorlie leading up to the death of 14-year-old Elijah Doughty; and to the obscene and antiquated laws that led to the jailing of Ms Dhu in a Port Hedland cell where she died in agony. (Perera 2016)[4]

The Fremantle prison and nearby Rottnest Island are also stark reminders of the city's history of maltreatment of the Noongar people after the formation of the Swan River Colony in 1829. Rottnest Island, now a popular tourist destination, lies 20 km off the coast of Western Australia and is clearly visible from Fremantle. It received its first prisoners in 1838 and formally came into existence as a prison in 1841.

The Swan River Colony, which later became Fremantle, was not established as a penal colony, unlike the colonies already founded in the eastern part of the continent, as it was a military and civilian settlement, not a settlement for convicts ("Fremantle History…"). The 'free' status of the colony was ended by the English before 1850: "The settlers were not happy about the proposition of turning the colony into a penal colony. They were concerned that it was against the founding 'free' principles of the colony – what had been 'promised' to them in England. They opposed the arrival of convicts as they felt they would bring stigma and trouble" ("Fremantle History…"). In November 1849, it was officially announced that the Swan River Colony had been constituted a penal settlement to accelerate the economic growth, despite public opinion. Over nine-thousand convicts were brought to Fremantle from England on 43 voyages. Importantly, two thirds of the convicts remained in the colony after they were released from prison and by 1868 the population had reached 22,738 ("Fremantle History…"). Until the 1870s, the city's economy was based on meat, wheat and wool.

From the Noongar perspective, however, the establishment of the colony had a grave impact on the lives of their communities. As noted by Karen Jacobs, a Noongar woman and former member of the Rottnest Island Board, "all of a sudden fences were going up, people were being pushed off their land and we were marginalised" (qtd. in Melville 2016). She continues:

> Then they started bringing in a law that passed judgment over us, when we'd had our own governance structure for thousands and thousands and thousands of years. They cleared the land and blocked all the freshwater springs that ran through the city. This meant all the medicinal plants, all of the traditional vegetation and animals were all gone. Our whole hunting ground was gone within three years of settlement. (qtd. in Melville 2016)

Irene Watson also comments on the legal implications of colonization in Australia with regard to land, noting that individual ownership was a very different concept to an Aboriginal relationship to land, which was collective: "all Aboriginal relationships to land were deemed by British law to be non-existent. Aboriginal peoples were held to have no legal ownership of land or political identity as sovereign peoples" (Watson 2009a, 2, after Watson 2009b; Schlunke 2009).

As food supplies became scarce, Noongar men started hunting any animal they saw, including sheep, chicken or cows, without realizing that animals can belong to people under white man's law (Melville 2016). To them, animals

belonged to the land. In consequence, Noongar people started being arrested for theft and trespassing, and they started to fill up the prisons.

According to Green (2011, 78), between 1838 and 1931, more than 3670 Aboriginal men served one or more sentences on Rottnest Island and 365 are buried there. An Aboriginal cemetery is located within the Thomson Bay Settlement. The 1850 land regulations provided for pastoral leases to a maximum of 20,000 acres and the lease was extended from one year to eight years (still six years less than in New South Wales). At the insistence of Earl Grey of the British Colonial Office, after 1851 the form of lease included a clause giving Aboriginal people a right of access to pastoral leases to seek their subsistence, a right which continues to the present. New land regulations in 1864 raised the maximum lease area to 100,000 acres and offered a generous rent concession to those willing to pioneer new districts of the North-West. This inevitably brought settlers into conflict with Aboriginal people on the expanding pastoral frontier: "Thomas and Stewart (1978), in their study of imprisonment in Western Australia argued that in the early years, settler fear of Aboriginal people influenced the arrests but later in the century fear gave way to a 'dislike of the native population' and eventually to contempt, shown in the lack of compassion. They noted, 'very rarely in the history of the legislature is there a categorical denunciation of the conditions under which Aborigines were imprisoned'" (qtd. in Green 2011, 78).

Although the Aboriginal prison officially closed in 1902, it became an annex of Fremantle prison the following year, and received Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal low-risk prisoners to do maintenance work on the tourist holiday cottages, roads and pathways until 1931 (Green 2011, 78). According to Green, during the collation of data for *Far from Home*, it became apparent that the advance of the pastoral frontiers between 1854 and 1900 was reflected in the Rottnest prison population (2011, 77–78).[5] For example, the overall preponderance of prisoners from the South-West reflects the early establishment of pastoral settlement in that region. Similarly, stock killing was by far the most common conviction. There was a marked increase in the number of prisoners sent to Rottnest from the 1860s, as the pastoral frontier expanded, especially following the 1864 regulations and their incentives. This reached a striking peak in the 1880s. Closer inspection of the data showed that in 1884, for example, prisoners form the Murchison and Gascoyne regions accounted for more than half of the Rottnest prisoners, with the most convictions for stock killing (2011, 78).

Watson also argues that demonizing Aboriginal culture allows an opening for the state to appear as "a crusader and rescuer of Aboriginal women and children," especially from violence committed by Aboriginal men (a view most definitely shared by my hosts in Fremantle) (2009, 4, after Watson 2005 and 2007). The scholar asks whether a long process of vilification assists in the assimilation of Aboriginal peoples and the commodification of their lands into Australian real property. In her view it does, as the state becomes "the knower of what is

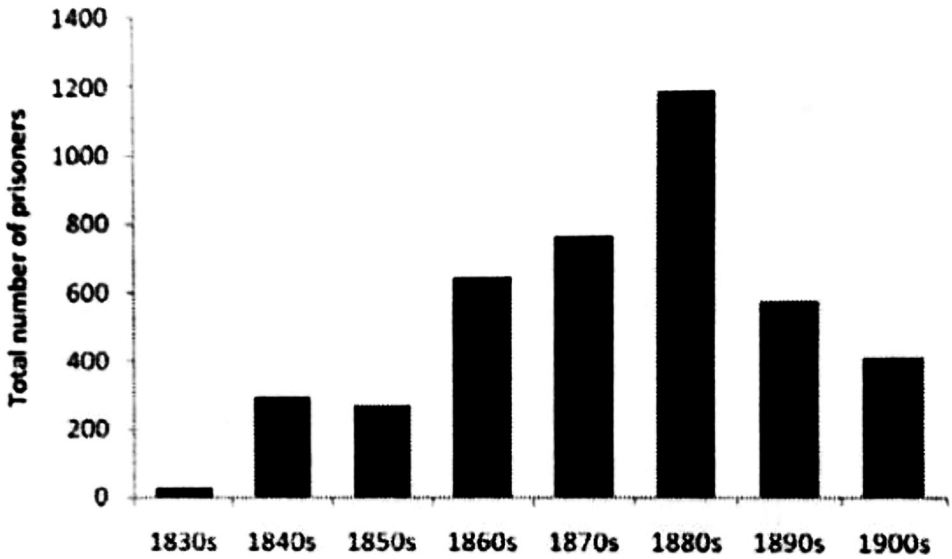

Figure 1. Number of prisoners received at Rottnest in each decade (Green 2011, 79).

Aboriginal culture while Aboriginal peoples and communities are positioned as mere actors, acting out a deemed and 'known' cultural practice. The state as knower of 'objectionable practices' has power to construct what Aboriginal culture is and to analyse, vilify, and ultimately undermine the right of peoples to self-determination" (Watson 2009a, 4). In her considerations of colonial violence, Irene Watson has compared such reality to entrapment: "Aboriginal men are hunted into a confined space, or removed from collectivity to prison or the isolation of individualised spaces" (2009a, 4); "Collective land ownership is thus made vulnerable, demolished and replaced by individualized land ownership" (2005, 15).

Conclusion

For many Australians, "1788 brings to mind the 'Old Sydney Town' version of history, with red coated soldiers and convicts subjected to cruelty for an arrogant English aristocracy" (Faruqi 2017). However, "clinging to the myth that invasion, occupation, colonisation and settlement are somehow peaceful processes and something to be celebrated continues to hurt us all," says Mehreen Faruqi, Pakistani-born Australian Greens MP for the New South Wales Legislative Council (2017). Supporters of the Change the Date campaign, including many Whadjuk and other Noongar people see the celebrations of Australia Day and the strong reactions to their cancellation by the Fremantle City Council as both a reminder and continuation of that violence, and an obstacle to creating an Australian society

that would be inclusive of its Indigenous population. Keeping the date allows the state to retain the power to construct what Aboriginal culture and history means, thereby not only ignoring 200 years of imprisonment, land grabs and other forms of colonial violence, but also undermining Indigenous peoples' rights to self-determination and their rights as Australian citizens. Changing the date would thus mean that the state (and mainstream society) no longer yield that power. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why Fremantle Council's decision was met with such strong resistance and why many do not want to see the date changed.

As argued by Watson, the state "still has assimilation agendas, intent upon the removal of Aboriginal peoples from traditional lands and the absorption of Aboriginality into a 'white Australia'" (2009a, 1). Celebrating Australia Day on the 26th of January can definitely be seen as part of such an agenda. Unfortunately, we cannot have justice or the possibility of de-colonising the past injustices of colonialism, when "the state is committed to a one dimensional universal world order, one which disallows for the diversity of peoples and cultures" (Watson 2009a, 1, after Watson 2006).The Fremantle City Council's decision may thus be viewed as a form of disrupting the status quo, and a move toward de-colonising past and present injustices toward Indigenous Australians.

To come back to Suvendrini Perera, in commenting on the council's decision, she wrote: "it seems that something is shifting here at the edges. Yes, something is happening here, at the edges: a stirring and unsettling of words, an unmooring of certainties, a small change of dates" (2016). Indeed, other councils have followed Fremantle's suit. On August 15th, 2017, City of Yarra councillors in Melbourne voted unanimously to no longer refer to 26 January as Australia Day in all official documents, but as "January 26" instead, to stop citizenship ceremonies on that date, and to support the campaign to change Australia Day recognizing that it is "a day of distress for many Aboriginal people" (Korff 2018). However, in response, the federal government stripped the council of the power to hold citizenship ceremonies. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull declared the decision to be "utterly out of step with Australian values" and accused the council of seeking to divide Australia. "To change the date of Australia Day would be to turn our back on Australian values," he said (qtd. in Korff 2018). About a week later, neighbouring Darebin council also voted in favour of not calling 26 January Australia Day, and on September 13th 2017, Moreland City Council (a neighbour of Darebin) did as well, although it will still hold citizenship ceremonies, as in 2015, it moved its annual citizen awards ceremony from January 26th to October, out of respect for Aboriginal people (Korff 2018). Hopefully, more of such "small changes of dates" continue to take place, ultimately leading to a new, inclusive and non-violent date for celebrating Australia Day.

Notes

1 Whadjuk is the name of a Noongar dialectal group from the Perth area. The major cities and towns within the *Whadjuk* region include Perth, Fremantle, Joondalup, Armadale, Toodyay, Wundowie, Bullsbrook and Chidlow. The approximate size of the Whadjuk region is 5,580 km ("About the Whadjuk region" 2018).

2 Aboriginal people refused to participate in the re-enactment because it included chasing away a party of Aboriginal people (Korff 2018).

3 Noongar "Noongar means 'a person of the south-west of Western Australia,' or the name for the 'original inhabitants of the south-west of Western Australia' and [they] are one of the largest Aboriginal cultural blocks in Australia. Noongar are made up of fourteen different language groups (which may be spelt in different ways): *Amangu, Yued/Yuat, Whadjuk/Wajuk, Binjareb/Pinjarup, Wardandi, Balardong/Ballardong, Nyakinyaki, Wilman, Ganeang, Bibulmun/Piblemen, Mineng, Goreng and Wudjari* and *Njunga.* Each of these language groups correlates with different geographic areas with ecological distinctions" (https://www.noongarculture.org.au/noongar).

4 Elijah Doughty was a fourteen-year-old Indigenous Australian, who was killed by a 56-year-old white man driving a ute, while riding a stolen motorbike on 29 August 2016. There is no evidence that Elijah had stolen the motorbike. The driver of the utewas also the owner of the stolen motorcycle. He was charged with manslaughter, but was acquitted by a jury on 21 July 2017 after a trial at the Supreme Court of Western Australia; however he was found guilty of the lesser charge of dangerous driving causing death ("Death of Elijah Doughty" 2018). Julieka Dhu, commonly referred to as Ms Dhu in Australian media, was a 24-year-old Aboriginal woman who died in police custody in 2014. Between 2 and 4 August 2014, she was detained in custody in a police watch house in South Hedland, Western Australia on unpaid fines. On Monday 4 August, she was pronounced dead. Dhu's was the 340th Aboriginal death in custody since the conclusion of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in 1992 ("Death of Ms Dhu" 2018).

5 *Far from Home* – the tenth volume of the *Dictionary of Western Australians* which identifies Aboriginal prisoners of Rottnest Island in the years 1838–1931 (Green and Moon 1999).

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The Return of the Silenced: Aboriginal Art as a Flagship of New Australian Identity

Abstract

The paper examines the presence of Aboriginal art, its contact with colonial and federation Australian art to prove that silencing of this art from the official identity narrative and art histories also served elimination of Aboriginal people from national and identity discourse. It posits then that the recently observed acceptance and popularity as well as incorporation of Aboriginal art into the national Australian art and art histories of Australian art may be interpreted as a sign of indigenizing state nationalism and multicultural national identity of Australia in compliance with the definition of identity according to Anthony B. Smith.

Identity, especially national identity, is a tricky issue and concept. It becomes even more problematic with reference to settler-colonial states in postcolonial times. In the past, the authors' attempts to define Australian identity invariably led to a definition which had Britishness as its essential part, rooted in British discovery and settlement of the continent, featuring mateship, hard work and perseverance, and encompassing democracy and aspects of the British legal system (Lencznarowicz 2005; Rickard 1996; Furniss 2005). There were also many arguments postulating that Australia in fact did not have any characteristic national identity. In either case, the Aboriginal people were nowhere to be seen, as a component of either official culture or as an identity. If they were mentioned, it was mostly as a disappearing race or conquered people, or as a silenced and repressed people, who, living on the social and economic margins of Australian society and culturally destroyed, now served as a source of guilt for many white Australians (Morgan 678).

1. Historical Context

The present predicament of white Australians should be understood in the context of the settler state or nation that Australia is referred to, along with the United

States, Canada and New Zealand. Such a state was built as a result of conquering indigenous peoples and their land, often referred to as 'unoccupied,' i.e. terra nullius, because it was not cultivated by the indigenous population (Rose, Davis, and Furniss 2005). These states built their countries and identities as a result of "domination and conquest, subordination of the [indigenous] population and nature as well as a victory of progress, civilization and will of God" and the "triumph of such values as self-reliance, democracy, competition and freedom" (Furniss 9).This is the frontier myth narrative – explaining the process of establishing settler societies – first formulated by Frederick Jackson Turner in 1893 with reference to American state and society. Since it perfectly grasps the essence of colonial invasion, it can be applied to settler colonialism exercised by Britain in its dominions (see Patrick Wolfe 1999). Analogically, this master narrative can also work in the settler Australian society,[1] in which the Aboriginal people feature as primitive savages and brutes, a stumbling block in the path of progress; thus they had to be removed through cultural assimilation or elimination. Judging by the small numbers of the present indigenous population in these countries (in comparison with those at the point of contact; however, recently their number has been increasing in Australia), it is evident what happened: they were eliminated through conquest, murder, disease, mistreatment on the frontier zone (by convicts or settlers who came from different European nations, though in the case of Australia, predominantly from Britain or Ireland), or later instituted by the Australian governments through forced assimilation or protection, with the latter based on isolation, which kept them apart from the white society on the reserve. In the case of Australia, those Aborigines who were not eliminated were made invisible by being placed not only on reserves, but also in missions or outstations. Additionally, they were subjected to the provisions of the White Australia policies that were in operation on the federal level from 1901 through the 1960s, yet before that time such policies had been also applied by colonial governments. This master narrative was part of a theory of history in which "the conflict, violence and subjugation of nature and indigenous people are legitimated as natural and inevitable for ensuring progress of civilization" (Furniss 29). The indigenous population was hence seen as a somewhat necessary victim to obtain "progress" in the new continent; a victim of white people, who, however, as Anthony Morgan suggests, cannot be held to moral account because they were part of "an inexorable movement" (686) advocating progress. A larger context for this movement also comprises 19th century environmental determinism, social Darwinism and cultural evolutionism, which put Anglo-Saxon civilization at the top of any ladder in settler society.

These forces started to weaken and eventually ceased to operate after World War II, when people and states were more concerned with "race, women's rights, Indigenous peoples' rights, multiculturalism, environmentalism" (Furniss 27). This is when the frontier myth theory was replaced by the New Western History pioneered by Patricia Nelson Limerick, Richard White and Donald Worster, all

of whom advocated a new approach to the West and its history, thereby rejecting the frontier theory as the main factor shaping the history of colonized continents. They emphasized the diversity of historical experience and the need to recover the voices of ordinary people often ignored by nationalist historical studies, including those of the Aboriginal population of Australia.

Those for whom the frontier myth is a foundation myth and who see Australia as an ethnic nation with Britishness and a British legacy as its core, and for whom the major threat to its identity comes from Asian countries, support the master narrative of victimization that necessitates not passive endurance, but an ongoing, aggressive battle for survival. Ann Curthoys in her "Entangled Histories" explains that the story "begins with the tale of convicts suffering, of pioneers who had to endure the harshest continent on earth, endless drought or flood near starvation." She goes on to say that the story also includes tales of war, their use as war fodder for the British military in Africa and in both world wars, a result of which death in war is glorified and upheld as the ultimate nationalistic sacrifice" (Curthoys after Furniss 52). For supporters of this narrative[2] (among them supporters of Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party),[3] victimization "comes from within, from Aborigines who are aggressors inflicting violence on the innocent settler and his family" (Furniss 36). The nationalistic rhetoric also contains undertones of anti-native entitlement, as some fear that the pastoral land will be taken over by Aboriginal Australians and, due to their high birth rate, that Aboriginal Australians will start to dominate in numbers.

For those who reject the frontier theory, all settler societies have been facing similar troubles: how to create or even imagine one identity out of so many different categories of settlers (from the point of view of ethnicity, race, class) involved in colonizing the continents? How can we rationalize and legitimize the policy of the mistreatment of the indigenous population and their dispossession from the lands? How are we to imagine the new relations and the place of the indigenous people in contemporary situations, especially now when they are reclaiming their identities and land or rather building one overarching Aboriginal identity? How can we maintain the integrity of one nation and one state when counter narratives concocted by each subjugated group undermine the master narrative that produced cohesion of the state and the nation?

The policy on how to deal with these questions and the post-colonial legacy greatly divides Australians. Anthony Morgan, in his article "The Psychodynamics of Australian Settler Nationalism: Assimilating or Reconciling With the Aborigines," suggests an existence of two models of settler nationalism – assimilationist and indigenizing "that compete to organize national reality, including relations between the settler and indigenous population" (667). Both are rooted in different views of the nation, feelings about the past, and understanding national subjectivity, and both are presently competing on different levels. For the assimilationist state nationalism, any changes – in the law from an assimilationist policy to

a self-determination policy or in the role the indigenous population as well as other minorities play in all walks of life – are a source of anxiety about national identity, evidently endangered by the policy of multiculturalism or marred by the shame or guilt in relation to events from the past. The other approach of the indigenizing state nationalism "welcome[s] and promote[s] changes to Australian national identity and government policy […] to improve relations between settler indigenous communities" (Morgan 682). Its supporters claim that the contentious issues should be discussed and confronted, not dismissed, including the issue of how to teach national history (Clark 2008). They, i.e. lawyers, politicians, and activists, are all involved in many symbolic and practical actions to promote multiculturalism, reconciliation and the inclusion of minorities hitherto excluded from British-based identity, but they are warned that their actions will lead to the decay of national identity and pride.

Both groups seem to approve Cathy Freeman's symbolic act of lighting the flame at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, a woman who has since been perceived as a representation of cultural diversity and the birth of a new national character on the path to reconciliation. For many, she would symbolize the moment of the inclusion of the hitherto excluded Indigenous population of Australia as well as other minorities in the narrative about Australia's history; thus, she signalled the start of multicultural Australia, which declaratively happened in 1973 under the Whitlam government, and since then has been further reiterated in official papers and in the political scene through a number of pieces of legislation.[4] The proposition I put forward in the paper asserts that the field which illustrates the inclusion of Australia's indigenous population and culture into Australian society and culture is Aboriginal visual art.[5] In this field we can notice a wide acceptance of Aboriginal artists as Australians and wide appreciation of their art works as representing Australian art or even embodying it, as, since 2002, "it has been displayed along the non-indigenous art, enabling a more holistic appreciation of the art history of Australia" (Grishin vi). What gives credence to this suggestion is not only the high number of Aboriginal people engaged in art [approximately 6,000 to 7,000 (McCulloch and McCulloch 2)] or the high numbers of their works sold, but also its anteriority to Europe-based Australian art production and its long presence there. This presence has been shown in the artworks made by colonial artists in response to meeting Aboriginal people: not only in the themes of the colonists' artworks but also in their stylistic borrowings from Aboriginal art.

The reasons for thus mentioned absence were very diverse, starting from cultural blindness to the so-called primitive art, then often classified as ethnographic pieces. Yet, as will be presented later, individual European colonists or convicts took interest in Aboriginal visual art in such forms as rock art, bark painting or sand and body painting. Yet these first mentions were ignored in the art history books until the 1930s, and, likewise, not prominently remembered by Australians at large. Moreover, the very characteristics of Aboriginal art could also make

it difficult, if possible at all, for Europeans to perceive, categorize and identify certain objects as works of art. For instance, Aboriginal art had (and still has, albeit to a much lesser extent) a religious and communal, not individual, nature, and it played a central role in the spiritual life of Indigenous communities and in their sustenance. In its creation the stress was put on the performance rather than the final effect, on creativity, not a final result (Walsh 97). During the last two decades, Aboriginal visual art has gained a very special status in Australian art; in fact, it has nearly become its flagship, with many of the Aboriginal artists attaining international recognition as Aboriginal Australians, artists such as Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri and Emily Kame Kngwwarreye. Its incorporation into Australian art may paradoxically signal some disadvantage for the Aboriginal art. Michael Walsh expresses it in the following way: "this integration may mean the loss of [Aboriginal] identity, the loss of urge to express those essential relationship between humankind and the land that is at the very root of what is to be an Aboriginal Australian" (101).

2. Definition of Identity

In the present analysis, the definition of national identity developed by Anthony D. Smith will be adopted. As representative of ethno-symbolism in the study of modern nationalism, he opts for the view that symbols, myths, values and traditions, including local traditions are instrumental in creation and persistence of modern nation states. He is also a supporter of the non-primordial approach to nation, which emphasizes that nations or *ethnies* (his term for ethnic communities) are formed and constructed, not static; that they are in a state of flux, where some elements tend to disappear while others enter it, sometimes taking a significant place. In this modern approach to nations and nationalism Smith highlights two elements: social engineering and technical innovation, which allow for a creation of new narratives and new cultural artefacts under the influence of imagination and novel skills made possible by technological inventions (86). This definition seems to fit the line of reasoning that in a changing, inclusive identity nature of a nation, which is often composed of different ethnic groups (*ethnies*), with the passage of time, due to different circumstances the traditions, symbols, or values of different *ethnies* are reselected and arranged in a different way.

His definition presented in his book *Nationalism. Theory, Ideology, History* (2010) reads as follows: "National identity is the continuous reproduction and reinterpretation by the members of a national community of the pattern of symbols, values, myths, memories and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of nations, and the variable identification of individual members of that community with that heritage and its cultural elements" (20). Crucial to the definition are the words "reproduction" and "reinterpretation," which imply that national identity

can be refashioned. What was once excluded from it, due to changing circumstances (or as Foucault would put it, a change in the operating forces of power), can be incorporated into it. After the conquest of Australia by the British the indigenous peoples of Australia were pushed to the margins of Australian society and in the newly built narrative of the continent were made invisible: their myths, stories, traditions and values hidden, or their voice muffled or silenced for almost 200 years.[6] The reason for that was that the western or British colonial mindset prevailed, based on the conviction of the superiority of western civilization; now, when cultures are perceived as distinct, not higher or lower, the status of the indigenous populations and their cultures is being reconsidered. Smith expresses this in the following way:

> This process of ethno-symbolic reconstruction involves the reselection, recombination and recodification of previously existing values, symbols and memories and the like, as well as the addition of new cultural elements by each new generation. Thus the 'heroic vision' of national identity […] may, in the next generation, cede place to a more open, pragmatic and utilitarian version of the nation's identity, stressing such themes as entrepreneurial ability, organizational skills and tolerance and diversity, themes that can be traced back to alternative ethnic traditions in the nation's history. (22)

In this newly fashioned Australian identity, especially from the point of view of the indigenizing nationalism, the memory of one indigenous, 'ethnic,' tradition is being revoked and reconsidered to make room for one more narrative about this continent's history. The tradition in question is the Aboriginal tradition, rooted in the culture of the continent, in which (because of 'Dreamtime')[7] visual art has been an indispensable element constituting the culture.

3. Australian Aboriginal Art: History of Its Presentation and Presence

First, Australian Art as such is not monolithic, though it is dominated by the European tradition and was seen through a European lens until 1990. It is actually multi-layered and diverse, consisting both of European-driven art forms, indigenous art, and recently Asian driven art forms. In a book *Australian Art: History*, by Sasha Grishin, the author also says that it "has been created as a result of a dialogue between the Aboriginal Art and the Australian European Art" (x) since the first point of contact. With this book Grishin 'as if' answers a call for an adequate account of Aboriginal art voiced in 2005 by Susan Lowish in "European Vision and Aboriginal Art: Blindness and Insight in the Work of Bernard Smith."[8] After reassessing art history books that appeared up until 2014, she observed that art historians had a problem adequately presenting the existence of Aboriginal art as they usually focused on the differences and did not look for interactions. They

instead searched for deficiencies in such art and mostly drew the conclusion that Aboriginal people, as savages, were incapable of producing true art. Grishin, on the other hand, emphasized the interactions between Indigenous people and settler societies that were taking place throughout centuries in the field of art production; thus, he concocted a different narrative of the continent's art history by reinterpreting the available artistic material. The changing nature of Aboriginal art has also been noticed. Howard Morphy observes: "[…] the recent history of Aboriginal Art has been a dialogue with colonial history in which what came before as Aboriginal history of Australia with its emphasis on the affective social and spiritual relationship to the land, is continually asserting itself over what exists in the present" (qtd. in Walsh 98). A reciprocal action between these two cultures and art traditions started from the point of their first contact.

Aboriginal art is said to be an ancient continuous tradition dating back to 40,000 years ago, with its rock art representations of Wandinjas,[9] X-ray paintings of animals, and Mimih[10] as the oldest examples of this art. The artistic achievements were noticed by the first European explorers, as already in 1803 William Westall "sketched a series of figures painted in a rock shelter on Chasm Island, off Groote Eylandt (Walsh 98). However, the captains and artists present on the first ships that reached Australia in the early 17th century did not take an interest in those "rude drawings" or did not offer accurate accounts of them. The first discussion of this ancient art was led by the anthropologist George Grey in 1830, and it seems to have affected further reception of this art by Europeans. On the basis of his research of rock art, he concluded that the art forms must have been done by superior people, probably former European visitors or Makassans. That land, he claimed, was populated by savage people who were not capable of executing such abstract art (Grishin 4). Such a view prevailed even in 1934, when William Moore in his *Story of Australian Art* attributed the Wandjina to outside sources. Grishin succinctly remarks that "the 19th century analysis of Aboriginal Art were rooted in the prejudice of the time so that the European response to indigenous art was at best misguided interpretation and at worst deliberate fraud that denied a people's ability to create art" (33).

Such a view was predominant and circulated in spite of the fact that in the 19th century quite a number of European anthropologists collected pieces produced in Arnhem Landby the Aboriginal peoples as part of their ceremonies and traditions, and that a host of Aboriginal men were involved in painting, drawing and selling their artworks, which were avidly bought. One notable was William Barak (1824–1903), a Wurundjeri artist, producing gouaches, watercolours, and drawings in which he presented the rituals and ceremonies of his tribe, the YaraaYaraa people who lived near Melbourne. At the time, the rituals were suppressed in Victoria. In his paintings we can see distinctive features of his art: painting in bands and drawing mostly silhouetted figures in possum skin-cloaks taking part in corroboree. His contemporary was Tommy McRae, a painter from that area as

well, who became especially famous for drawing the story of William Buckley. Buckley was a convict who escaped in 1803 and settled among the Wada Wurrungi People and lived with them for 32 years, during which he learnt their language, observed their ceremonies and even adapted to their way of life. His experience serves as a testament to the possibility of peaceful coexistence between Europeans and Aborigines. In 1835 he surrendered to white people when he encountered them through happenstance and was subsequently pardoned. He spent the rest of his life with white people, first offering great service as a cultural and language translator. At the end of his life, when interviewed by the journalist John Morgan, he described the people who gave him hiding as "generally treacherous, cowardly, and mere creatures holding the link in the chain of animal life between the man and the monkey" (Morgan 1812–1815). Whether this was true or invented to please the public and thus earn money, it is hard to say, but it definitely fitted the frame of mind of white Australians at the time, who readily accepted the explanation.

Both Barak and McRae were mentioned, along a few other Aboriginal painters of the end of the 19th century (e.g. Mickey of Ulladulla, a Dhurga man), in *Art of the Australian Aboriginal* by Robert Croll (published in 1943) and their works were shown previously in an exhibition of Australian Art in New York in 1941 (Grishin 22). It is worth stressing that the works were referred to as Australian Aboriginal art, thus acknowledging them as Australian artists. Yet these two artists did not bring about much change in the perception and thinking of the indigenous population, whose political and social situation in Australia was deteriorating due to the overarching understanding of indigenous cultures as primitive, savage, and degenerate, and thus meant to vanish. These painters were excluded from the narrative of a newly fledgling Australia and as a component of the then Australian identity offered by contemporary writers and painters, among others, by the renowned Heidelberg school,[11] and, later, by some modernists painters.

In the field of painting this policy was a continuation of a long tradition of representing the Aboriginal people through the European lens and for European purposes, either as Noble or primitive. These can be seen through the art of the colonial Port Jackson Painter (unknown colourist active at the end of the 18th century in Sydney), who rendered the Aboriginal people, showing white dabs on their bodies as well as by a palette of Aboriginal colours (i.e. mixtures of red, ochre, charcoal black) and that of Richard Browne (1771–1824), an Irish convict who painted stylized figures of the Aborigines and their marine activities. The latter was well known for following a theory of phrenology authored by Johann Caspar Lavater (1741–1801), according to which indigenous people had physical characteristics which predetermined them to be cruel, backwards and barbaric. Other physical characteristics allegedly proving that they were imbecilic, immature, stupid and weak were indicated by their "projecting foreheads, eyes that in profile run parallel with the nose and arched noses turned down" (Grishin 58). His silhouetted portraits represented the prejudices of the days, and as such provided

and sustained an explanation for the abuse of the Aboriginal people during the periods of colonization, the gold rush and the later settlement of inland areas. These paintings were small in size and quite inexpensive; they were thus widely distributed and commonly available and they largely determined the representation of the Aboriginal people for almost a century. They also fitted into the Darwinian theory of the development of civilizations, which placed the Aborigines at the bottom rung of the ladder of developed societies.

The European lens in depicting Aboriginal people can be also seen in artworks of such colonial painters Sydney Parkinson, Thomas Watling, Augustus Earl, John Glover, Benjamin Deterrau, just to name a few, where they were shown as either heroic Roman gladiators defending their country (e.g. Parkinson's "Two of the Natives of New Holland, Advancing to Combat" 1770s) or pure and perfect elements of nature (e.g. Glover's "Corrobery of Natives"). Their depictions were romanticized, contrived, and impersonal, showing Aboriginal people as elements of nature and landscape, just as animals and plants, which shows a tendency to eliminate them from the realm of civilization, unless they civilize as in the representations of J. M. Crossland, ("Nunnuntera"), Augustus Earle's "Bungaree," or Robert Dowling's "Masters George, William, and Miss Harriet Ware with the Aborigine Jamie Ware."

The first signs of a different approach to the Aboriginal people as creators of art appeared in the 1930s, which was partly initiated by the modernist movement represented by Margaret Preston, a leading modernist painter, who in her 1942 article "Art in Post-War," postulated the development of a national Australian culture through an exchange of ideas of indigenous and non-indigenous artists (Otton and Muir 1981). She herself painted a number of paintings inspired by indigenous art, employing the indigenous depiction of dabs of white paint and white dots, of landscapes as seen from above, and earthy colours, as in her painting "Flying over the Shaolhaven River." Despite her enthusiastic approach to Aboriginal art, she still maintained a patronizing European view of Aboriginal people (Grishin 226).

Contemporaneous to this appeal of modernists was a new trend that developed in the 1940s and picked up momentum in the 1960s due to anthropologists and ethnographers, who took to collecting indigenous artworks: bark paintings, sculptures, or watercolours. Lectures, writings and visits of non-indigenous artists to Arnhem Land dating from the 1940s led to discussions about the types and role of Aboriginal imagery. One of the first pioneers of this trend was Charles P. Mountford (1890–1976), an anthropologist and photographer, who commissioned people in Ernabella to record traditional images on paper and crayon. He was followed by Catherine (1918–1994) and Roland Berndt, who also encouraged peoples of the Arnhem Land to record Arnhem designs, using western media. The most notable in this respect are artists Rex Battarbee and John Gardner who, in 1936 and 1938 respectively, exposed their watercolours to the Aboriginal Arrernte

people of the desert area, among whom was the most famous Aboriginal artist, Albert Namatjira. Before meeting the two artists he was already known for his artistic talent. He had made small depictions of everyday life around him, i.e. boomerangs or woomerangs as well as mulga-wood plaques with poker-worked designs (He turned to be exceptional pupil of both, for in two weeks he absorbed all the secrets of water colour landscape painting (Grishin 275). Namatjira himself held his first solo exhibition in 1938 and continued painting while encouraging other members of his tribe to paint. He and his wife were the first Aborigines to receive Australian citizenship in 1957. Also, to a degree through his imprisonment and death, he paved the way to wider recognition of indigenous people as artists and later to their political enfranchisement. Grishin states that "the most significant heritage of Namatjira was his challenge to the stereotype of the Aboriginal artist as a backward savage who was incapable of making anything that went beyond traditional decorated artifacts" (279).

There are some other examples of a successful cross-cultural cooperation between an Australian and Aboriginal artists, for example Dick Roughsey (1920–1985), from Lardil tribe in the Mornington Island and an airline pilot and artist Percy Treize. Another couple was Dolly Nampijjinpa Daniels (1936–2004), from Warlpiri people in Yuendumu, in Northern Territory, and Anne Mosey (Walsh 101). Due to the collaboration, the Aboriginal artists obtained some material support, exposure to European art and, most importantly, encouragement to continue Aboriginal artistic expression as part of the communal culture, for which some market was secured.

Still another example of a successful artistic enterprise is the Papunya School which emerged in the 1970s, a school perhaps on par with the world-renowned Hermannsbrug School. From this moment, the presence of the Aboriginal people in the public sphere and Australian consciousness has been more pronounced, and perhaps this is where the revival of Aboriginal painting truly began. We can link this revival to two events. The first event was the referendum of 1967, which made history because Australian people voted to amend the Constitution to include Aboriginal people into the census and thus create laws for them (Jupp 19). This event in the public space was marked by an artistic gesture: handing in bark petitions. The bark petitions of 1963 were presented in parliament and are thus seen as the first official recognition of the Aboriginal people in Australian law. A subsequent event was the 1972 transfer of land rights to the Aboriginal people, which enhanced their desire to artistically display their bond to the land. According to Elazar Barkan, author of *The Guilt of Nations,* Australia openly recognized in the 1970s that "Aboriginal culture has been inextricably linked to Australian culture." All the aforementioned events, Barkan writes, have led "to the plans of restitution, reconciliation, retribution and a new answer to a question "What is Australia?" (234).

Instrumental in answering this question is the role of Aboriginal art in Australian art. If we accept after Tom Griffiths that the "history of Australia is

the anatomy of silence[12] and of 'white noise' generated by European settlement" (Griffiths 3), then a new narrative of the history is written when the silence about the status of indigenous art is broken. This silence, if some still had not yet heard about the Namatjira and the Hermannsburg School, was shattered with a bang by the establishment of the Papunya school in the desert. Early in 1971 Geoffrey Bardon (1940–2003) encouraged children and then adults of five different peoples relocated there from their original homelands, to paint their traditional stories and designs. In this way the most famous Australian mural was created. The previous steps mentioned before were important, but this school acted "as a catalyst, and Geoffrey Bardon as a midwife of the contemporary art movement" (Wroth 2014). In spite of the previous courageous steps taken by the Labor Government, the 1970s were still a time when the Aboriginal people were moved places so that they could be assimilated into the culture of white people and to wean them off their aboriginal culture, including the habit of producing paintings as part of a ritual. Thus, by encouraging the Aboriginal people to practice their traditional ways and to re-establish metaphorically their connection to the land, Bardon was acting against the grain; the reluctance of the administration to give money or any kind of material support to Aboriginal artists to produce art – buying paints and canvases to market their artistic production – is proof that Bardon rankled such authorities. In order to counter such obstacles, Papunya Tula Artist Limited was established in November 1972, and it played a major role in popularizing this art in form of acrylic paintings, advertising it and selling it to growing numbers of enthusiasts.

All this coincided with the emergence of the abstract art movement, and the activity of such famous abstract artists as Tony Tuckson and Ion Fairweather, who had already organized exhibitions of Aboriginal art dating back from the 1950s up until the 1970s, in the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Some of the collections from the exhibitions went on a tour across Australia, thanks to which they were exposed to a wider audience that generally showed acceptance and appreciation. Tuckson was to say the that "We [i.e. Australians] have a rich heritage, yet much part of it is neglected. It is not ours but with years it will have a much greater bearing on our Australian art" (Grishin 7).

These were prophetic words, for in the years to come more and more Aboriginal artists – old and young, those living in the outback and those living in the city – achieved international fame. The artists so far mentioned are just a few of other widely recognized names. In its catalogue, the NSW Gallery wrote that Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarr "like Albert Namatjira before him […] blazed a trail for future generations of Indigenous artists; bridging the gap between Aboriginal art and contemporary Australian art" (Guringai Festival). Similarly, Emily Kngwarreye, a woman artist who took to painting at a very old age, well into her 80s, tried many styles, beginning from the famous batik school in Utopia, but gained fame with her gestural paintings that have been compared to those of Wilhelm

de Kooning, Jackson Pollock or Claude Monet, which showed stripes of thick lines, probably representing yam tracks.

Conclusion

Many, including Anthony Morgan, would say that Cathy Freeman is the symbol of cultural diversity and the new national character of Australia, as sports is a domain inseparably linked with Australian identity. But it can be safely said that in numbers, through its excellence, and in its continuity and duration, the symbol of a new Australian national identity, or more precisely a newly unveiled element of Australian identity, is Aboriginal art. Due to the slow recognition of the culture and talents of the indigenous population of Australia, Aboriginal Australians and their culture were erased for centuries and have made forays into the culture of Australia only quite recently, yet they have already indelibly put their stamp on it, and this mark is still evolving. What needs to be remembered is that in spite of the White Australia policy, Australia and its identity were never white, but only presented as being so, and never really separate from, but in a relationship (often a difficult one) with other racial or ethnic groups, including the Aboriginal people and Asians. It is often the latter group that was the target of the ardent white policy for political and economic reasons. By reselection, recombination and the recodification of Aboriginal artworks retrieved from the past, an alternative story of Australia is being written, one that is a manifestation of its new and changing identity. It is still a declarative identity, as practice shows, but this New Australia is on the horizon. And it features dots and dabs as well as meandering lines.

Notes

1 However, there are some significant differences between American and Australian frontier myths, or their conceptualizations, underlined already by R. Ward in his *The Australian Legend;* see also G. Davison's "Frontier" in: *Oxford Companion to Australian History*. 269–270.

2 The 'black-armband' version of Australian history, and K. Windschuttle's attacks on mainstream historiography (e.g. *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History*).

3 Other examples contain Professor Blainey's critique of the 'black-armband' version of Australian history, and K. Windschuttle's attacks on mainstream historiography (e.g. *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History*).

4 There is a long list of initiatives undertaken after the period of reawakening of the 1970s or events that took place before and after, which included, among

others, Tent Embassy, findings of the Commission of Inquiry, the land rights campaign initiated by Mabo case of 1992 and Wiki case of 1996.

5 It should however be pointed out for the Indigenous Australians visual art has always been inextricably intertwined with music, dance and storytelling.

6 It may be noted yet that during the bicentennial celebrations in 1988 the 'indigenous' aspect was already very prominent.

7 Also referred to as Dreaming – a term used to refer to Aboriginal cosmology, encompassing the creator and ancestral beings, the laws of religious and social behaviour, the land, the spiritual forces which sustain life and the narratives which concern these (Caruana 254).

8 Bernard Smith (1916–2011) was one of the most prominent Australian art historians, author of *Place, Taste and Tradition: A Study of Australian Art Since 1788*.

9 Wandjinas – generic term for a group of ancestral beings in the Kimberley, who control the elements and maintain fertility in humans and in other natural species (Caruana 254).

10 Mimih – spirit figures that appear depicted on the rock walls of West Arnhem Land and Kakadu, it also refers to the style of painting which incorporates images of these spirits (Caruana 254).

11 It was an Australian art movement in the end of the 19th century that promoted Australian landscape and nationalism.

12 The Great Australian Silence is defined by the anthropologists W. E. H. Stanner as "the habit of white Australians to deny the violence of the frontier" (Griffiths 2).

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The ANZAC Tribulations at Gallipoli in Recent Australian Children's Literature

Abstract

Generations of Australian children have been presented with iconic figures and values associated with the events of 1915 at Gallipoli and involved in the ritual practices of remembrance exemplified by Anzac Day ceremonies throughout a corpus of children's literature which ranges from picture books for pre-schoolers to young adult fiction. This paper aims to broadly identify the narrative strategies at work in a selection of recent stories of brave animals helping the Aussie boys under fire or paeans to the duty of personal and communal remembrance and to examine them in a larger context of national self-representation.

From 1916 and the first commemorations of the Anzacs' fruitless deployment on the Gallipoli peninsula a few months before, to the current remembrance efforts, there have been important fluctuations throughout the past century in the way these World War One events have been acknowledged and appraised by the Australian public as well as by its political leaders and the country's intellectual figures. In the context of the current centenary events program, the children's book industry has been especially active in Australia (and in New Zealand in a smaller capacity). While the Australian federal government was allocating generous funding to the production and circulation of educational resources supervised by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the corpus of local children's literature dealing with various aspects of the Anzac myth was also significantly enlarged, with illustrated texts, Young Adult stories, graphic novels, and a sizeable delivery of picture books – a category which will be the main focus of this presentation. A similar publishing endeavour can be observed in Britain, concentrated around the poppies of European battlefields as visual symbols of remembrance. However, with a distinct ritual practice organised around Anzac Day each 25th of April, a few themes and images connect the creative strategies of several dozen Australian picture books: this article will concentrate on the animal protagonist as a narrative and emotive proxy, and on the collective memory mobilised through dawn services, veterans' marches and artefacts.

1. Animal Figures as Fighting and Remembering Proxies

First, if this picture book selection is slightly extended to include the Anzacs' later service on the Western front, one can discover a whole menagerie. The donkey of John Simpson Kirkpatrick in Gallipoli is the most famous creature in this group, whether he is called "Abdul," "Murphy" or "Duffy." Similarly, *Roly the Anzac Donkey* and his work with the New Zealand Medical Corps has been celebrated by Kiwi author Glyn Harper. A donkey also leads the farm animals to go and pay tribute to Simpson's four-legged companion in *Only A Donkey*. Then, from Egypt, Palestine and the Dardanelles to Fromelles, Pozieres and Villers-Bretonneux you may encounter a lot of dogs: *Digger The Dog Who Went to War*, *Caesar the Anzac Dog*, Nipper the messenger dog in *The Red Poppy*, Freda *The Anzac Puppy*, or Flanders/Victoire in *A Soldier, a Dog and a Boy*. One can also mention birds like the little red hen of *The Bantam and the Soldier*, pigeons as *Flapper*, *VC*, and a red robin in Norman Jorgensen's *In Flanders Fields*.[1] Horses (like *Midnight* in Beersheba) may cross paths with the turtle from *Torty and the Soldier*, or with bears like *Anzac Ted* (a plush toy) or Winnipeg, the Canadian black bear which became the inspiration for A. A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh*, as related in Lindsay Mattick's *Finding Winnie*. Finally, antipodean animals have not been forgotten, with the anthropomorphic kangaroos, koalas, wombats, magpies and cockatoos of *An Anzac Tale*, a graphic novel of Gallipoli.

On a superficial level, one can imagine that cute animal stories will be an easy sell to a juvenile audience. For Australian federal departments, this has translated for the last two decades in a series of publications such as 2009's *M is for Mates – Animals in Wartime from Ajax to Zep*, a large-sized album based on traditional illustrated alphabet books. "G is for Gallipoli donkeys," with a double page telling the much-repeated story of Simpson and his donkey in the most noncommittal way possible. The 2014 *Anzac Day Media Style Guide* (published by Monash University and the University of South Australia) fills some gaps in the standard version of those events from April–May 1915, and underlines its historiographic attraction:

> Historians argue that Simpson's story has been used for propaganda purposes. Claims that he rescued 300 men from the battlefield in three weeks are unlikely and unproven. Still, there is agreement that Simpson showed courage under fire, even if his life was less heroic than his legend. His role as a medic – rather than a killer – has contributed to his popularity: his story has been used to convey the Anzac legend to children in particular. Referring to Simpson's story requires careful handling, in order to ensure accuracy. For example, in the 1920s he was called an imperialist; today, a patriot. Neither claim is true: Simpson expressed hatred for the British Empire. (14)

How does all this translate in a popular picture book like *Simpson and his Donkey*, first published in 2008? First, it takes the reader a third of the book to approach Anzac Cove "on a moonless April Morning"; in the meantime, author Mark

Greenwood and illustrator Frané Lessac describe how John "Jack" Simpson Kirkpatrick, born in Britain, became the quintessential Australian bushman (the figure celebrated by Banjo Paterson and others in *The Bulletin* in the late nineteenth-century). The naïve gouache artwork of Frané Lessac and its palette go from slightly muted in the English scenes to more contrasted in Simpson's Australian adventures, and culminate in a monochromatic explosion of orange-beige on the Turkish peninsula where his legend was born. War horrors are toned down for young readers: the wounded are all quietly sitting or lying, with all their limbs still attached; only one tiny figure is seen floating face down in the sea, surrounded by a very faint beige halo in the middle of the blue; and, on the next double page, the sea takes an ominous salmon-pink hue. For the rest of the book, Simpson and Duffy's brave rescue operations, until Simpson's death and burial, take place in a hilly countryside that, in the visual style of the illustrator, emulates children's drawings but also clearly hint at Aboriginal painting designs, with wide swaths of ochre for the land and strong primary colours, up to the red sky of the funeral scene, reflecting the poppies mentioned in the text and drawn among the soldiers' graves. On the same double page, the hills have also taken an unnatural black tint which serves as an inverted canvas for the repetitive accumulation of men, tents, trees, bushes echoing the field of aligned crosses. This image, and the well-ordained patterns of vegetation and fighting positions all along the previous pages, also evoke Aboriginal dot-painting motives.

Less original is the narrative treatment of Simpson's story, with the last double page mentioning that "Jack rescued over three hundred men during twenty-four days" before concluding the narrative with the traditional injunction, "Lest We Forget." These words are placed just opposite a recycled visual trope of Simpson's legend which the authors are using no less than three times in the whole book: Simpson walking alongside his donkey and supporting a wounded soldier sitting on the animal. Based on a few photographs from 1915, the scene has been memorialised at different commemorative sites around Australia, on medals or on stamps. In 2004–2005, as part of John Howard's conservative government's new National Framework for Values Education:

> [federal Minister for Education Brendan] Nelson designed a poster of the values "and over the top of it," he said, "I've superimposed Simpson and his donkey as an example of what's at the heart of a national sense of emerging identity." The story of the unarmed digger and his donkey rescuing wounded soldiers at Gallipoli was the essence of our national character, said Nelson, "and he represents everything that's at the heart of what it means to be an Australian." (Clark 52–53)

The lofty but vague notions evoked by the Minister are echoed by the contrasting impressions and images present in another picture book re-using the Simpson visual package. Titled *Only a Donkey*, it seems to conflate the Anzac myth with redemption stories from the Old and the New Testaments. In the book, the

Australian icons ultimately change the destiny of a small farm donkey first bullied (literally) by the other animals:

> *All the other animals were happy at the farm, except the donkey.*
> "You're useless." The dog barked.
> The goat said, "You're weak."
> "Donkeys have ears like wings," bleated the sheep.
> And the animals laughed.
> Especially the bull. (2–3)

The story takes a metaphysical turn when, sleeping in his stable, the donkey sees a path to magic in his dreams. With the manger and night-sky background, it is not a stretch to think of Joseph being visited by the Holy Spirit before the Nativity. The next day, the donkey gets on his way, followed by inquisitive, sceptical and still verbally abusive animals. When the little group ends up in what looks like the grounds of Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance, their encounter with "The Man with the Donkey" (a 1935 sculpture by Wallace Anderson) is a kaleidoscope of biblical references. It feels like a paradoxical Exodus (are they really finding the Promised Land in the middle of a modern metropolis?), and the gathering around the statue seems to mix the episode of the golden calf and the scene of the grumbling Hebrew crowd challenging Moses to draw water from the rock. And, lo and behold, the bronze donkey speaks – in fact recites a poem about the friendship and trust between man and beast that led to the rescue of "over 300 men." The humbled animals then "all see the magic" of care and compassion (the first value listed on Nelson's poster) on their way home, and "all the animals were happy at the farm – especially the donkey – THE END" (30–31).

This tale of epiphanic remembrance brings to mind the concerns of modern historians and teaching specialists. In *History's Children: History Wars in the Classroom*, published in 2008, Anna Clark thus comments on her discussions with high school students all around Australia about Gallipoli and the Anzacs:

> I did wonder whether their belief in Anzac was more like a form of spiritual nationalism than historical understanding. I got a similar sense of this national sentiment while reading Bruce Scates' study of pilgrimages to Australian war sites [at Gallipoli and the Western Front in 2002]. […] Dave, a student on the trip, wrote that he'd learnt about Gallipoli since primary school: "To me, it's the Australian Mecca, a place where we can reflect upon ourselves and what it means to be Australian." […] At a boys' school in Adelaide, Declan talks about his connection in similar terms: "Most people say that you shape your country with the way you fight your battles and what comes from that. People are always talking about Australia's freedom is because we fought at Gallipoli and World War II." (46)

"The way you fight your battles" and the initial bullying in *Only a Donkey* may hint at a peculiar issue in the Gallipoli/Anzac legend: it is fundamentally based on

a military failure, the kind that nonetheless inspires intense nationalistic discourses like the Thermopylae in 480 BC, the Battle of Kosovo for the Serbian nation in 1389, or the end of the Gallic independence from Rome after the Battle of Alesia in 52 BC.[2] The Australian human tragedy at Gallipoli has, at different periods, been explained by the heartless incompetence of the British High Command, resulting in a massive waste of soldiers' lives, an interpretation central to the thesis of Peter Weir's *Gallipoli* movie of 1981. However, this supposed ill-treatment has to be measured against actual cases of bullying perpetrated by Australian soldiers, such as the deadly riot in the Cairo brothel district, known as the Battle of the Wazzir – or simply their participation in the invasion of a distant, unknown country.

Just as in *Only A Donkey*, a clear case of bullying also occupies almost a quarter of the pages of Belinda Landsberry's *Anzac Ted*. The tattered plush toy is described as "a scary bear" on the first page, as scary as anything that explosive ordnance and ammunition can inflict on a human being: "he is missing bits, his tummy splits, he only has one eye." A few pages later, his appearance triggers a panicked stampede out of a classroom, with visual echoes of a military position or a trench violently emptied of all human life: papers caught mid-air in the rush, like shrapnel or blown bits of landscape – or worse, with a kid's foot half-seen through a doorframe, visually disconnected from the rest of his body. Is it because of that initial scare ("I don't know why some start to cry but reckon I can guess") that all the kids then verbally lash out at poor Anzac Ted? He ends up marginalized and covered with ridicule. However, instead of only playing his part in a cautionary tale of social misbehaviour, this teddy bear ends up as a double proxy, that of the child and that of many a veteran of World War I and later conflicts. Published in 2014, *Anzac Ted* is designed as a safe first exposure to the Anzac story, as evoked in its publisher's online promotional material:

> Coincidentally, the centenary for Australia's involvement in World War I and landing at Gallipoli was approaching, so Belinda saw this as a wonderful opportunity to introduce to our children the subject of war, the Anzacs and respect for those who serve. Of course, there are numerous picture books already doing this, but none has made it as readily accessible to children via such a powerful symbol of childhood: the teddy bear.[3]

Thus, halfway through the book, the narrative switches to a flashback in sepia tones, fast-forwarding through the first twenty one years of the narrator's grandfather's life to concentrate on his departure to the war, the teddy bear packed in his suitcase. The fighting in Turkey is sparingly shown: busy stretcher-bearers in the background at one point, and one scene of soldiers charging out of a trench under artillery fire; during this whole ordeal, Ted the mascot becomes a hero, as mentioned four times by the narrator. Decades later, back in Australia, he is last seen in his tiny uniform jacket and slouched hat saluting the viewer, a young audience now enlightened as to the glorious legend – a budding awareness smoothly

consolidated with the superimposition of the last line of text ("His name is […] Anzac Ted") on the stock image of the Anzac Day dawn silhouette.

Anzac Ted toys with the notions of mindless violence and ghastly mutilations. In this precise case, and with a whole corpus of children's books dealing with individual experience in the context of large-scale bloodshed, it is interesting to question the value and possible consequences of what may at first glance look like an age-inappropriate literary onslaught of military nationalism. Even without any ideological agenda, what may arouse criticism here is "the question of reading books that deal with sober topics to young children at all" (76), as Ellen Handler Spitz formulates it in *Inside Picture Books*. In a chapter entitled "Please Don't Cry," she describes a situation that could be true for most Australian children of today: "Even in times of relative social calm, however, most children's lives brush up against death, occasionally death that is sudden" (76). She then explains how certain cultural and aesthetic experiences may be made relevant in the light of the larger world's realities:

> Books that survive for many years are often those that are high-spirited. Yet as authors on fairy tales have pointed out, long-lasting stories frequently deal with highly disturbing themes. Just as we adults go to the theatre to watch plays and hear operas that bring tears to our eyes, so children should be permitted to have experiences with art objects that are not all sugar and spice. Although children cannot be protected from loss, they can be exposed to it in ways that range from the sensitive to the callous, the inquiring to the hushed, the slow and careful to the swift, sudden, and overwhelming. With a beautifully crafted picture book and a measure of unhurried time, an attentive child and an engaged adult can accomplish important psychic work that may not involve gaiety but that can, in its own way, be considered to include other deep forms of pleasure. That is, if we count the communication of shared and meaningful experience as a form of pleasure. (Spitz 76–77)

Her demonstration is then articulated around a few picture books depicting young protagonists dealing first with the death of a beloved pet (a fairly likely occurrence in their lives, and another instance of the attractiveness of animal protagonists in fiction). She also comments on a few other books dealing with a more profound exposure to one's mortal condition through the decline and death of a grandparent, before analysing an American picture book dealing with past wars and their individual and collective memory. In Eve Bunting's and Ronald Himler's *The Wall*, a young boy and his dad visit the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Washington, D.C. to pay tribute to the boy's grandfather. The ritual remains subdued, different groups of mourners gently come and go in the narrative, and the civic-duty notes of honour and pride are quickly countered by the boy's final lament: "I'd rather have my grandpa here, taking me to the river, telling me to button my jacket because it's cold. I'd rather have him here" (30).

In *The Wall*, it is a simply-phrased anti-war feeling that imbues the remembrance ritual with a heartfelt authenticity, rather than any construct of national identity. On the title page, the authors utter a stern recommendation to their readers: "CHILDREN, LIVE IN SUCH A WAY THAT WE WILL NEVER NEED ANOTHER WALL LIKE THIS ONE." A similar injunction appears in *Anzac Day Parade*, when a young boy and an old veteran meet on the grounds of the Auckland War Memorial Museum; at the end of their discussion, the boy points at six words engraved in otherwise-blank marble panels of the Hall of Memories: "LET THESE PANELS NEVER BE FILLED" (26–27). However, this simple heart-rending message comes after an exchange that started with the boy's abrupt question to the old soldier: "Did ya shoot them dead? […] Did it feel real cool to kill?" (10). Most picture books dealing with Anzac Day rituals of remembrance are positioned between these two opposites, with varying approaches and ambitions.

2. Anzac Day Commemorations in Children's Literature

After a period of decline from the 1960s to the early 1980s, the April 25th annual commemorations have experienced an unexpected resurgence, from Prime Minister Bob Hawke's visit to Gallipoli in 1990 to the massive crowds at recent dawn services, parades, Anzac Day Clashes between the Collingwood and Essendon football teams at the Melbourne Cricket Grounds, and drinking and gambling sessions at the local RSL (Returned and Services Leagues) clubs. As Anna Clark explains in *History's Children*: "It's clear that irrespective of party politics, Anzac Day is 'good politics' – it's a powerful public commemoration where national myth and Australian history have become inextricably entwined" (48).

Beside the abundant teaching material provided to all school age groups by the federal Department of Veterans' Affairs, commercial publishers have also been very active in this domain over the last 15 years, especially with the current centenary period. This output is partly constituted from fairly didactic efforts such as Jackie French and Mark Wilson's *A Day to Remember: The Story of Anzac Day* (2012). Readers have also access to first-person narratives of young Australians partaking in the public rituals of the day or already questioning the act of remembrance (*My Grandad Marches on Anzac Day* by Catriona Hay and Benjamin Johnson, 2005; *Lest We Forget* by Kerry Brown, illustrated by Isobel Knowles and Benjamin Portas, 2015; *One Minute's Silence* by David Metzenthen and Michael Camilleri, 2014). Finally, one can find a whole series of more allusive works, sometimes tending towards poeticized abstraction while evoking the persistence of memory through man-made artefacts and natural manifestations, operating separately or in collaboration (*The House that was Built in a Day: Anzac Cottage*, Valerie Everett and Barbara McGuire, 2007; *Do Not Forget Australia*, Sally Murphy and Sonia

Kretschmar, 2012; *The Poppy*, Andrew Plant, 2014; *Lone Pine*, Susie Brown, Margaret Warner and Sebastian Ciaffaglione, 2012; *Memorial,* Gary Crew and Shaun Tan, 1999; *The Anzac Tree,* Christina Booth, 2017).

The current intellectual and political debate on the meaning of Anzac Day is the latest phase of a national discussion started soon after the actual events at Gallipoli. In recent decades, the public commemorative fervour was at its lowest in the 1960s and 1970s, when the cultural tide was turning (with creations such as Alan Seymour's play *That One Day of the Year*) and when Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War soured this institutional duty of remembrance. However, while Anzac Day has progressively come back in favour over the last 30 years, it has managed to keep clear from various cultural and ideological storms: the controversial Bicentenary celebrations in 1988, the Mabo decision about native titles in 1992 and the 1997 *Bringing Them Home* report on the Stolen Generations, among many other issues related to the current situation of Aboriginal Australians and Torres Strait Islanders. This black-armband-versus-white-blindfold dialectic also structures the debates around Australia's post 9/11 policies and attitudes, from the refugee detention crisis to the scepticism about inclusive multiculturalism (with extreme manifestations such as the much-discussed Cronulla riots in 2005).

During the Anzac Day celebrations of the last 15 years, recently retired soldiers and active combatants have marched together after serving as part of UN peace-keeping operations or in Afghanistan and Iraq. In *A Day to Remember*, Jackie French performs a delicate balancing act as she tries to convey the fierce controversies and the still-horrendous realities of the world at large to her young readers:

> 25 April 2004
> Australia had sent troops to join the United States, Great Britain, Saudi Arabia and Egypt when the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein invaded neighbouring Kuwait. More troops were sent to support the invasion by the United States to topple Saddam Hussein's regime.
>
> Many among the crowds that lined the streets on Anzac Day, or who stood in prayer or silence at dawn, felt that Australia shouldn't have been in wars like these.
>
> But still they came, and they remembered: those who had suffered as the bombs of others dropped from the sky; refugees torn from their homes far away; children conscripted as soldiers for wars they didn't understand. (26–27)

On this double page where two conflicts are clumsily put together and then juxtaposed with the plight of refugees and child soldiers, as in other sections of the book, the author's intention to encompass a whole century of ceremonial remembrance may have been too ambitious for the picture book medium. Added to the neutrality she imparts to her narrative, all this turns *A Day to Remember* into an unsatisfying history lesson: too vague, and disconnected from its audience's sensibilities.

By contrast, *My Grandad Marches on Anzac Day* succeeds in its naturalistic approach to the Anzac Day ritual. The little girl's narration and the matter-of-fact, textured graphic rendition sprinkled with discrete visual cues effortlessly blend the communal Anzac Day experience in a familiar suburban setting with a summary evocation of past tragedies. With most of its illustrations either medium shots or close-ups, the book doesn't try to convey any sense of epic endeavour or immeasurable suffering. The young narrator underlines some elemental aspects of the ritual: the cold of the pre-dawn hour, the gun salute that makes her "jump and scares the seagulls" (9), the shared sustenance of "chocolate and cake" (10), the badge on her dress (perhaps no more important to her than a school distinction); they all remain embryonic signifiers of the events celebrated on this occasion. When her grandad finally appears, he poses as a fully-formed specific character in the middle of the crowd, not just one of the veterans marching. To his granddaughter, his "big moustache" is as distinctive as his "shiny medals," and her description of his behaviour ("he smiles," "he remembers," "he marches," "he is quiet," 14, 17, 27) shows that, beyond the tacit codes of the ceremony, it is with her very own grandad that she is sharing this special occasion, not with some transcendent idea of national identity made flesh. The Gallipoli story is told in only one double-page of text and images, a brevity which allows the little girl's experience to feel deeply sincere but without excessive flourish or pathos. In the same fashion, when she expresses her commitment to assume her family's duty of remembrance in the future, it's on her own terms, as the thought comes to her while she is sitting alone for a moment.

It is in the same position that the reader discovers the little group of senior high school students in *One Minute's Silence*. In the first double page of that small group, they look rather unfazed, perhaps hopeful that this evocation of the Great War may be more "exciting"[4] than the unit on the 1901 Federation and the constitutional conventions, "so far removed […] with starchy old men in top hats" (as described in Anna Clark's *History Children* 44–45). They're looking away, not even interacting with their peers in the class. Some are even half-asleep. But when the title of the book becomes an injunction written on the blackboard, each of them is taken out of their immediate environment. They are mercilessly thrown into scenes of the landing and the battles on the Turkish coast, in a way that distorts the usual empathetic projection that a narrative authority may try to elicit from the reader.

Their involvement in the fight, on each side of the battlefield, is marked by a peculiar in-betweenness. Some of them do fall dead, but it does not provoke any lasting impression. After all, the urge for them to "imagine" the circumstances (repeated fifteen times throughout the book) does not take them very far. Stuck at the threshold of personal awareness, they are their own safe avatars, since the overall impression given by the pictorial narration remains that of an elaborate military action video game. The eight months of the campaign are sliced up

into game levels: landing on the beach, climbing the hill, the fight at Lone Pine and the stealthy escape from the Cove around Christmas time. The weapons and explosive devices are drawn with a didactic precision that borders on the fetishist (with the same level of detail that one may encounter in any modern war game franchise like *Call of Duty*). The technological annihilation of human beings is evoked through cutaway diagrams of artillery shells and heavy machine guns, and through ballistic compositions of bullets and shrapnel balls flying towards their targets in a visual style that sits somewhere between the late nineteenth-century chronophotographs and the bullet time special effects a century later. Published in 2014, the book's target audience are the last of the Millennials still in high school, and they are natively immersed in the contemporary semiotic systems of military combat representation, a familiarity borne of the pervasive, constant discursive interactions between news media, institutional communication organs, the entertainment and the video game industries. Attuned to the background noise of the War on Terror since the beginning of the previous decade, they may ultimately be too familiar with these extreme realities to be manipulated either into radical pacifism or spiritual militarism.

More notable in *One Minute's Silence* is the representation of the Turkish enemy. Far from the tokenism still present in other recent books, the Ottoman combatants are described as determined to hold their positions to protect their farms and their families from the "slouch-hatted strangers swarming towards them with rifles" (16). None of the ten students depicted together in the class at the beginning seems to choose where he or she lands on the Turkish hillside, and just starts shooting to save his life and that of his fellow soldiers around him. The only trace of any instinctive epiphany at the end of this minute of silence seems to be the exchange of concerned, even peeved looks between the students. Having read through the perfunctory chronicle of the Diggers' resilience to extreme adversity, the teenagers are ready for a constructive dialogue about what Anzac may mean today – an approach that many real-life students and teachers are happy to implement to avoid a one-sided veneration of the legend, as observed by Anna Clark in *History's Children*.

This critical caution is certainly what dictates the emotional and narrative ambiguity of the last pages of *An Anzac Tale*, a recent graphic novel covering the whole campaign in the Dardanelles. When a bitter Australian soldier casts one last look at the Cove during the evacuation in December 1915, he sternly silences one of his fellow soldiers: "Why would any Australian want to come to Gallipoli?" (63). The answer is given on the final double page, with the depiction of a recent Anzac Day dawn service on the Turkish site. Thousands of spectators/participants/pilgrims are turned towards the ceremony stage and the flags at half-mast. However, with a majority of teenagers and young adults attired in national teams' hoodies and beanies or draped in national banners depicted in the foreground, there is still a lingering doubt as to the way most recent children's books

depict the Anzacs' fight in Turkey and its annual commemorations – somewhere between two conjoined rites of passage a century apart, and a civic festival with or without the nationalistic overtones denounced by many Australian historians every April 25th.

Notes

1 Although it is called *In Flanders Fields*, it is not the famous poem by John McCrae that was written during that period, but instead the book includes only a verse from that poem.
2 In "A Turkish Tale" published in *The Monthly*, in February 2007, Robert Manne evokes the opposition between "collective memory" and "memory" developed by Peter Novick, and Manne gives the examples of the lost battle of Kosovo and the partitions in Poland.
3 *Anzac Ted* – Online teachers' notes (http://anzacted.com/teachers-notes/).
4 The adjective is taken from comments of students and teachers interviewed by Anna Clark, as reported in her 2008 book, *History's Children*.

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Filmography

Gallipoli. 1981. Dir. Peter Weir. Prod. Associated R&R Films.

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Trauma, Gothic Apocalypse and Critical Mourning: The First World War and Its Aftermath in Chris Womersley's *Bereft*

Abstract

The article focuses on *Bereft* (2010), a novel by Australian writer Chris Womersley, which applies the framework of trauma to depict the (failed) reintegration of the returning soldiers after the First World War. Using Gothic and Apocalyptic tropes, Womersley addresses the question of the aftermath of violence in the lives of an Australian family and the Australian nation. By combining the insights of trauma and Gothic studies, the article demonstrates how *Bereft* undermines the meta-narrative of Australian participation in the First World War, questioning the myth of Anzac and national cohesion. It proposes to read the novel as an example of critical mourning, which, rather than cure from trauma, suggests a re-examination of the dramatic sequels of the imperial conflict. Rage seems to offer here an intriguing alternative to the forgetful practices of commemoration. By revising the militarized national mythology, *Bereft* redefines the First World War in terms of loss, trauma and desolation, and negotiates a place for broken bodies and minds in Australian cultural memory.

The defining moment in Australian cultural memory of the Great War is the landing of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (Anzac) forces at Gallipoli, Australia's first major armed confrontation during the conflict. Only fourteen years old, through stupendous feats of courage, on 25 April 1915, the Australian federation was transformed into a true nation. The romanticized legend of the Anzac, shaped by Australia's official eyewitness Charles Bean, highlighted the outstanding characteristics of Australian men, such as courage, loyalty, physical strength and anti-authoritarianism, features earlier attributed to the Australian digger/bushman (Seal; Keshen 8). The memory of the brave Australian soldiers on the cliffs of Gallipoli was soon fused with a narrative of Australianness, which neglected the fact that Gallipoli was a serious military defeat, "with Anzac, which was among the initial invading force of 50,000, suffering 7,600 casualties and then withdrawing after eight months" (Keshen 8). In the post-war years, the myth of the glorious

achievements of Anzac soldiers, seen as catalysts of a new nationalism, was celebrated by Australians. Although, besides New Zealanders, British and French soldiers also took part in the campaign, in the Australian national imagination Gallipoli was represented as an entirely Australian undertaking. After Gallipoli, in Australia the term "Anzac" began to be used only in reference to Australian troops (Keshen 8).

Synchronously, since the 1960s, the Australian legend has been challenged as over-simplified, based on several exclusions, in terms of ethnicity, race and gender, important factors in "a war that was fought for the freedom to keep Australia white, British and openly militaristic" (Reynaud 301). Nevertheless, in spite of the multi-layered critique of the Anzac myth,[1] at its centenary, the Great War remains the essential event that marks Australian independence from the British Empire (see Spittel 269; Reynaud 300).The modern version of the Anzac has been redefined "as one of unity, Australianness and inclusivity," reflecting what Australians want to believe about the 1914–1918 conflict a hundred years later (Reynaud 301). The war awakened both Australian nationalism and imperialism, yet it is the former that occupies a central position in the narratives of commemoration. Colonial loyalties and the support given by Australians to the British Empire in what was an imperial, global war are thus eclipsed. The conflict's tremendous costs for the dominion, with over 60,000 dead among the 400,000 volunteers, out of a population of five million, are still overshadowed by the official discourse of courage, freedom and nationhood (Keshen 8).

Since the 1960s, the Anzac legend has also become an important literary theme. In contrast to the canonical British representation of the Great War in terms of trauma, disenchantment, futility and ruin, Australian literature tends to depict the conflict "at one extreme, as a foundational event, and at the other, as a devastating national tragedy from which the country has yet to recover" (Rhoden 286). In mainstream literary works, the tropes of action and heroism are privileged over passivity and victimization, while the war itself is represented as a constructive adventure. The war might be horrible, but it is "a task to be done" by stoical, selfless and pragmatic Australian men (Rhoden 276–277). Clare Rhoden links this optimistic approach to the Australian national character and the bushman ethos of the pioneering past. Inscribed within the Australian tradition of insubordination (also in relation to the cliché of war's futility and dehumanization), "Australian wartime confrontation with mortality in fact celebrates life, even contingent life, and living, as opposed to simply affirming the futility of war and mourning war's victims" (Rhoden 277).

In this perspective, the remembrance of grief and war trauma itself becomes problematic. The reliance on the myth of Anzac as the idealized nation builders conceals the operations of biopower inherent in war,[2] which reduce the existence of soldiers to what Giorgio Agamben refers to as *bare life*, exposed to unlimited injury and death "in the most profane and banal ways" (114). The "licensed

displacements of the realities of war", inscribed within the legitimizing narrative of the Australian nation, tend to de-realize the actual goals of warfare and attempt to "confer meaning on the meaninglessness of war" (Gana 78). Consequently, commemorating the dead killed in an imperial war, which is remembered as the birth of the modern nation-state, involves several forms of self-forgetfulness. As David Lloyd emphasizes, for the postcolonial subjects the function of the practices of commemoration is to "lose" their loss in order to become docile subjects of a "therapeutic modernity" (222). In this sense, mourning often involves reconciliation with the past "that is at odds with a postcolonial desire to reclaim or recover that which was lost/stolen" (Durrant 95). By contrast, Sam Durrant proposes a form of critical mourning, which, instead of soothing colonial/imperial trauma, exposes the collective wound, disrupting the identification of the subject with the state inherent in national mythology (Durrant 96; see also Lloyd 218). It is "a recalcitrant, anti-therapeutic form of mourning that, rather than accommodating the subject to postcolonial modernity" (Durrant 97), dismantles the amnesiac effects of the discourses of commemoration by synchronously revealing the violence that constitutes subjectivity (Durrant 93–94).[3]

Bereft, published by Chris Womersley in 2010, set between 1909 and 1919, focuses on the experience of Quinn Walker, a returning soldier from Flint, New South Wales, Australia. The novel is not a linear, coherent narrative, for it shares many of its ambivalences and uncertainties with the Gothic convention. The central protagonist has been profoundly marked by the war, but the defining experience of his life was the rape and murder of his beloved sister Sarah in 1909 by his uncle Robert. Wrongly accused of the atrocious acts, the sixteen-year-old had to run away from his native town and to conceal his identity. *Bereft* is therefore to a large degree a narrative of guilt, paranoia and persecution, Quinn being a man "perpetually on the verge of departure" (26). He volunteers for the front hoping for atonement, yet the Dardanelles and France prove devastating experiences which shatter his sense of self: "First exile, then war. Everything was in ruins" (243). The traumatic symptoms Quinn suffers from – flashbacks, nightmares, hallucinations – are therefore directly related to war, yet at the same time war trauma covers the initial trauma of family violence. Womersley thus powerfully illustrates Cathy Caruth's statement that "trauma is not only the repetition of the missed encounter with death but also the missed encounter with one's own survival. It is the incomprehensible act of surviving – of waking into life – that repeats and bears witness to what remains ungrasped within the encounter with death" (6). Quinn has acquired a profound wisdom about the limits of human endurance and does not care about life. What is important for him is a half-conscious desire for justice, which causes him to return to Flint after the war.

Bereft challenges the legendary view of Australian heroism and of unique bonds between the Anzac. As an outcast on the run, Quinn is particularly tempted by the war's promise of glory and community. The potential transformation of the

"private ego into a national persona" proves, however, detrimental to his sense of self, and is experienced "like a death, abandonment, a severance from life" (Leed 205).The only brotherhood Quinn is admitted to is "a brotherhood of terror": in *Bereft* the soldiers become accustomed to "the press of many bodies, to the whiff of other men and their whispering hearts of fear" (53).What connects them, however, rather than a sense of common achievement, is "ritualized humiliation and rites of powerlessness" (Bourke 128). Having returned home, the protagonist still hears the sounds of battles in the calm Australian countryside and wakes up weeping after the terrible war scenes that come back to him in his nightmares. The narrator emphasizes that language would fail to describe the horror of war, or "rather, that to describe it would require every word of the language, all of them at once, until they no longer made sense" (115). The available tropes of representation are dysfunctional in the context of war trauma: "the inextricable relationship between discourse and experience has been unsettled in such a way that, instead of experience, there follows a *collapse* of experience" (Gana 81). Moreover, Quinn's memories from the war zone would be unacceptable to civilians, particularly the iconoclastic scene of a soldier sodomising a corpse (45). On the ship bringing him back to Australia, Quinn throws his medal into the ocean; he does not feel proud about his deeds and thus "displays an archetypical Australian disrespect for formal recognition" (Rhoden 285).[4] The war fails therefore to create a community, as it isolates shattered individuals in the prison of their traumatic microcosms and the memories of horror that cannot be communicated to others.

Womersley thus engages with *critical mourning*, refusing to comply with the reproduction of the glorious Anzac subject in his novel. His descriptions of Australians returning from the front highlight maimed corporeality and the veterans' liminality. Instead of vigorous heroes, the men disembarking at North Head, Sydney are represented as delicate and vulnerable, in terms reminiscent of Wilfred Owen's "Dulce et Decorum Est": "The soldiers were a rabble, ill-shod and half-broken, tubercular, mutilated and blind. Many hobbled with crutches, on bandaged legs" (12). Quinn himself was gassed at the front and still suffers from terrible coughing fits, which leave him frightened and exhausted. Due to heavy bombardment, the protagonist was also exposed to partial loss of hearing; half of his face is scarred as a result of shrapnel wounds. In *Bereft,* war's violence is therefore inscribed on the veterans' bodies and minds. Moreover, they are liminal men, suspended between two "disjunctive social worlds," that of war and that of peace (Leed 194). Having cohabited with vermin and beasts in the subterranean world of war, they are situated in-between the animal and the human world. As those who have experienced and inflicted unimaginable violence, back home they are perceived as dangerous barbarians (Leed 18–19; 196). Travelling through the Australian countryside, Quinn encounters other veterans, who, like him, are uncertain of their bearings. In this sense, homecoming proves more difficult than departure for the front; devastated by the terrible knowledge they acquired during

the war, several veterans in the novel succumb to the temptation of suicide. The totalizing gesture of the meta-narrative aiming to produce a homogeneous national body is undermined when Womersley focuses on the emotionally and physically maimed veterans, whose life, in contrast to the invincible Anzac, is tragic, obscure and precarious.

Interestingly, by resorting to Gothic hyperbole, Womersley depicts Quinn's liminal condition as extreme: he was reported missing in action, presumed dead in 1916, and, like a revenant, haunts his relatives; as a traumatized soldier, he is among the living dead; there is no social role he can return to except for that of the terrifying Flint Murderer. He is physically alive, but legally and socially dead, claiming "a self, a love, and a life of which he has been radically dispossessed" (Caruth 26), demanding a recompense for what has been denied to him. His condition is that of an outcast, ostracised by the community which treats him as a scapegoat, being unable to accept the violence within. In this sense, Quinn is a romantic figure, a victim of various institutions of power – the family, the police, the military (Botting 92), who elicits the reader's sympathy. Trauma in *Bereft* is not only connected with the protagonist's broken mind, but also with utter powerlessness, a betrayal of trust, which "takes place when the very powers that we are convinced will protect us and give us security become our tormentors: when the community of which we considered ourselves members turns against us or when our family is no longer a course of refuge but a site of danger" (Edkins 2003, 4). Significantly, both at the front and back home Quinn is exposed to the constant threat of death. Womersley's conflation of his protagonist's status as a dangerous banned man with that of an injured veteran, suspended in-between the world of humans and beasts, highlights that "his entire existence is reduced to a bare life stripped of every right by virtue of the fact that anyone can kill him without committing homicide; he can save himself only in perpetual flight" (Agamben 183). Yet it is this figure, hardly recognizable as human, scarred physically and mentally, "decivilized" by a war that was fought in defence of civilization, that is empowered in the novel to denounce injustice and claim retribution.

Womersley uses disturbing Gothic means to explore his protagonist's traumatic experience and the tension between civilization and barbarity. Quinn's mother displays an ambivalent reaction when she sees her son returning as if from the dead, for initially she fears that he has come back to take her life. Only later does she confess that she has always believed in his innocence. Quinn's relationship with the orphaned Sadie Fox, the object of his uncle Robert's sick desire, is also most disquieting. The adolescent girl, apparently involved in witchcraft, submits the young man to strange rituals, covering his body with mysterious cuts, including a cross on his chest that marks the bond between them. Their mutual feelings oscillate between the polar extremes of the Gothic sublime (see Botting 39): tenderness and distrust, "comfort and fear" (Womersley 137). When Quinn finally agrees to protect her, she replaces Sarah by his side, and he talks to this Gothic

doppelganger as if she were his sister. Sadie communicates with nature and the world of the spirits to learn others' secrets and predict the future; Quinn himself is called back to Flint by his deceased sister during a spiritualist séance. The Gothic monster *per se* in the novel is Robert Dalton, Quinn's uncle, now Flint's constable, a frightening figure of authority, who, pretending to protect the status quo, hides the most perverse desires under the mask of respectability. The Gothic logic of the hunted/hunter, victim/victimizer (Botting 165) is reversed when the protagonist finally kills his uncle, redeeming in this way his inability to protect his sister in the past, and thus liberating himself from its grip. Ironically, his own father still wants to kill him and his mother trusts Robert, her brother – a serial rapist and murderer – unconditionally. In a way typical of the Gothic (see Punter 198), the family is thus exposed as a fragile institution, incapable of recognizing the source of violence and of sheltering its children against the enemy at home.

I insist on these details for Womersley's resort to the supernatural in depicting the world emerging from the 1914–1918 conflict is consistent with the miracles and feasts of magic Quinn witnessed or heard about at the front. Myths, fantasies, rituals and omens were used by the soldiers to make sense of their experience during a war which, paradoxically, represented "a triumph of modern industrialism, materialism, and mechanism" (Fussell 115). This reliance on superstitions and supernatural beliefs was a "response to the total loss of individual control over the conditions of life and death" (Leed 128), a form of self-defence against the barbaric brutalities of war. Significantly, in *Bereft* such pre-modern frameworks are also functional after the conflict, which highlights the illusion of the discourses of progress and modernity, shattered in the realities of industrialized slaughter.

Womersley engages with the theme of premodern fears in his descriptions of the influenza pandemic, which echo the catastrophe of the front. Commonly known as the Spanish Flu, it killed 50 million people worldwide, including 13,000 in Australia, where it began to spread in June 1918. The warring nations were unprepared to confront the disease and to break the contagion, the more so that it was impossible to control human circulation at the end of the war (Rasmussen 337–355). Womersley recreates the atmosphere of fear caused by the Spanish Flu. His soldiers disembark wearing gauze masks, ghost-like figures, which provoke anxiety among the civilians. The state borders are closed, as the neighbouring state of South Australia has imposed a quarantine,[5] which reinforces the carceral mood of the novel. A sense of emptiness, loss and grief suffuses the Australian countryside. Quinn's mother suffers and finally dies from the flu; the male protagonist is the only one who dares to approach her, while others, including her husband, communicate with her through an open window and leave food on the porch. The epidemic is associated with the Black Death of the Middle Ages: "They call it a flu, but it is surely something more serious than that. There is talk of other, worse things. Some say it is the plague. Here, in the twentieth century, can you imagine, Quinn?" (56). The plague contributes therefore to an impression of

"decivilisation" (Rasmussen 351), suggested by the reversal to barbaric brutality and the mass deaths in the war scenes of *Bereft*.

Ironically, the Armistice coincides with the peak of the flu, which creates a powerful sense of Apocalypse in the novel. Sailing back home, the veterans exchange rumours of the end of the world: the visions of Virgin Mary in Portugal; locusts ravaging Palestine crops; bizarre lights illuminating the waters of the world (144). For Quinn and Sadie, the First World War is a "moral catastrophe," which, in a broad gesture, encompasses the modern technologies of slaughter, the influenza pandemic, the Bolshevik revolution, the collapse of traditional ethical codes, the destitution of the powerless *and* Sarah's death (125). "It has already been a dark century. Who knows what is still to come?" (45), observes Quinn's mother, foreshadowing other conflicts, other holocausts. The ur-scene of violence in the novel is, however, Sarah's murder, which has "thrown the world off its course forever" (21). In this light, Quinn appears as the Old Testament Angel of Death (231) who brings punishment to the unworthy. Moreover, in a radical gesture, Womersley imagines a crusade "of all the children of the world left defenceless, abandoned by war or disease to fend for themselves […] storming over the land with Sarah at their head, seeking retribution from those who had failed them" (136). This pre-modern image of the crusading army serves here to convey empathy for the helpless victims of basic social institutions, such as the family or the nation, both unable to protect their offspring. This is why not only Robert Dalton, but also Quinn's mother has to die at the novel's closure, cruelly punished for her blindness and lack of care. The triumph of the dispossessed in Womersley's novel is a typically Gothic fantasy (see Ellis 4–43), yet this victory can be also read as a revenge of the physically, psychologically and socially abused soldiers on those who sent them to a deadly war. Rage appears in Womersley's novel a more proper response to mass death than redundant mourning; by resisting the role of "good subjects" and seeking for revenge, Quinn and Sadie refuse to forget and thus "devalue" both the dead and the living left to confront the sequels of the catastrophe (see Lloyd 221).

Significantly, *Bereft* thus highlights how the public and the domestic, the world of war and the war of peace, are inextricably intertwined. The novel points to the powerlessness of language in reference to the traumatic experience of the soldiers at the front, but also the emotional loss experienced by the civilians. According to Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker (176), the nuances of suffering during and after the First World War remained unverbalized first of all because of the lack of an appropriate vocabulary. Hardly any semantic innovations were introduced in French, English or German to speak of the relatives of a deceased person, such as the mother, father, sister or brother of the dead, not to mention further removed relatives or friends. In *Bereft*, Quinn's mother notices that there is no word to designate a parent who has lost a child, while the protagonist himself observes there is no word, either, to speak of the pain of a brother who has lost

his beloved sister (144). The grief of the bereft revolves outward towards a more general conclusion about the devastation of war.

What binds the home front and the war zone in the novel is unspeakable violence. Paradoxically, the most haunting 'war' scene for Quinn is not a memory of cruelty or gore but his encounter with the corpse of Sainte Solange that he discovered in the cellar of a French Catholic church. The memory of this young girl, dead for hundreds of years, whose cracked face retains a semblance of innocence, becomes for Quinn what Robert J. Lifton refers to as an *image of ultimate horror*, "one involving the dead or dying in a way that evokes the survivor's strongest identification and feelings of pity and self-condemnation." Such imagery often involves the most vulnerable individuals and thus functions as an epitome of all the situations in which he might have saved others (Lifton 142). It is no coincidence that Sarah merges with Sadie and Solange in Quinn's tormented mind. His failure to find atonement in the war proves that the pain of loss after the death of his sister cannot be healed; yet it gives him the power – in reality or fantasy – to protect Sadie from his uncle.

What is more, Gothic uncertainty experienced by Quinn in relation to the past, as well as the subjectivity of villains and victims in the novel, undermines the illusion of a stable identity in favour of disintegration. His lapses of memory, and the inability to know the truth about real motives and events, also render, on a metaphorical level, war's confusing aftermath in a country recovering from mass death and eager to forget the slaughter. Quinn's excessive role as the Flint Murderer in fact masks his exclusion from the symbolic order. The *ontic* trauma of war serves in the novel to reveal "the inevitable *ontological* trauma around which what we call social reality is constituted" (Edkins 2014, 132). Womersley uses Gothic aesthetic to question the fantasy of a secure subjectivity rooted in a stable social and linguistic order, a traumatic insight that shatters the continuity of both social and psychological narratives of origin. Ultimately, in *Bereft*, Sarah's murder, the war and the Spanish flu expose the pretence of security and wholeness within the family and the nation-state, by highlighting chaotic aftermath, and refusing closure – the illusion of completeness and meaning inherent in the Anzac myth.

The representation of the war in terms of abyss and ruin, an apocalyptic gap in time, characteristic of the British tradition of First World War writing (Hynes 455), radically questions the Australian discourse of national (re)birth. Womersley thus undermines the constructive narrative of nation-building centred around Gallipoli, which is ironically deprived of its glorious associations (211). In *Bereft*, Australia is not born at Gallipoli: it might be situated at the end of the world, but it possesses a sophisticated class structure and complex mechanisms of social control long before the conflict. For the protagonist of the novel, moreover, Gallipoli only belongs to a sequence of brutal events, initiated by family drama. By resisting the official narrative of commemoration, Womersley demonstrates that when it inscribes war violence "into a linear time of national heroism […]

the state conceals the trauma that it has, necessarily, produced" (Edkins 2003, xiv). *Bereft* highlights the vulnerability of Anzac, refusing to invest them with glory and heroism, exploring bare life – abandonment to injury, trauma and the power of death. Yet Womersley's story of a traumatized ex-serviceman, erased from the sanitized official narrative, refuses to "depoliticize" the memories of the veterans (Edkins 2003, 16). It thus illustrates the responsibility of the nation-state for the violence it has produced, in shattering and then neglecting the lives of war survivors. The Great War brings only losses and no benefits to the Australian nation,[6] which results in a poignant emotional barrenness and the collapse of community. The pre-modern anxieties of the novel's protagonists shatter the image of a modern war and Australia's entrance into postcolonial modernity, as an independent nation-state, due to its participation in the mechanized slaughter. Using the imagery of the Apocalypse, Womersley seems to suggest the impossibility of mourning mass death, for in the aftermath of war Australian landscape remains filled with haunting absence, while the attendant sorrow cannot be overcome. In an effort to mourn critically, Womersley thus suggests forms of remembrance that do not embrace a cathartic liberation from the trauma of violence. Rage and retribution highlight the bleeding wound of an unresolved national and familial past; the Gothic family drama renders metaphorically the devastation caused by the political crisis. Revising the militarized national mythology, *Bereft* thus redefines the First World War in terms of loss, trauma and desolation, negotiating a place for broken bodies and minds – a legacy of grief – in Australian cultural memory.

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Notes

1 Reynaud points out that the Anzac myth has become "the new secular state religion" (301) for Australians. According to Bongiorno, "while the cultural authority of Anzac has been achieved by developing its inclusiveness – it gestures powerfully towards both a multicultural and an Aboriginal Australia – the result has been a declining toleration in public culture of critique of Anzac. Anzac's inclusiveness has been achieved at the price of a dangerous chauvinism that increasingly equates national history with military history, and national belonging with a willingness to accept the Anzac legend as Australian patriotism's very essence" (81). This conflation of national memory with military history is viewed with suspicion today (Lake et al. iii). For a study

of the history and progression of the Anzac legend, see Reynaud; Spittel; Bongiorno.

2 See Bourke; Leeds; Edkins 2003 for a biopolitical approach to the First World War in terms of management of bodies and mentalities.

3 Lloyd situates his analysis in the context of the Irish Famine, while Durrant develops his critique of postcolonial mourning in reference to post-apartheid Africa. I attempt to read *Bereft* through the framework of critical mourning in the Australian context.

4 The gesture is also reminiscent of the famous British Great War poet, Siegfried Sassoon's. See Rhoden's brief discussion of how *Bereft* re-inscribes traditional Australian literary tropes. I am not convinced by Rhoden's optimistic interpretation of the novel's ending. The Gothic fantasy might be as well interpreted as the central protagonists' death.

5 The wearing of gauze masks was a measure widely applied in Australia, unlike other countries (Rasmussen 351). The quarantine is also a historical fact (Winter 49).

6 Unless we count as a benefit Quinn's murder of his uncle in *Bereft*, which transposes the violence of war into the world of peace, the protagonist having acquired the capacity to kill in a good cause (see Rhoden 286).

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‘Storytelling is an ancient art.’[1] Stories, Maps, Migrants and *Flâneurs* in Arnold Zable’s Selected Texts

Abstract

Nadine Fresco in her research on exiled Holocaust survivors uses the term *diaspora des cendres* (1981) to depict the status of Jewish migrants whose lives are forever marked by their tragic experience as well as a conviction that “the[ir] place of origins has gone up in ashes” (Hirsch 243). As a result, Jewish migrants and their children have frequently resorted to storytelling treated as a means of transferring their memories, postmemories and their condition of exile from the destroyed Eastern Europe into the New World. Since “[l]iterature of Australians of Polish-Jewish descent holds a special place in Australian culture” (Kwapisz Williams 125), the aim of this paper is to look at selected texts by one of the greatest Jewish-Australian storytellers of our time: Arnold Zable and analyse them according to the paradigm of an exiled *flâneur* whose life concentrates on wandering the world, sitting in a Melbourne café, invoking afterimages of the lost homeland as well as positioning one’s status on a map of contemporary Jewish migrants. The analyses of Zable’s *Jewels and Ashes* (1991) and *Cafe Scheherazade* (2001) would locate Zable as a memoirist as well as his fictional characters within the Australian community of migrants who are immersed in discussing their un/belonging and up/rootedness. The analysis also comprises discussions on mapping the past within the context of the new territory and the value of storytelling.

Born in January 1947 in Wellington, New Zealand, to Polish-Jewish refugee parents, Arnold Zable is currently one of the most significant second-generation writers in Australia. Shortly after his birth, his family moved to Australia and he grew up in Carlton, Victoria. Educated at the University of Melbourne and Columbia University, he has become a writer as well as human rights activist and teacher in Australia, Asia, North America and Europe. Zable is the author of eight books so far, including memoirs, short story collections, novels and biographies. His works have been highly praised and awarded both in Australia and abroad. The main themes of his writing are most often focused on migration, loss, the Annihilation, as he prefers to call the Holocaust, and un/belonging among others.

As a son of Polish-Jews, who emigrated from their hometown of Bialystok in the 1930s, born after WWII, the family did not suffer from the Holocaust directly. Yet, many of their relatives, who stayed in Europe, were affected by the mass killings and deportations. They were also very much aware of the annihilation of the European Jewry as well as the demise of the Yiddish culture in Poland and Central-Eastern Europe. As Richard Freadman informs "[Zable's] home life was deeply steeped in the world of *Yiddishkeit* – his father wrote Yiddish poetry, his mother was a fine amateur performer of Yiddish song – but they were not strictly observant Jews" (119; original emphasis). As a result of Zable's upbringing and his literary fascinations, he has become one of the most outstanding Australian writers of Polish-Jewish origins to consider the intricacies of exile and migration permeated by the questions of belonging and place. The aim of this paper is therefore to look at two famous books by Arnold Zable: *Jewels and Ashes* (1991) and *Cafe Scheherazade* (2001) and analyse them according to the paradigm of an exiled *flâneur* whose life concentrates on wandering the world, sitting in a Melbourne café, invoking afterimages of the lost homeland, weaving migrant stories and listening to them as well as positioning one's status on a map of contemporary Polish-Jewish diaspora.

Arnold Zable's debut text, *Jewels and Ashes*, was published in 1991 and can be classified as a memoir. However, as Katarzyna Kwapisz Williams has suggested, second-generation authors, such as Mark Baker, Arnold Zable or Lily Brett "produce competing narratives built on facts and fiction" (126). Therefore, Zable's memoir needs to be located within the idea of faction[2] in which, as he claims: "family stories become, in time, ancestral legends" (1991, n.p.). Hence, the book is an autobiographical rendition of his journey to Central-Eastern Europe undertaken in 1986 during which he rediscovers his family's roots and his parents' hometown of Bialystok. Critics saw this text as a "ground-breaking book in Australia, one of the first of what has since become a distinct auto/biographical genre" (Varga 23).[3]

Cafe Scheherazade, published in 2001, a decade after Zable's debut, is a novel which comprises facts and fiction, history and story. It tells a story of a young journalist, Martin Davis, who spots in Acland Street, St. Kilda, the suburb of Melbourne, the eponymous Cafe Scheherazade and is intrigued by its name. Martin enters the place to inquire about the origins of its name. He meets its owners: Masha and Avram who invite him to their table at the back of the café and promise: "This you will understand once you hear the full story" (2001, 4). Martin, Zable's alter ego (Watts), who is a busy journalist and has deadlines to be met, gradually becomes immersed in their stories as well as their guests: Yossel Bartnowski's, Laizer's and Zalman's, and it is their storytelling that compels Martin to narrate the text. Thus, the journalist is pulled to this café by its atmosphere of the Old World as well as the stories of the Old Places such as "Vilna, Vilnius. The Jerusalem of Lithuania" (5), Warsaw, Pinsk, Odessa, Tulchin

and Kiev, among others, evoked by the group of storytellers exiled from Eastern Europe to the New World speaking in a mix of languages such as English, Polish, Russian, and Yiddish.

1. Stories

"Storytelling is an ancient art" (Zable 2001, 220) claims the narrator of *Cafe Scheherazade* at the end of the book evoking images of ancient storytellers gathered around the fire enchanting audiences with their tales. Throughout the whole text, he also refers to the mythical Scheherazade weaving stories to postpone her death. In both texts by Zable, storytelling plays a central role in preserving the memories of the Old World even though its witnesses frequently struggle with painful remembrances. Both in *Jewels and Ashes*, in which Zable depicts his own family and their fates, as well as in fictionalized *Cafe Scheherazade*, the author pays "a homage to the power of storytelling" (2001, 222). Storytelling saves the Old World from oblivion and helps conjure up images of it in the New World environment.

The story of Zable's parents, which serves as a basis for his own trip to Poland in 1986, is a dramatic one despite the fact the his mother left Poland in the 1930s. Throughout their lives the parents were struggling with the haunting images of their parents, Zable's grandparents, and many other relatives and friends, who stayed in Bialystok and did not survive the Second World War. His own impressions from the journey across Poland are intertwined with his parents' stories of the past. Zable had been exposed to many stories for years, but never received a coherent version of his parents' lives as: "Mother tells stories in fragments. Over the years she has retold the same anecdotes many times. Her experiences flow through her, always liable to leap out unexpectedly in moments of unguarded reflection" (1991, 8). Given her age, tricks that memory plays and conflicting processes of forgetting and remembering, Zable is aware of the inability to get the full view of what it was like to leave one's homeland behind, to fight to get a permit to stay in the New World, and to bring up children who would not be infected with the postmemory of the Holocaust of the closest relatives. It is, however, impossible to avoid being affected by what his family went through and what his parents who were spared the grimmest fate lived through. Referring to the fragmented stories he has received and explaining the meaning of the memoir's title, Zable asks: "What was it they were trying to convey, our elders, when they told us their stories? 'Kadimah' means 'future'; yet they talked endlessly about the past, sometimes lovingly, sometimes with great venom. […] They left a legacy of fragments, a jumble of jewels and ashes, and forests of severed family trees which their children now explore and try somehow to restore" (23–24).

This process of restoration of the family history is never a simple one since some facts are silenced, others have to be extracted at scarce moments of honesty, still others must be just intuitively reclaimed. When his mother muses on her past in Grodek and in Bialystok – this "enticing mirage" (193), she never reveals the whole story, her narrative comes in ebb and flow and Zable's task is to extract the fragments and put them together all by himself. He resembles many second-generation writers who try to grasp the Holocaust stories of their ancestors across the world.[4] Zable depicts his task in the following way: "And as I recreate the story, I must make do with snippets of information gathered from kitchen conversations in which the silences grow longer, and mother seems increasingly lost in an inaccessible world of her own" (73). It is a result of the fact that: "We are talking of events that took place over eighty years ago. At such a distance memories streak like fireflies that flash brightly for a moment in the mind of my mother, before receding back into the darkness. The son is hungry for information, for any spark that might illuminate the beginning of things" (59).

Storytelling is therefore inextricably linked with memory. As Pierre Nora claims: "[…] we speak so much of memory because there is so little left of it" (7). The memories that fuel stories come unexpectedly: in dreams or due to some traumatic experiences. Zable's father has recurrent dreams: of a fire in the forest which through its light exposes himself and his brother hiding among the trees, or of the Old World left behind, when he sailed to the New World from Gdynia. Moreover, he frequently sees his own parents in these dreams:

> They come to him often, Bishke and Sheine. They stand by the bed and ask him how he is, while father asks them: "Where are you now?" And in the mornings his sense of disorientation is overwhelming. "This is why I must deny my dreams," father insists. "Otherwise I would suffocate. A father. A mother. Bathed in blood. A beloved city. A community of friends caught in an ocean of flames. And I was so far away." (1991, 162)

Being haunted and visited by spectral figures of the closest relatives coincides with the feeling of guilt connected to the fact that they (Zable's parents) decided to leave their homeland before the war. The post-Holocaust generation, who either escaped the persecution or did not participate in it, is the haunted generation always prone to be visited by spectral figures, sites of memory, images and spaces forever transformed into mass cemeteries.[5]

Additionally, there are sudden moments of remembering when memories can be accessed for a limited period of time. When Zable's mother fell down on a Melbourne street once, this opened a kind of rift in her memories otherwise kept hidden in her heart:

> Her eyes are blackened, her nose bruised, perhaps broken; and she shields herself from any suggestion of pity. I have known her as a tough person at most times,

> hiding any sign of pain. She seemed always buried in work, as she brought up three sons in the New World. Memories of that other world she had known in her childhood were restricted; while those more painful were kept at bay, and only revealed themselves unexpectedly, triggered by something that would throw her off guard. (1991, 88–89)

Such memories that linger in the minds and hearts of Jews who escaped before the Annihilation are the most painful ones as they expose their passivity and inability to reverse the past.

Among the obvious references to Scheherazade's weaving stories in Zable's 2001 book, the focal theme is definitely the one connected to the ancient queen's ability to postpone death by storytelling. The people coming to the bar are compared to the polyphonic choir singing their song, which spares them from forgetting, losing their identity and, thus, dying:

> Like a magnet Scheherazade draws them, cynics and idealists, ageing schemers and dreamers. […] Listen, and you will hear four, five, six voices at a time. Perhaps you think this impolite, lacking in manners, in style. But for those who participate this is a weekly *simkhe*, a celebration, a communal gathering. The babble of voices is an aria to their ears. […] They are like a chorus in a Greek drama, those who frequent Scheherazade on this winter morning. They fill in the gaps. They echo the central text. Each one has a story aching to be told: tales of townlets and cities now vanished from the earth, of journeys in search of refuge, a shelter from curse. (22)

Martin, the narrator of the book, is faced with the Babel tower of languages, as the trio of friends and the café's owners use English, Yiddish, Russian, and Polish interchangeably. Moreover, they offer versions of the same story as well as gaps to be filled in. This "full story" which Masha promises at the beginning is never realized as Martin understands this task is impossible to achieve. Avram and Masha, who have spent many years and travelled the world together, sometimes offer competing stories until Masha exclaims: "Avramel, let me tell *my* story" (49; original emphasis). If storytelling is supposed to save them from death, each of them wants to dominate the conversation and bring back the most compelling images from the period before the destruction as well as from the years of the War. As Freadman claims, Martin "learns to honor the survivor stories he hears not just for the sake of memory, but because telling is an aspect of surviving" (124). Others also see this forceful task in a similar way. Laizer, who was forced to stay for years in Siberia before making it to Australia after the War, reminiscences how he spent hours of hard work dreaming of the moment in which he "would tell [his] unbelievable tales" (Zable 2001, 85). He says: "I did lie awake at night, beside my snoring workmates, and conjure the picture of my triumphant return. I saw myself walking the final steps to the door. I would tell my story, and my life would not have been wasted" (86). Even though this triumphant return

was never realized as there was no place, no *milieu de mémoire* to come back to, storytelling is seen as the only factor sustaining the sense of existence. This phenomenon can be seen through an analogy to Derridean concept of cinders that "there are" [*il y a lá cendre*] (3). In his *Cinders*, Jacques Derrida comments on the idea of place and placeness in the following way:

> If a place is itself surrounded by fire (falls finally to ash, into a cinder tomb), it no longer is. Cinder remains, cinder there is, which we can translate: the cinder is not, is not what is. It remains *from* what is not, in order to recall at the delicate, charred bottom of itself only nonbeing and nonpresence. Being without presence has not been and will no longer be there where there is cinder and this other memory would speak. (21–22; original emphasis)

This mixture of languages, stories, places, and memories that Zable's texts offer is, therefore, supposed to bring back the impossible, to give voice to the cinder "that remains" and to reclaim the sites of memory from the lost, reduced to cinders, milieus of Central and Eastern Europe, home to the world of Yiddish and people speaking it.

The promise to tell the whole story is not fully possible, but there is a longing to grasp even the overwhelming part. When the café's owners – Masha and Avram talk about their past and describe their idea of a café vibrant with stories, they mention the moments they spent in Paris, their love and happiness, their escape from Shoah and the birth of their first son, but they also refer to the darkness the World entered with the Nazi rule. Their inspiration for a café called Scheherazade comes from a Parisian bistro Scheherazade depicted in E. M. Remarque's novel *The Arch of Triumph* which discusses the fates of stateless people who flee the Nazi terror. Together with vivid memories of Wolfke's cafeteria in Vilnius that Zalman, Laizer and Yossel used to visit, the idea of a safe place for the homeless refugees behind St. Kilda's café becomes obvious. Storytelling is deeply embedded in this very idea, it animates the place and offers shelter from forgetting as well as helps survive when dark memories beset. When they enter "the Kingdom of the Night" (Zable 2001, 157), it is on the one hand the moment of ordeal to recount stories of pogroms, escapes, Siberia, but on the other one it is Scheherazade's moment of prolonging one's life, of sustaining till dawn. Therefore the task of telling tales is seen as "a sacred duty" and Avram "is [such] an avid guardian of the past" and the story "with each telling […] retains its power to astonish" (157).

In both texts, storytelling organizes the narration in a formal and more figurative way. It is the *spiritus movens* of the characters' existence and well as Zable's and his narrator Martin's guide. In one of the interviews Zable compared his position on the text to "a conveyor, or a medium" of the characters' tales. His narrator becomes "a second-generation witness, an alter ego" (Watts). The urge to tell stories and the impulse to write them down reveals the power of stories

that can save both the storytellers as well as the narrators and readers, those who "cannot understand, yet [they] must" those who "should not delve in too deeply, yet they should" (Zable 1991, 163).

2. Maps

Being a narrator in *Cafe Scheherazade* for a journalist whose craft requires reliability and truthfulness is not an easy endeavour for Martin. He is most often challenged by the polyphony of voices, different versions of the stories he is entrusted with. His task is thus not only to write the stories down but to rearrange the fragments as he admits: "it is for me to reconstruct the map and the chronology. A scribe, a no-good scribbler, I cannot turn back. What had begun as a simple newspaper story has exploded beyond my grasp. I listen. And I record. Driven by the knowledge that the old men are moving on, nearing the ends of their tumultuous lives; driven by a sense that it would be a tragic betrayal if their stories disappeared without trace" (Zable 2001, 59). Apparently, the stories are fragmented maps that need rearrangement and reconstruction. Storytelling becomes mapping the exiles' experiences and fates. Laizer, whose story goes back to Vilnius, gives a detailed description of his escape to Ukraine, where he was captured by the Red Army patrols and ended up in Lvov prison first and then was sent by train and on foot into the Urals and labour camp in Vorkuta. Yet, despite the abundance of details, he frequently loses track of his narrative, "cannot see any continuity […] only broken lines" (59). In order to see the landscape and feel the fatigue of the journey, Laizer describes, Martin has to visualize these "broken lines and maps" (64). He consults atlases in libraries, looks at the maps to feel the vastness of this Siberian experience. He says: "I am plotting lines that form ancestral maps, that unify fractured journeys across continents and oceans; lines that convey ancient melodies and longings, and twist and curve and break off into unexpected detours […]" (64–65).

Ultimately, Martin becomes not only the reader of the physical maps who has to locate all the places the Cafe group has been wandering through, from Vilnius to Paris, from Lvov to Kobe and Shanghai, which he analyses from the perspective of a Melbourne based young and secure journalist. He also turns out to be a storywriter who has to catch the threads and arrange them according to the colours of the map, creatively reconstructing the pattern of journeys, and retracing the traumatic experiences and miraculous rescues of the group of refugees. He has to abandon his down-to-earth strategies in order to enter and comprehend this "world of sojourners and itinerants, unhinged and unearthed" (149) and he admits near the end of the text: "I too have become a walker, a café dweller. I too have become unhinged, so taken by Laizer, Zalman and Yossel's stories that all I see about me seems like a parade, a play of chance" (149). When

Martin consults this idea of being unhinged, Yossel aptly responds: "We are *luftmenschen* […] People of air. We do not belong to any one place. The whole world is ours. Yet, despite all our running about, nothing is truly ours." (149; original emphasis).

Such refugees, who have lived for over fifty years in Australia, when Martin meets them, once exiled from the homeland, can never anchor in any place. They dwell in stories, the Café being a physical shelter from the tormenting unbelonging felt as a never-ending ordeal. The city of Melbourne becomes just a space they try to tame but every day they trace the routes of beauty from the past as well as maps of horror.

3. Migrants

The question of unbelonging pervades both texts. Zable's characters are the eternal wanderers who have never stopped being migrants even though they settle down in Australia. In *Jewels and Ashes* he explains that his parents considered leaving their hometown of Bialystok all the time. Despite the fact that they did not encounter any violent anti-Semitism before the War, they felt they had been successors of the Biblical Israelites. Though never voiced in this way they must have realized their condition of migrants. Very early in the book, Zable writes: "They lived on the edge of time and space, my ancestors, always on the verge of moving on, continually faced with the decision: do we stay, persist, take root within this kingdom, or do we take to the road again?" (1991, 11) His parents as well as the characters from *Cafe Scheherazade*: Masha, Avram, Yossel, Laizer and Zalman are the 20th century nomads, exiled from their homes. Being members of the *diaspora des cendres* (Hirsch 143) they can never reclaim their places of origins as the Bialystok, the Vilnius and the Warsaw of their times no longer exist and have "gone up in ashes" (Hirsch 243). Yet, following Derrida's question: "*If the all-burning destroys up to its letter and its body, how can it guard the trace of itself and breach/broach a history where it preserves itself in losing itself?*" (26), Zable, the author, and Martin, the narrator, undertake the task of preserving the cinders as "*the all-burning must pass into its contrary, guard itself, guard its own monument of loss, appear as what it is in its very disappearance*" (26; original emphasis). To place Zable's texts within the paradigm of *diaspora des cendres*, diasporic writing of/about cinders, it has to be remembered that Zable has always been exposed to the stories of exile. That is why when he recalls his earliest memories he says: "When, as a child, I had my first intimations of these ancestral wanderings, I saw them initially as a romance. I imagined myself the descendant of Gypsies and nomads. I tried to retrace their steps. I would catch glimpses of footprints and hooves etched in mud and dust within the pages of Yiddish novels that I read voraciously" (1991, 12). As a result, as an adult person

he undertakes the journey back to retrace these steps and to visit the sites of his parents' memory.

The condition of Cafe's migrants is closely linked with the paradigmatic exiled Jew, a wandering Jew. All storytellers in the novels who entrust Martin with their lives escaped from their lands, went through camps, wandered through the Siberian Taiga, and spent some time as stateless refugees in Paris, Shanghai or the Japanese town of Kobe before reaching Australia. Such journeys would today require maps or navigation systems, but as Martin writes, all of them roamed without aims and final destinations which can only be reconstructed from the perspective of their settlement. Therefore, when Martin writes what kind of story his is, he says: "This is a tale of maps, both old and new. Maps with shifting borders, obsolete before the ink could dry. Maps that created bands of nomads, stateless refugees. Maps criss-crossed by trains shunting their cargoes of uprooted wanderers thousands of kilometres […]" (2001, 50). Zable sees the exiles as nomads whose uprootedness will never be soothed because the wound is too deep and the world's rift cannot be covered up.

4. *Flâneurs*

Arnold Zable, during his 1986 journey to Poland, visited Bialystok, Warsaw, Cracow, among other important places in which he tried to trace his ancestors' past. He himself immerses in Baudelairian strolling to explore the city space, *les lieux de memoire* as Nora puts it. There are no longer the exact *millieux de memoire*, therefore Zable the *flâneur* wanders around the former Jewish districts to reconstruct as much as he can. The same happens to his characters in *Cafe Scheherazade*, who were scattered around Europe during the War and resumed their *flânerie* lifestyle in Melbourne. What Walter Benjamin discovered about Baudelaire and his wandering around Paris, can be compared to Masha and Avram who discovered themselves and their love in a Parisian café which they visited while on exile, stateless and abandoned, unable to find an aim in the devastated Europe of the Second World War. They ended up in St. Kilda and found a goal when they transformed a milk bar into a café which would be a safe place in this "sanctuary" of Melbourne hidden between "two peninsulas that sweep towards each other like hands reaching out to complete an embrace" (2001, 214). Nowadays, this is a vibrant place full of small bars and cafés and Martin, who depicts the area, walks around quite often becoming a *flâneur* himself. Although he wanders with an aim in his mind, he realizes that it is a floating one, as he might not ever fully grasp the multiplicity of stories he listens to. When he "stroll[s] past this maze of cafés, and makes [his] way to Scheherazade" he hears Masha saying: "Each café begets another […] and for every coffee shop on Acland street I imagine a precursor, a café of the mind. Such as Wolfke's, which once stood in

the city of Vilna, on the corner of Niemecka and Zydowska streets" (36). Their Cafe Scheherazade is therefore another place in the long line of similar cafés that gave shelter to the city wanderers such as the classical example of Baudelaire, or other Jewish exiles-turned-strollers from Ravvin's *Café des Westens* modelled on the famous Berlin place. While Pinsker describes "the ultimate Jewish flâneur" (62) and the "coffeehouse Jew" (57) in the 1920s Vienna and their literary renditions, certain similarities can be drawn to analyse the group of Jews visiting St. Kilda's café.

Apparently, the café offers shelter and a place to meet other strollers. However, the Jewish exiles come there in order to recall memories and to bring the stories of the past back. In this way their accounts are evocations of the darkness of the past and the place is not really a healing sanctuary but rather a place which helps them conjure up ghosts of the War. For example, "Yossel still stalks the streets of Warsaw. He still hovers in its shadows. He remains obsessed by a world of hoodlums and fear" (2001, 25),[6] "Laizer walks these streets as if they do not exist. He moves in and out of his parallel universes, pursued by the whispers of obstinate ghosts. He wanders a world of mirages" (83). This spectral haunting which they all experience, this almost tangible presence of ghosts from the past makes this *flânerie* a grim one. All of them, though living in the beautiful sanctuary of Melbourne and strolling its streets every day, enter the Cafe, and, while weaving stories, are transplanted into the other world of the bygone days. Martin becomes aware of this when he says:

> We are descending, Avram and I, in the back room of the café. We are moving together. Step by step. Each step is another realm. A step closer to an unfathomable darkness. […] The café walls close in around us. Those seated at nearby tables evaporate into ghosts. Neon-lit Acland Street recedes. The city we inhabit whirls about us. And again we are elsewhere, by the gates of the ghetto, in the Jerusalem of eastern Europe. (162)

Near the end of the novel, Zalman, the most poetic of the group concludes that they are all trapped in the past as this is the way memory works. What they can cling to are just brief moments of salvation from the past, from the grim and dark history. As the most sensitive of the group, he realizes that there is always a dream to "remain poised, fixed in time" (218) but it is always a fleeting moment. There is, however, a chance to find some consolation as he says: "This is what all my wanderings have taught me: that the moment itself is the haven, the true sanctuary. If only we could hold on to that. And savour it. Perhaps then we would not be so inclined to tear each other to pieces" (218). Unfortunately, these are just brief moments that probably cannot be caught in time. The characters, like Zalman, feel uprooted and cannot find a centre which would "hold." He compares the feeling to living on a beautiful bridge, it is enchanting, but never stable, never rooted, never fully belonging (101).

Arnold Zable, following in the footsteps of the grim *flâneur*, goes on the journey across Asia to visit Poland and rediscover the sites of memory which once were his parents' familiar routes. In Warsaw he meets Nathan Berman, a Polish Jew born in Warsaw, and a retired mathematics professor, who lived for decades in Palestine and New York and moved to Poland to wander with his girlfriend around Polish cities. He astonished Zable with his vibrancy and his decision to live in Poland. He took Zable around Warsaw and declared: "It's madness. Yet somehow, in Poland I feel most at ease. It has the smell of my childhood and a distant remembrance of the womb" (1991, 36). For Zable this behaviour is not understandable as the names of Warsaw streets bring back stories which he heard, pictures he saw, and the images of the destroyed Warsaw resurface in his mind. Like in *The Winter Vault* by Anne Michaels, the *flâneurs* automatically recreate the visions of their lost city, Zable in *Jewels and Ashes* conjures images he has never seen and which have been handed down in the form of postmemory.

In a climactic moment, he wonders if this journeying through the contaminated landscapes (Pollack) makes sense and whether he would ever be able to move beyond this postmemorial heritage:

> The country is littered with reminders: stones, plaques, monuments; in forest clearings, within open fields, on busy city streets, in village squares, by roadside shrines, and in provincial museums. […] And beyond the physical borders, the echoes of what happened just one generation ago, on this soil, reverberate in the dreams of survivors scattered throughout the world; and the children of survivors, they also have been drawn into this landscape of darkness with its aborted stories and its collective memory of suffering.
>
> There must be a way beyond this grim inheritance. It is as if, having come this far, I have no choice but to continue the journey, completing tales half told and half imagined, as I follow my forebears on their final trek, whether it may have taken them, and beyond, far beyond, so that I will never have to return. (1991, 102)

There is no easy answer to these doubts. Zable is a hostage of memory and stories. Consequently, he may never move beyond the grim *flânerie* as he is immersed in his ancestors' stories and memories. They have formed his life and served as guidelines for the journey. He wanders through Bialystok and discusses the idea of rebuilding the city after the War.[7] When Zable informs his father he wants to visit Bialystok, as he says: "the Bialystok I had dreamed of for so many years; the city my parents had never ceased dreaming of, even as they had wanted to forget" (207), Bialystok which is also called a "siren's song," "a spell" and a "lost dream" (207) by his parents, his father insists:

> "Give my regards to the town clock," were the last words my father had said to me when I left Melbourne. But he doubted whether it was still standing. And in a sense he was right. The clock-tower that overlooks the central square is a replica, erected after the War on the site where the celebrated original had stood. In fact the entire

> central enclave is a replica, recreated brick by brick in a land where memories cling tenaciously and demand to be honoured. (1991, 44–45)

Nevertheless, Zable tries to trace his parents' routes in the 1930s when they were young, sat in cafes, and went to the cinema like many other similar Jewish couples living their lives in cities. He reconstructs his mother's voice who subconsciously becomes aware of the fact that they are "bound to a common fate" (Zable 1991, 124) and insists on emigration to Australia. He cannot fully restore the words that were said and emotions between his parents but he aptly offers an insight into his feeling of having been given a life of his own to walk the streets of Bialystok, Warsaw and Cracow.

When he visits Cracow and wanders along its streets, and especially the streets of Kazimierz, the Jewish district, he visits synagogues and cemeteries. Zable as the "ultimate Jewish flâneur" shows the perspective of an Australian stroller, which becomes a universal perspective of a child of exiled Jews. During his visit to a Jewish cemetery in Cracow, the caretaker says: "The memory fades and is transformed into history. In time the history is distorted, denied, impossible to believe, and we are reduced to absolutely nothing, zero, not even a figment of the imagination" (1991, 171). That is why, Zable weaves autobiographical stories of his ancestors in *Jewels and Ashes* and fictional tales in *Cafe Scheherazade*. He walks through the cemetery of Europe, through the contaminated landscapes, through the "kingdom of darkness" (Freadman 122)[8] and "a museum of the impossible" (Zable 1991, 180)[9] in order to save some of the sites of memory. Like the ancient Scheherazade, he wants to survive the night of death, to salvage the world from oblivion and silence.

Zable's texts contribute to the universal body of migrant literature in which storytellers try to grasp the autobiographical experience of immigration through the narrative process which involves mixing facts with the imagined and fictionalized. Apart from various routes Australian migrants took in the first half of the 20th century, some via Siberia, India, and Persia, and others through Displaced Persons camps in Germany and France, their stories of displacement are parallel. They are all descendants of European Jewry looking for a 'sanctuary' and living forever in the inherited postmemory. Notwithstanding their different stories, Jewish immigrants in Australia most frequently dwell on their diasporas *des cendres* – diasporas blown up in ashes – and reclaim them in the literary output of the generation of postmemory.

Notes

1 Zable, Arnold. 2001. *Cafe Scheherazade.* Melbourne: Text Publishing, 220.

2 Kamboureli uses the term faction to delineate "the interplay of faction and fiction" (2000, 135) and thus it is understood here as a process of mixing or

fusing the autobiographical immigrant experience with a certain element of fictionalizing through the change of names or fallible memory for instance (Zable also mentions this in the Author's Note in *Jewels*, n.p.).

3 Quite unsurprisingly, a similar phenomenon can be noticed while analysing Canadian migrant literature of the same period. Even while looking merely at the titles of books published in the last decades of the 20th century in both countries and devoted to the common themes of immigration and journeying back, striking similarities are apparent. Zable's texts can be juxtaposed with such Canadian titles as *Honey and Ashes A Family Story* by Janice Kulyk Keefer depicting the emigration from Ukraine and Poland to Canada in the 1930s and *Ashes and Miracles. A Journey through Poland* by Irena F. Karafilly, a travelogue in which a journey back in search of the remnants of the Jewish-Polish legacy is depicted. Furthermore, Norman Ravvin's *Café des Westens*, describing a Calgary coffee shop for "old-timers" (Kulyk Keefer 1996, 85) resonates with the St. Kilda's Café Scheherazade as well. As far as Australian literature is concerned, Zable also claims that his *Jewels and Ashes* was "one of the very first books in [the country]" written by "the sons and daughters of survivors or near survivors" (Wechselblatt and Zable 2001, 90). The late 1980s and early 1990s also mark the appearance of such texts in Canada.

4 Repeatedly, certain resemblances can be spotted in Canadian literature as well. Zable's approach corresponds with Lisa Appignanesi's descriptions of her struggle with her oblivious father in *Losing the Dead. Family Memoir* and her novel *The Memory Man*, texts in which forgetting due to diabetes delirium and Alzheimer's disease competes with remembering.

5 The same kind of haunting appears in many Holocaust texts in Canadian literature such as Bernice Eisenstein's *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors,* in Anne Michaels' *Fugitive Pieces* and *The Winter Vault*, in Norman Ravvin's *Café des Westens*. Ravvin's characters, and especially the generation of grandparents, who left Mlava in the 1930s, constantly visualise the destruction of their *shtletl*, however, the word Holocaust does not appear in this book at all. As varied as all of these texts are, they all touch upon ghostly presence of the relatives who stayed behind in the Nazi-occupied Poland and died in concentration camps and mass killings.

6 Yossel would also reminisce on walking other cities: "Of all the cities I have known, Shanghai was the best, the most beautiful. My beloved Warsaw was burning. Krochmalna Street was circled by barbed walls. My loved ones were in *gehennim*, and in Shanghai I had a good life. A Yiddish life.With Yiddish theatre. First-class. With the best actors. From Warsaw and Vilna. From Odessa and Harbin. And Yiddish clubs. Yiddish radio. Yiddish newspapers […]. Of course […] after Pearl Harbor, it all changed. Of course we were squashed into Hongkew. […] Hundreds died of starvation. Of typhus, Of cholera. Of malaria and *meshugas*" (*Cafe* 141; original emphasis). Chakraborty in her

analysis of the text, situates Yossel at the crossroads of global, cosmopolitan worlds, whose diasporic consciousness helps him survive and preserve his Jewish/Yiddish identity. She views Zalman on the other hand as a person who is able to acculturate and adapt (Chakraborty 2013, 4–5).

7 Similar motifs are visible in Canadian texts as well. For instance, Anne Michaels in *The Winter Vault* examined the question of replicating the soul of Warsaw after the Second World War or Eva Stachniak debated over the double image of Wrocław/Breslau in *Necessary Lies*.

8 This is an expression Freadman uses in reference to Auschwitz.

9 Again, this phrase is used by Zable upon his visit to Auschwitz.

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"Dinner by the River" and "Driving to the Airport": Andrew Taylor's Polish Ash Poems and Jacques Derrida's *Cinder*

Abstract

Andrew Taylor (b. 1940), one of the most eminent living Australian poets, has had a lasting relationship with Poland and Opole in particular. As a result of one of his several visits to Opole, he wrote two poems, "Dinner by the River," which was later included in the volume edited by Peter Rose *The Best Australian Poems 2008* (Melbourne: Black Inc., 2008), and "Driving to the Airport," which appeared in *The Unhaunting* (London: Salt, 2009). Both poems were originally included in the volume *Australia: Identity, Memory and Destiny* (ed. Wolny and Nicieja, Opole 2008). The aim of this paper is, therefore, to explore the image of Poland, and the Odra River in particular, the Australian poet has created, alongside the memories of the past his visit to Poland evoked. The elements that unite the Polish poems are the ones connected with coal, soot, fire, ashes, embers and what Jacques Derrida called *cendre* (cinder) in one of his most important books, *Feu la cendre* [*Cinders*] (Minneapolis, London 2014).

> […] that whiteness of ash which belongs to destiny consumed and consuming,
> to the conflagration of the flame which burns itself up.
> Is ash the Good or the Evil of flame?
> (Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit* [*De l'esprit*])

Andrew Taylor's poetry has universally been associated with Australia, its cities and landscapes (*Folds in the Map*, 1991; *Sandstone*, 1995, and many others). Yet, the poet's numerous travels resulted in him widening the range of perspectives from which he views the world (*Travelling*, 1986; *Götterdämerung Café*, 2001; *Rome*, 2005; *The Unhaunting*, 2009, in particular, and most recently, *Impossible Preludes*, 2016). This geographical diversity implies also a certain emotional one on the part of the poet since he listens very carefully to the voice of the lands he trots and the people who cross his paths. The emotions that are evoked in his many encounters with Europe (his second home is in Germany, but his heart is in

Rome) cause that his poetry sounds so idiosyncratic to the Australian ear, making it almost impossible to imitate and, perhaps, to understand.

"Dinner by the River,"[1] is, generally, a reflection on Poland's tragic past as evoked by the image of a passing barge carrying coal on the Odra River in Opole, Southern Poland:

> And midway through the first course
> of pickled fish in the restaurant
> by the river that night
> slid a black on black
> barge
> under the brilliantly lit bridge

Taylor constructs his opening image spatially with the use of his favourite short phrases and rhythm based on an unstressed/stressed syllable pattern to suddenly break it to introduce an object of his attention that somehow violates the tranquility of the dinner by the river – a black barge, which he contrasts with the brilliantly lit bridge. The contrast between the blackness of the barge and the brilliantly lit bridge builds an image of an imaginary boundary between the two worlds: the one of the (ancient) past – the underworld and the other of the contemporary times: the one is dark, the other is lit. The poet cleverly makes use of alliteration here: "black on black / barge" and "brilliantly lit bridge" that is supposed to create an impression of wholeness between the two contrasting worlds and make them complement each other. We also notice the silent and secret slither of the barge ("slid"), manifesting thus its surreptitious, sneaky and stealthy entrance into the world of the living who, at the same time, have been feeding themselves on the (pickled) fish. This interruption was ghostly and uncanny since the barge was:

> silent
> unmanned
> unlit

and evoked the image of Styx, the Greek mythical river that forms the boundary between Earth and the Underworld, frequently called Hades. And, as the myth has it, when your soul has reached the Styx River, Charon, the boatman, will give you a ride to the underworld:

> *Souls*
> *destined*
> *for the underworld?*
> I ventured
> to my friend but he said
> it was only coal

At this point, the narrator realizes the reality of the setting, yet cannot agree with the plainness of his interlocutor's explanation: what for the latter was an everyday routine in the Silesian landscape over the Odra River – the coal transport from the coal mines nearby via the cargo port in Gliwice to the Baltic seaside port of Gdynia, for the former it carried far more meaning:

> That silent
> burden of blackness was not
> only coal
> it was smuggling history
> through southern Poland
> it was dragging me back
> to the nineteen forties
> to when there was less light
> to when my friend
> hadn't been born
> to when the bridge
> was a broken arch
> to when carbon
> had another meaning
> falling like soot
> [11.10.06, 06.03.07]

The poet's image of Polish history focuses at that moment on the tragic and dark period of the Second World War ("to the nineteen forties / to when there was less light" and "when the bridge / was a broken arch") and the experiences of the Holocaust and massive extermination of millions of Polish and foreign citizens in concentration camps, where they were either gassed or starved to death. Then, their bodies were cremated in camps' ovens ("to when carbon/ had another meaning") to finally take the shape of soot ("falling like soot").

In his epoch-making book, *Feu la cendre* [*Cinders*], Jacques Derrida espoused his most essential elaborations of his thinking on the legacy of the Holocaust in contemporary poetry and philosophy, famously arguing that the ashes – or ciders – are the best model for one of his master-terms, the *trace*, arguing that they are the most authentic manifestation of Being, entangled in the insoluble game of presence and absence. Ned Lukacher, Derrida's translator of *Feu la cendre*, starts his "Introduction" with the fundamental question, "Why does Jacques Derrida speak of the trace in terms of ash and cinder (*cendre*)? "I would prefer *ashes*," Derrida has said, "as the better paradigm for what I call the trace – something that erases itself totally, radically while presenting itself" (*Ciders* 1). As Lukacher further explains:

> Cinder is at once the best name for the absence of truly proper name for that which holds all beings and entities in presence, and by the same token just another name that

> cannot begin to assess its distance or proximity to the final proper name (or names) of the truth of Being, whose very existence remains undecidable. […] The naming of a cinder thus resists presenting itself as the privileged name or metaphor for that which brings things to presence and sustains them there. It is at the same time a name that resists the temptation to make the play of metaphor itself synonymous with the truth of Being. Cinders are neither proper nor metaphorical names; cinders name another relation, not to the truth as such, but to its possibility. (1)

In his whimsical style, Derrida elaborates on his subsequent master-phrase, *il y a lá cendre*, on which he has founded his arguments in the book:

> More than 15 years ago [the original French version of the book was published in 1987 by Des Femmes, R. W.] a phrase came to me, as though in spite of me; to be more precise, it returned, unique, uniquely succinct, almost mute. I thought I had calculated it cunningly, mastered and overwhelmed it, as if I had appropriated it once and for all. Since then, I have repeatedly had to yield to the evidence: the phrase dispensed with all authorization, she had lived without me. She, the phrase, had always lived alone. (21)

Il y a lá cendre is the French phrase that contains a spelling error (*lá* means "there" and takes the place of the feminine article *la*) and Lukacher translates it either as "ciders there are" or "there are ciders there": "'there' where the marks of a divisible materiality within language, within its syntactic and linguistic stuff, trace the infinitesimal cinder quarks that remain from whatever it is that makes it possible and necessary that a language comes into being" (*Cinders* 1). Derrida explains his decision to change *la* to *lá*:

> *Lá* written with an accent *grave*: *lá*, there, cinder there is, there is there, cinder. But the accent, although readable to the eye, is not heard: cinder there is. To the ear, the definite article, *la*, risks effacing the place, and any mention or memory of the place, the adverb *lá* […]. But read silently, it is the reverse: *lá* effaces *la*, *la* effaces herself, himself, twice rather than once. This sentence, in which each letter had a secret meaning for me, I used again later, whether a citation or not, in other texts: *Glas*, *The Postcard*, for example. (21)

Andrew Taylor's subsequent poem, "Driving to the Airport," brings us closer to the idea of ashes, the process of burning out and introduces the Derridian concept of the feminine in the ashes:

> Last summer
> southern Poland
> a Porsche 4 wheel drive
> *the Merc couldn't be moved three months*
> *because of the ice*
> shirtsleeves now

Would you like to see
the lake? She was swimming
somewhere beyond the trees
water rippled with her swimming
the lake was on our way
to the airport
the Porsche maneuvered the jolty track
through woods a plane
mirrored her progress
though we couldn't see her.
We parked and walked down
to the lake shore
sandy but blotched with ashes
of picnic and other fires
her footprint captured within it.
I remember glimpsing a road sign
to Auschwitz
as we left the lake
(Perth, February 2007)

The feminine element so deftly introduced and intertwined into the body of the poem gives it an extra dimension in terms of wholeness of life and gender, the genuine Derridian *il y a la cendre* before it turned to *il y a lá cendre*. In Taylor, it is both, and the direction is fundamentally the same: first, "there is *she* cinder there" to become, in the process of presence-turn-absence, "there is the cinder there," the only remnant of the passed time, the trace of being/Being, like the wake on the surface of the lake. The female swimmer spotted by the onlookers exemplifies the Heideggerian *Dasein*, i.e. "Being-there" transformed into somewhat Foucauldian "being-their [object of gaze]," the penetrating masculine look into the feminine matter (mother of all things) meant to restore and regenerate the stifled voices of absence. Like in Derrida, in an endless play of signification, the demonstrative pronoun "there" takes the form of the possessive plural "their" – the inaudible difference, which only emphasises the superiority of writing over speech. In effect, both poems, but the latter in particular, become the polylogues in which the masculine voices are entangled with the feminine ones (the swimmer, the lake, the ashes). For Derrida, the theme of cinders takes, technically and generically, the form of the polylogue:

> an apparently unpronounceable conversation, really a writing apparatus that, one might say, *called* to the voice, to voices. But how can this fatally silent call that speaks before its own voice be made audible? How can it be kept any longer? In effect two pieces of writing come face to face on the page: on the right hand side, the polylogue proper, an entanglement of an indeterminate number of voices, of which some seem masculine, others feminine, and this is sometimes marked in the

> grammar of sentence. These readable grammatical signs disappear for the most part when spoken aloud, which aggravates a certain indecision between writing and voice, an indecision already risked by the word *lá,* with or without the accent, in 'cinders *there* are' [*il y a lá cendre*]. (22)

What is most important, however, is that the polylogue is primarily and fundamentally meant for the *eye* in dealing with the tension between writing and speech and the vibration of grammar in the voice: "And this polylogue, it seems, is destined for the eye, it corresponds only to an interior voice, an absolutely low voice" (22). "Driving to the Airport," too, is destined for the eye. Written on the sand, on the surface of the lake, is itself a wake, a furrow on the shore, the white trail left by the plane in the sky. The poem is itself an inaudible voice of multifarious voices; the masculine and feminine voices of the narrator, his interlocutor and the female swimmer who are the subspecies of woodland, the fire and ashes.

One of the key issues for Derrida is the experience of the holocaust, which he extends far beyond the Jewish tragic experience of the Second World War and that is why he always de-capitalises the word. Clutching to the tiniest trace of Ash-Being beyond the dichotomy of presence and absence, the logic of vacuum and void, Derrida drives us to the places where a different kind of memory is impossibly possible. In search of some other ways of memory, there are questions tracing down the fate and voice of a "girl" (the "la" changing to the "lá" – an audibly indiscernible difference, parallel to his master-term "différánce" of *De la grammatologie*). As a result, the "girl's" proper name becomes Cinder (*Cindre*) like in the case of Taylor's female swimmer.

The momentous and tragic experiences of the Holocaust of which the poet has heard and/or read about furrowed in his memory what in Derridian language is metaphorically called a trace, an evidence of authentic Being-there: the inaudible voice of the girl as the ashes, the inaudible voices of the Holocaust victims as the ashes; the ashes speak in inaudible voices thus giving us that great gift of memory, which we are unable to return. And the symbolic catharsis by fire: "The symbol? A great holocaust fire, a burn-everything into which we would throw finally along with our entire memory, our names, the letters, the photos, small objects, keys, fetishes, etc." (Derrida *Cinders* 62: xi).The great holocaust fire made the children see the invisible even though – and maybe because – the fire will blind them: "Holocaust of the children / God himself / had only the choice between two crematory ovens […]" – "They will only see it through the fire (they will only be blinded by it)" (xi–xii), which, in effect, will make them immortal in the passers-by memories.

As has already been mentioned, Derrida finds ashes as the better paradigm for the trace – something that erases itself totally, radically, while presenting itself which, in all cases, signifies both presence and absence. In Taylor's poems, ashes, alongside the full glossary connected with it – coal, carbon, fire, cinders – denote

what he believes constitutes the essential part of Poland's recent history and Polish national identity – the memory of Auschwitz, which erases itself totally while presenting itself as ashes.

Nietzsche, Derrida's grand master to whom he refers very frequently, proposes to treat cinders as part of the wholeness of the world. He cautions us, at the same time, against believing in that the world and the universe is organic:

> *Let us be on our Guard.* – Let us be on our guard against thinking that the world is a living being. Where could it extend itself? What could it nourish itself with? How could it grow and increase? We know tolerably well what the organic is; and we are to reinterpret the emphatically derivative, tardy, rare and accidental, which we only perceive on the crust of the earth, into the essential, universal and eternal, as those do who call the universe an organism? That disgusts me. […] Let us be on our guard against saying that death is contrary to life. *The living being is only a species of dead being*, and a very rare species. (109; emphasis mine)

And that is why, over a century after him, Derrida is postulating *ashes* as the best model for the trace, the trace that cannot be denied and forgotten and that which will stay forever.

Andrew Taylor's "Dinner by the River" and "Driving to the Airport" present themselves as a continuous dialectic between presence and absence which alternates with the logic of space and motion, in which the poet uncovers, in an evocative and thoughtful manner, the most human elements in clusters of images, condensed phrases or short words, not infrequently alliterated ("unmanned, unlit"), constructed by the use of negative prefixes, such as "un-," also in the title of the whole volume of poetry, *The Unhaunting*. His thinking defines itself as a persistent questioning of the origins of the language and the human, which inevitably leads, at least as it is in the above cases, to soot, cinder and ashes – the effects of fire's both destructive and constructive energies and activities. What remains of the human is the trace, not so much as the footprints on the sand, which are vulnerable and ephemeral, but rather as cinders and ashes that are there to stay. Thus, Derridian deconstructive reading and his grammatological strategy, contained particularly in *Cinders*, allows the reader to see the invisible and hear the inaudible in Andrew Taylor's Polish ash poems.

Notes

1 "Dinner by the River" and "Driving to the Airport" made their debut in the post-conference volume which I edited with the help of Stankomir Nicieja, *Australia: Identity, Memory and Destiny* (Opole 2008) and were contained in the Appendix (129–130). "Dinner by the River" officially appeared in *Australian Book Review*, July-August 2008, then in *The Best Australian Poems*

2008 (ed. Peter Rose, Melbourne: Black Inc., 2008: 128) and *The Unhaunting* (London: Salt, 2009, 64) alongside "Driving to the Airport" (63). I, thereby, express my sincere gratitude to Andrew Taylor for participating in the September 2006 Opole symposium on Australian culture and literature organised by the Institute of English and American Studies, University of Opole.

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Controlling the Ever Threatening 'Other'

Abstract

Ideas of Australia being invaded by a foreign 'Other' have been present throughout much of its history and this legacy is still present today. My paper will reveal the red thread of control that runs through Australia's attitude and policy towards asylum seekers since European arrival. Claims of current restrictions against asylum seekers being mere Islamophobia ignore this history. From the grudging admission of Jewish refugees during times of Nazi oppression to quotas placed on certain nationalities and later draconian punishments for those claiming asylum without a prior visa, control of the 'Other' has been a constant theme, with current policies of mandatory detention and offshore processing on far away Pacific islands separating the Australian 'Self' from the foreign 'Other.'

The trope of a threading body invading Australia has been prevalent throughout much of its history. Indeed, since Federation the country has been casting a wary eye at those who attempt to reach its shores. Today, Australia finds itself, once again, in the middle of a discourse and asylum seeker policy towards the Other that is framed as a threat in the need of control. This restrictive nature of Australia's 'Self/Other' relationship produces, at times, draconian responses to claims of asylum.

Despite recent claims of current anti-asylum seeker policy being centred on Islamophobia (Aly and Walker 2007; Tittensor 2011; Hage 2016), I would like to argue in this paper how, for Australia, it has always been an attempt to control who will come and in what manner, an attempt to hold the reigns of national sovereignty and an attempt to control the defiant faceless 'Other.' I will do this by first providing evidence of how the media focuses on the need to control asylum seekers while ignoring their identity. I will then proceed to examine the Hegelian relationship between Australia and those who have arrived by boat and highlight the criticism of those not following societal norms. Following this, I will trace the history of Australia's attempts to control the 'Other' arriving on its shores, including the deportation of Melanesian sugar cane farmers, the denial of entry to Jewish refugees, the implementation of immigration quotas, the desire to control Vietnamese refugees in the 1970s and the strict controls on asylum seekers at the

beginning of the 21st century. My paper puts forth the argument that there is a red thread running through attitudes and policies towards asylum seekers throughout Australia's history, whether they are arriving from the Middle East or Vietnam, whether they are Muslim or Jewish. This red thread has a faceless 'Other' at its heart, interchangeable in race or religion, with control as its watchword.

1. A Faceless 'Other'

A constant feature throughout Australian history has been a fear of invasion, with its position as a European settlement in Southeast Asia grounding it in a perennial state of siege. From the early 19th century a recurring theme has been one of peril that was either yellow, brown, communist red (Aly and Walker 204) or Jewish, Greek and Italian (Wilton and Bosworth 2) with the intention to invade Australia's vast empty spaces, particularly in the far north, or depress wages and bring about economic depression (cf. Richards 2008). The identity of the 'Other' arriving on Australian shores has mostly been ignored, a practice continued in newspaper coverage during the early 21st century, whether that be, for example, in a tabloid newspaper such as the Australian *Daily Telegraph* (September 9, 2015) or in broadsheets such as the *Sydney Morning Herald* (August 15, 2012), which featured a threatening photo of an asylum seeker under the headline "We're Still Coming."

Rather than reporting identifiable information such as names, backgrounds or narratives that would ground and explain an asylum seeker's desperation and pursuit of safety in Australia, a vocabulary of threat is deployed that dehumanizes and forebodes an invasion. This portrayal of asylum seekers as the dangerous 'Other' has been present both in the media and politics for at least two decades, where asylum seekers have often been described as "queue jumpers" or "illegals" leading to their connotation as social pariahs (Muytjens and Ball 451). Indeed, the use of language to portray asylum seekers as criminals that became so well-known during the Howard government years (1996–2007) is mirrored in the way the Fraser government described Vietnamese asylum seekers in the late 1970s as pseudo-refugees (Peterie 2016). Likewise, Howard's juxtaposition of the dangerous, immoral 'Other' against the egalitarian Australian Self (Peterie 438) can be also seen in former prime minister Gough Whitlam's call in 1977 for restriction and quarantine to stop the spread of drugs and disease, thereby associating asylum seekers with crime and infection (Neumann 276). Howard also continuously painted asylum seekers as not real refugees, as pseudo-refugees or queue jumpers ahead of the truly deserving, thereby dehumanizing and delegitimizing their claim to asylum (Peterie 2016). This association between asylum seekers and deviousness would be continued in constant references to asylum seekers as "illegals," "illegal asylum seekers" or "illegal immigrants," despite the solid legal fact that it is not illegal to claim asylum in Australia (Peterie).

The dehumanizing of refugees is continued in the use of language by both the government and media. A common method used by the news media is the description of asylum seekers as "flows," "floods" or "waves" (Hage 39). The use of terms such as "waves," "hoards" or "swarms" to describe refugees instils a sense of fear that may lead to an unwillingness to allow entry of asylum seekers (Cox 483). In this case the 'Other' loses any identifiable features, thereby taking on an abstruse predatory quality that demands action to impede and quarantine. This method seems to support Chomsky's claim that the use of fear of a terrifying enemy to whip the population into line behind contentious policies is standard practice in many countries (1989, 269).

Fear-laden language in Australia would provide the impetus for an ever strengthening anti-asylum policy that eliminates the possibility of reaching Australia if the asylum seeker arrived via boat and, instead, transports them to offshore centres for processing. The introduction of mandatory detention for asylum seekers in the 1990s in order to quarantine and remove the 'Other' away from Australia for processing created "a new class of criminal and new criminality – the unlawful non-citizen" (Carrington 42). These non-citizens at the same time became "illegal entrants" or simply "illegals" – a parasitic burden upon Australia's legal and health care system (Pickering and Lambert 75). In a post-September 11 world this criminality would soon slide into accusations of terrorism, as well. The new connotative language of criminality and the 'Other' was present, for example, in September 2001 when Australian federal government ministers claimed an "undeniable link" between illegal immigrants and terrorism (Klocker and Dunn 71), a claim later found to be untrue (Commonwealth of Australia 2002).

The use of dehumanizing language towards asylum seekers is linked with a desire to control the 'Other.' The controlling aspects of asylum seeker policy in Australia also serves to strengthen the resonance in such harsh discourse. A primary reason for this is due to the limited contact the Australian public has with asylum seekers i.e. they are placed offshore on islands such as Nauru or, until recently, Manus Island, as well as the media bans on access to detention centres and asylum seekers, which has resulted in a dependence of the media on information provided by the media (Muytjens and Ball 451). Therefore, any sense of objectivity is hard to determine and the power of the language used by the government is both significant and persuasive. As of 2018 there is a limited amount of information coming out of offshore processing centres with films and social media posts mostly made by Kurdish asylum seeker and film maker, Behrouz Boochani, who has described violence and inhuman treatment on Manus Island where he is imprisoned (Grewcock 2017). These few posts on social platforms seem to be the only messages slipping through the governmental desire for control of the 'Other.'

2. Australia's Relationship with Its 'Others'

Some have argued that the relationship between 'Self' and the 'Other' is that of the 'Other' being seen as a radical alien, a form of crude 'Othering' that distances the 'Self' from the 'Other' (Brons 70). Others, such as De Beauvoir (1949) have introduced the notion of the 'Other' as a construction opposing and thereby constructing the 'Self.' Identity is, indeed, not thinkable without a border to an 'Other,' the boundary functioning as a "brokering of difference […] a negotiation in which I am bound to you in my separateness" (Butler 43–44). This form of identification has been largely influenced by Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic (1807 B.IV. A.) of identification and distancing where the self-consciousness sees itself in the 'Other.'

This notion of identification and distancing can be seen in Australia's attitudes regarding threatened Asian invasion, fears of immigration and recent attitudes towards asylum seekers. The argument runs along the lines of stopping the 'Other' because Australians are different in terms of race, backgrounds or values i.e. identifying Australians and distancing them from the 'Other.' The resentment from the RSL and trade unions when it was suggested that the White Australia policy be dismantled in the second half of the 20th century drew upon these fears of losing identity (Tavan 2004). This fear of the 'Other' is often centred on the belief that Australia will lose what makes it different from those attempting to enter the nation. The fear is that of the 'Other' taking control of the land and replacing the current owners with their own children. This fear has been prevalent throughout Australian history, focusing on a supposed plan by Asians to defile white Australian women and "outpopulate" the Anglo-Celtic population (Aly and Walker 2007). Arata (1996) has described this fear of invasion by migrants from Africa, Asia and the Middle East as a "narrative of reverse colonialism" that has existed since the Victorian age – the former colonizing nations now being confronted with citizens from the lands that they had once colonised. Consequently, it has been claimed that countries such as Australia or the United States of America operate under a constant state of siege, geared towards violence even when they are peace (Hage 2016).

Following Hegel's argument that self-consciousness sees itself in the 'Other,' a comparative example can be found in Australia, where much of the population can boast of family, including myself, who arrived by sea. Australia sees itself in new arrivals to its shores. This attempt to see the 'Self' in the 'Other' and to give the 'Other' a face can be seen in the "#I came by boat" campaign which began in Australia in 2015. This ongoing campaign aims to capture the positive way asylum seekers contribute to Australian society. Through the use of photography and television viewers see the faces and learn of the backgrounds of certain asylum seekers who explain how and why they came to Australia as well as their successful lives that have included careers in medicine, education, the arts and many other areas (SBS 2015). The campaign provides a counter-balance to much

of the media depictions of asylum seekers that largely ignore biographical markers, are generally negative in portrayal (McKay, Thomas and Blood 2011; Hightower 2015) or question the validity of their refugee status (Lawlor and Tolley 2017).

However, as Hegel argues, the relationship between the 'Self' and 'Other' is an unequal one, identification does take place and the self-consciousness does see itself in the 'Other' but there is also distancing and the 'Other' is often criticized for not meeting societal norms. The process of 'Othering' itself places certain groups on the social margin. Consequently, there is always an attempt by the 'Self' to control the 'Other.' This need for control is mixed with a constant unease over sovereignty in Australia. With the overturning of *Terra nullius,* or the claim that Australia was not settled at the time of European arrival, the legal basis of white Australian sovereignty has been called into question (Duncanson 25; Giannacopoulos 2007, 48). Additionally, fears of invasion have been prevalent since the early days of European settlement beginning with the French scientific expedition by Baudin from 1800–1803 and the subsequent settlement of Tasmania by the British fearing the arrival of French settlers (Peron 2013).

3. Controlling the 'Other'

If we go back to the beginnings of modern-day Australia we can see that Federation got off to a rocky start with the Immigration Act of 1901 being passed to supposedly safeguard Australia against a hostile world. Demands for social homogeneity as well as social Darwinism would result in the infamous dictation test restricting entry only to those who could write a passage of 50 words in a European language that was to be determined by the officer present at the time (Palfreeman 81–85). Australia from the very beginning was attempting to control the 'Other' arriving on its shores.

This attempt at controlling the 'Other' would take place centre-stage during the 1901 federal election (Australia's first) when Melanesian workers in the cane fields of northern Australia came under criticism. It had been previously claimed that such hard work in the tropical north was unsuitable for whites, yet these workers, many who had been kidnapped ("blackbirded") from their homes in the Solomon Islands, New Hebrides or New Caledonia and subsequently lived and worked for years in Australia, were singled out for deportation (Markus 117). Edmund Barton's protectionist party went on to win the election and deportations began almost immediately for these labourers who had worked so hard on Australian soil. Of the 9324 Melanesians in Queensland in 1901 only 1654 would remain while others fled for refuge in the bush (Markus 117).

Before the immigration act of 1901 Lutheran refugees had come to Australia from Germany in 1838 (Neumann 16). This was followed by a small amount of Jews arriving who were fleeing oppression in Tsarist Russia but it was not until

1941 that refugees played a major role in the government's population policy.

Despite Nazi atrocities there was great fear of Jewish refugees in Australia during the early half of the 20th century. A plan to settle them in Western Australia was considered and then rejected due to fears of the colony growing out of control and establishing a competing nation on Australian territory (Blackeney 281). This is a recurrent term throughout Australian history – a fear of losing control of the land itself to an outsider and an uncertainty over what Australia was exactly – a nation with an indigenous population and yet based upon a legal concept, *terra nullius*, that asserted that the land was empty. The fear appears to be that if one population can be denied ownership and subsequently replaced, then another must be controlled lest it attempt to repeat this action. In November 1941 the future Minister for Immigration Arthur Calwell's speech to the parliament seems to support this argument:

> There is no need for the nations to the north of us to cast covetous eyes on Australia and fight a way into it if the present trend continues, because they need only wait a generation or two until we are so reduced in numbers that they will be able to walk into Australia in much the same way as Captain Cook did 150 years ago against the boomerangs and spears of the aborigines.

The decision whether to accept Jewish refugees was discussed with the opposing camp arguing that they would disrupt the social balance in Australia and the pro-camp arguing Australia needed to increase its population and that despite misgivings, Jews could "be controlled, harnessed and used like steam" (Wilton and Bosworth 8). In the end, Australia's interests and the need to control the 'Other' would be the deciding factors. At the beginning of Nazi oppression, with Jews applying for asylum in Australia at the annual rate of more than 50 000, the federal cabinet adopted a quota of 5100 based on "selecting those who will become valuable citizens of Australia and, we trust, patriots of their new home, without this action disturbing industrial conditions in Australia" (Neumann 17). Such a small number seems to indicate that humanitarianism was never an issue with Australia also denying entry in June 1939 to a ship, the *St. Louis*, with 907 German Jews on board. This ship had already been denied entry into Canada and Cuba and, cruelly, would be forced to return to Germany where many of these passengers would be murdered by the Nazi regime (Neumann 22).

It must be said that Australia's generosity was quite favourable in terms of per capita basis at the time when compared to Germany's European neighbours (Neumann 22). However, the primary factor was always the attempt to control the 'Other.' Social homogeneity was desirable with no action taken to encourage refugees fleeing the Spanish Civil War, for example. The fear of communists gaining control in Australia, of the 'Other' threatening the 'Self,' would outweigh any humanitarian demands.

The flip side of the constant attempt to control the 'Other' was Australia's

continual desire for a larger population. This demand was based on the wish to compete economically with the rest of the world and the fear of northern Australia being populated by Asian invaders (cf. Neumann 2004). Certain groups which were seen as being beneficial to the economy while not disturbing social homogeneity were encouraged to come to Australia while others that clearly did not fit the white Anglo-Celtic idea of Australian identity were denied entry outright. Despite these fears, the restrictions on entry to Australia were gradually relaxed while still maintaining a strict sense of control of the 'Other' entering the nation. For example, quotas beginning in the 1920s were set on Maltese, Greeks, Albanians, Yugoslavs, Estonians, Poles, Bulgarians and Czechs (Markus 158).

Even after the war, when the Displaced Persons Program would bring in the largest resettlement of people in Australia's history (Richards 182), control and the benefit for Australia were the most important topics. The humanitarian aspect of the scores of people uprooted after World War II does not appear to be an issue of major concern. Instead, the race was on for Australia to snap up the European displaced persons before other nations did with 180,000 being resettled in Australia in the period 1948 to 1953, making up more than half of all immigrants during that time (Neumann 34). In the post-war period, Britain proved unable to supply the amount of immigrants that Australia was demanding. By the 1950s the Menzies cabinet was slowly moving its eyes to other parts of Europe for prospective migrants despite protests from the political left-wing and trade unions (Tavan 2004). Pragmatism and control, as always, would rule, however. Deciding factors were that the prospective immigrant was not a communist as well as being healthy and able to work for Australia. Blonde attractive persons, the famous Beautiful Balts, were desirable and those seen as too darkly skinned or unhealthy were restricted (Neumann 2004). Once again, humanitarianism was not a main factor. Those who did arrive were controlled by having to enter two-year work contracts in remote areas throughout Australia (Markus 161). A similar controlling practice can be seen today in Safe Haven Enterprise Visas that allow asylum seekers to stay if they study or work in regional Australia. The bottom line was that Australia would accept refugees but they would choose who comes, in what manner and what they would do when they arrived in the nation.

Control of the 'Other' would continue as a major factor in the 1960s and 1970s. Although much has been made of changes regarding immigration and refugees under Gough Whitlam, many of them were in name only with migrant numbers and refugees settled actually decreasing during his time in office (Neumann 143). It was during this time that Manus Island would first take its place in Australian asylum seeker history. In the late 1960s and early 1970s West Papuans fled Indonesian forces, with many being stopped at the border or returned due to Australia's desire to stay on friendly footing with the Jakarta government (Neumann 65). Uncontrolled entry of the 'Other' into Australia, even in times of dire need, was

dismissed immediately. Once again national self-interest would trump humanitarian concerns and to this day Manus Island houses many West Papuans who fled their homeland.

It was the succeeding government under Malcolm Fraser that seemed to be more swayed by the humanitarian need of South-East Asian refugees at the close of the Vietnam War. Between 1975 and 1977 10,628 people were accepted as refugees (Neumann 252). Many others, such as Lebanese Cypriots and East Timorese were also resettled, being classified as displaced persons.

However, once again control would remain important with Australia acknowledging its responsibility to take refugees for resettlement but also that it retained the ultimate say over who would be resettled and that resettlement in Australia was not always the best solution (Neumann 262). It was also during this time that much of the language seen in recent years regarding asylum seekers reared its head – "pseudo-refugees," "queue jumpers," and "illegals" were terms applied to those arriving in Darwin in 1976 (Peterie 2016). Once again there was little talk of the identity of the 'Other,' they remained faceless in that they were once again taking the role of the uncontrolled 'Other.' Future Prime Minister Bob Hawke suggested that only refugees selected offshore be accepted and that compassion should only be shown to "refugees who have gone through our formal process of screening and meet our requirements" (Neumann 283).

Control of the 'Other' would increase at the end of the 20th century with the Keating government introducing mandatory detention in 1992 and then the Howard government making international headlines during the Tampa Affair. The Tampa Affair, where Australia denied entry to a ship filled with asylum seekers, is an apt example of Australia's desire to control the 'Other.' Despite initial offers to take the asylum seekers to Indonesia made by the ship's captain, and the refusal of entry by the Howard government, the ship continued towards Australia and was eventually boarded by members of the SAS. Entry of the 'Other' into Australian territory would only take place if it was controlled by the Australian 'Self.'

Since then offshore processing has ensured the 'Other' remains a faceless 'Other' with much of the public only receiving information from the government or through media which itself has to depend on government press releases. This is significant as upon examination of press releases from August 2001 and January 2002 it has been found that 91% of government terminology on asylum seekers contains negative references (Klocker and Dunn 77). Access to the refugees on Nauru or Manus Island is near impossible for the general public and difficult for others such as border protection workers who wish to tell of the conditions on the islands. This is due to the implementation of the Australian Border Force Act 2015 that makes it a crime punishable by two years imprisonment for an entrusted person to make record of or disclose protected information. Once again control rears its head, with the desire to control attempts to put a face on the 'Other.'

Since 2013 the need for control has increased with the militarization of plans to deal with asylum seekers. Operation Sovereign Borders and the introduction of policy under the left wing Labour government that ensures that no asylum seeker arriving by boat would be settled in Australia has ensured total control of the 'Other' as well as the Australian public's contact with this faceless 'Other.' Other forms of control have taken shape in the granting of visas – with the two options being either temporary protection visas of 3 years with no possibility of renewal, family reunion or the ability to leave Australia and return, or the Safe Haven Enterprise Visas that requires study or work in regional Australia.

Australia's current asylum seeker policy is another chapter in a long attempt to control the 'Other.' The 'Other' remains faceless in that the Australian public knows little of who these asylum seekers are or why they are attempting to seek asylum in Australia. An example of how the need to control is at the root of the harsh measures against asylum seekers can be seen in the criminalization of the manner with which they arrive – with settlement in Australia impossible if an asylum seeker attempts to reach Australia by boat. The desire for control over the manner in which the asylum seekers arrive can also be seen in the fact that Australia is one of the most generous takers of refugees from UNHCR camps throughout the world (Watson 44) and yet reserves harsh measures for those who arrived as "illegal maritime arrival detainees." In summary, it can be said that Australia takes in large amounts of refugees each year as long as they can control who and how the arrival takes place.

The need for control can also be seen in the change of Australian governmental criticism from asylum seekers to human smugglers (Cameron 242). Transnational crime has become the threat, externalizing the problem and subsequently ensuring the use of punitive measures against asylum seekers with former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd describing smugglers as the "scum of the earth" and deserving to "rot in hell" (Rodgers 2009). This focus on the smugglers is the very fear of the faceless 'Other' that Australia endures – that the 'Other' is coming without Australia's consent or control.

Australia has long had fears of a faceless 'Other' invading and claiming ownership of the land and yet, in a Hegelian manner, Australian is bound with this 'Other' across the seas, giving the nation identity and shape. The history of Australia's attitudes towards asylum seekers has always been one of attempting to control this identity, to shape these borders. For Australia it has always been an attempt to be the one in charge of deciding who will come to Australia, the attempt to hold the reigns of national sovereignty and the attempt to control the threatening 'Other.'

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