Vorwort der Herausgeber dieser Nummer

Die Nummer 23 der ZfA ist umfangreicher geworden als beabsichtigt. Dieses Mal kamen auch wirklich alle zugesagten Artikel und Rezensionen bei mir an, was ich als ein Zeichen der zunehmenden Solidarität mit der Zeitschrift werte. Es mussten sogar zwei Aufsätze in das kommende Jahr verschoben werden und ich entschuldige mich etwas zerknirscht bei den Autorinnen.

Hamish Maxwell-Stewart zeichnet in seinem Beitrag über den deutschen Häftling Gotfried Hanskie ein faszinierendes Leben nach, das jeder Fiktion eines Daniel Defoe oder Jonathan Swift zur Ehre gereichen würde. Der historische Kontext zu dieser Geschichte umfasst außer der Geschichte Tasmaniens und Großbritanniens noch die napoleonischen Kriege, die Konflikte zwischen Österreich und England auf der einen, Bayern und Frankreich auf der anderen Seite, sowie innerdeutsche Ereignisse, welche in Summe das Leben Hanskies zu einem Spielball der europäischen Großmächte machten. Endstation war dann *Van Diemen's Land*, wo Hanskie trotz seines Vorlebens noch eine ordentliche Karriere hinlegte. Walter Struve widmet sich der Biografie eines anderen Wanderers zwischen zwei Welten, des jüdischen Journalisten und Essayisten Kurt Offenburg (1898-1946), der als Opfer der NS-Rassenideologie in Australien Zuflucht suchte und dort mehr als 10 Jahre lang das intellektuelle Leben als politischer Kommenator und Essayist maßgeblich mitgestaltete. Johanna Peerhentupas Beitrag bewegt sich auf ähnlichem Terrain und beleuchtet in beeindruckender Weise die keineswegs uniformen Diskurse australischer Historiker des 19. Jahrhunderts zur brennenden Frage, wie die sechs Kolonien mit den Aborigines umgegangen waren. Nicht alle waren rassistische Apologeten.

Der Beitrag von Christian Wirtz greift zu einem günstigen Zeitpunkt, nämlich nach dem Machtwechsel von Howard zu Kevin Rudd einerseits, und Bush zu Barack Obama andererseits, die Frage nach der Partnerschaft zwischen den USA und Australien auf. Unter John Howard war die Unterwerfung australischer Politik unter die unmoralischen Strategien des George W. Bush vielen Australiern (und nicht nur ihnen) ein Ärgernis gewesen, doch was kann sich ändern? Jaro Kusnir leistet den einzigen literaturwissenschaftlichen Beitrag und widmet ihn dem vielleicht ‚aufregendsten' zeitgenössischen australischen Schriftsteller Richard Flanagan. Seine Romane, mehr noch aber seine vehemente Parteiergreifung für intakte tasmanische Ökosysteme, haben Flanagan viel Lob, aber auch Kritik v.a. der politische Eliten eingetragen. (Ich verweise auch

auf die Rezension seines Romanes *The Unknown Terrorist* in der ZfA 21/22; sein neuester Roman *Wanting* wird in der kommenden Nummer besprochen werden.)

Diese Nummer hat eine besondere Vielzahl von Rezensionen aufzuweisen. Ich bedanke mich bei allen Beiträgern und Beiträgerinnen für ihr selbstloses Engagement. Rezensionen sind m.E. außergewöhnlich wichtig für unsere akademische Fortbildung: sie leisten nicht nur Denkanstöße und fördern die Lust aufs Lesen, sondern sie liefern oft auch wesentliche Informationen in ökonomischer Form. Hier verweise ich z.B. auf Reinhold Grotz, der mehr als in einer ‚bloßen' Besprechung einer Neuerscheinung einen ansprechenden Überblick über die Beiträge von Tim Flannery zu den Diskursen der Ökologie in Australien und auf dem ganzen Globus leistet. Stilistisch ist in den Besprechungen eine erfrischende Bandbreite festzustellen: von der flapsig schreibenden Veronika Starnes, die einen ähnlich flapsigen Venero Armanno würdigt, bis zur bewundernswerten Diszipliniertheit und Tiefe eines Gerhard Stilz oder Werner Senn. Hervorheben möchte ich auch noch Rosemarie Gläser. Ihre Würdigung einer historischen Sichtweise auf antipodische Botanik wird im Endteil zu einem flammenden Plädoyer für die Integrität einer deutschen Botanikerin des 19. Jahrhunderts, welche in dem besprochenen Werk zu Unrecht als Rassistin gebrandmarkt wird. Die angelsächsische Sichtweise auf Deutschland oder Deutsche ist in dieser Hinsicht leider allzu oft eine getrübte und betrübende.

Die in der vergangenen Nummer begonnene Praxis des Vorstellens zeitgenössischer Lyrik wurde weiter geführt; etablierte Dichter wie John Kinsella finden sich neben den PoetInnen von morgen.

Abschließend noch meinen Dank an meine tapfere Assistentin Christina Obermann. Möge ihr weiterhin Geduld mit mir beschieden sein.

Klagenfurt, Mai 2009, Adi Wimmer

Dieser ZfA liegt ein Werbeblatt für den neuen (und wirklich außergewöhnlich gelungenen) GEO-Epoche Band Australien bei. An ihm hat unser Vorstandsmitglied Henriette v. Holleuffer als wissenschaftliche Beraterin maßgeblich mitgewirkt. Man gratuliert.

From the editor of this issue

Issue 23 of our journal has become more voluminous than I originally expected. This time each and every pledge for a contribution or review was redeemed, and I found myself with more material than I could handle. Two essays will have to wait until the next issue for their publication. My apologies to the authors affected.

In his essay, Hamish Maxwell Stewart provides an admirable combination of history and story telling when he sketches the truly picaresque career of the German-born convict Gotfried Hanskie. Hanskie's pre-vandemonian life was that of a mercenary; he became helplessly entangled in the military events of the early 19th century. Serving in the Prussian, French and English armies he repeatedly deserted, was caught, deserted again, was caught again, narrowly escaped with his life, was transported. But he made good in Van Diemen's Land.

Johanna Peerhentupa covers a comparable historical terrain. Her essay is asking how Australian historians of the 19th Century dealt with the issue of the (frequently vile) treatment of the Aboriginal population in the immediate past. She unearths some intriguing discourses: while the majority were accepting of their dispossession, not all acquiesced with the policies that followed. Like Maxwell-Stewart, Walter Struve researches the life of a German-born wanderer between two worlds. Kurt Offenbach (1898-1946) was a correspondent for influential German newspapers when he came into the regions of SE Asia. Unable to return to Germany because of his Jewishness he received asylum in Australia and became one of the best political commentators of his time. Christian Wirtz addresses an issue of 20th Century and contemporary relevance: what is the nature of Australia's "special relationship" with its 'Big Brother' the USA? This is a good time to re-formulate some ideas on the matter: both in Australia (from Howard to Rudd) as well as in the USA (from Bush jr. to Barack Obama)we have seen political power changing hands. Does this mean Canberra will stop being Washington's poodle? Will anything of importance change? Finally, our Slovakian friend Jaro Kusnir has penned the only literature-focussed contribution to this volume. His investigation into "Postcolonial Space and Australian identity" in the novels of Richard Flanagan offers many intriguing observations on Flanagan's oeuvre and should prod us to re-read his narratives with a keener eye to the postmodern faultlines running though his work. (Let me remind you we ran a review of Flanagan's gripping novel The Unknown terrorist (by Paula Kreiner) in issue 21/22 of this journal, and we'll review

Flanagan's not-yet completed new novel *Wanting* in the next.)

I am proud to announce an uncommonly large number of uncommonly well-written reviews in this issue. My heartfelt thanks to all the contributors for their selfless work. Reviewing is often a thankless job, but nevertheless reviews are an immensely important contribution to our work. Not only do they offer topical information, not only do they invigorate our *Leselust*, they often provide essential information in a space that is highly economical. Reinhold Grotz's review of Tim Flannery's collection of essays is a case in point.

Stylistically, the 19 reviews gathered up here are joyously eclectic, from the irreverent, post-structural approach chosen by Veronica Starnes (reviewing a new novel by the equally irreverent Venero Armanno) to the scholastic restraint and depth of Gerhard Stilz or Werner Senn. One more contribution I should like to point out is Professor Rosemarie Gläser's discussion of a new study of early Australian botanical science in conjunction with the help and expertise provided by indigenous men and women. In the final section she is disturbed by a racist slur carelessly made against the German botanist Amalie Dietrich, and rushes to her defence. When debating racism, the Anglo-Saxon view on Germans is still deplorably jaundiced.

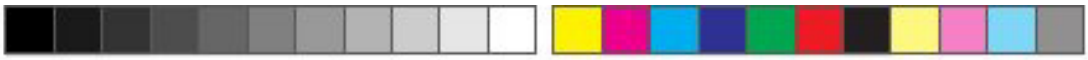
We continue to include new poetry in this journal and are again greatly indebted to the authors. Established and renown poets such as John Kinsella sit next to poets at the start of their careers, a useful mix.

Finally, my heartfelt thanks to brave Christina Obermann, my editorial assistant. May her patience with me last forever.

Enjoy this volume. All feedback from our readers is very welcome.

Klagenfurt, May 2009, Adi Wimmer

There is a flyer included to this issue announcing the publication of an addition to the series Geo-Epoche: Magazine for History. The new volume is remarkable for its scope, its research and its attractive appearance. Henriette von Holleufer, a member of GAST's board, was the academic advisor to the publishers. Congratulations, Henriette!



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ESSAYS

Hamish Maxwell Stewart

'The Strange Career of Gottfried Hanskie: A German Convict on the Van Diemonian Frontier'

In his account of the "Wars, Extirpation, Habits etc." of the "Native Tribes of Tasmania", James Calder wrote:

> Whatever the future historian of Tasmania may have to say of this ancient people, he will do them an injustice if he fails to record that, as a body, they held there ground bravely for 30 years against the invaders of their beautiful domains (1875, 73).

Although Keith Windschuttle refers to Calder's account in *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History*, Vol. 1, this is a piece of advice that he does not take.

One of Windschuttle's aims is to prove that there was no warfare in colonial Van Diemen's Land. He argues that, rather than a military confrontation the outbreak of hostilities was triggered by the depredations of "Musquito, Black Jack and Black Tom", who were merely "bushrangers who happened to be black". They were "among a number of like minded criminals who took to the bush at roughly the same time and lived by pillaging the property of outlying settlers" (2002, 71)

If he seeks to demilitarise the indigenous side of the frontier he does much the same for the European. Thus, the man who played a prominent role in tracking down Mosquito, "Gotfried Hanskey", is described as a "settler" (Ibid., 71). In fact Hanskie (to call him by his most common appellation) was a serving convict who had only

just been released from Macquarie Harbour penal station after serving just two years out of what should have been a twelve year hard labour stretch. As it turns out, this officially sanctioned escape from the horrors of penal station life owed much to Hanskie's previous military experience and the uses to which that could be put.

As military careers go, Gottfried Hanskie's has to be one of the more unusual. He was born close to Berlin around about the same time as the first fleet landed in Australia. He lived, as he put it "with my friends" with never a thought of "becoming a soldier". That was until the defeat of Prussia in the disastrous 1806 campaign. In the following year he decided to join the hussars. His life, however, was turned upside down when in April 1809 his commanding officer, Ferdinand von Schill, rose up in rebellion against the French.

Schill had been one of the few Prussian officers to emerge out of the debacle of 1806 with any distinction. A second-lieutenant in the dragoons, he had been wounded at the battle of Auerstadt, but escaped to Kolberg where he played an important role in the siege of the city which held out against French forces. Schill commanded a *Freikorps* unit which raided behind enemy lines. Following the Treaty of Tilsit he was promoted to major and placed in command of a hussar regiment, raised primarily from those who had fought under his command at Kolberg. Other recruits, including Hanskie, joined from further afield, probably motivated by patriotic sentiment. Schill was a member of the *Tugendbund*, an organization that has been described as a "quasi-Masonic 'League of Virtue'" and he shared with many of the membership a belief that the recently created French puppet state, the Kingdom of Westphalia, was ripe for rebellion. Ruled by Napoleon's younger brother, Jerome, Westphalia had been patched together from an amalgam of smaller states and was seen as a symbol of French dominance in Germany. The outbreak of the War of the Fifth Coalition provided Schill with what he thought was his moment.

Keen to avenge its defeat in 1805 the Austrian Empire declared war on France with British support. Although initially promised help by Frederick William III, the Prussian King reneged on the deal before the conflict began. Despite the lack of continental allies the Austrian army took the field in April, invading Bavaria and late in the same month under the pretext of manoeuvres, Schill moved his regiment out of Berlin. Marching south he was joined by a number of officers and a company of light infantry. By the time he reached Wittenberg in early May he claimed to have 500 cavalry and 2000 infantry under his command. Turning north-west towards Westphalia he fought a successful engagement with the Magdeburg garrison at the village of Dodendorf on 5 May, although six of his officers and 83 other ranks were killed or wounded (Mustafa 2008, 71-114). As a result of this victory some Westphalian troops changed sides to join the rebellion. The net, however, was fast closing in. Around 8,000 Danish and Dutch troops under French command had been called in to contain the growing rebellion. Schill had also gained the ire of Frederick William III, who was anxious to disown his actions, fearful they might drag the Prussian state into another disastrous conflict with Napoleon. Driven north-eastwards, Schill was finally captured in Stralsund and the rebellion was comprehensively put down. Schill himself was killed in the street fighting. The captured officers and many of the Westphalian deserters were executed. The Prussian rank and file were condemned to service in the French Mediterranean galley fleet.

Hanskie was lucky in that he was taken early in the campaign. With 15 others he was captured at the engagement in the village of Dodendorf, possibly after being wounded – he later complained of being troubled by a broken collarbone. This was the same day as Jerome Bonaparte declared that Schill, not having the authority of the King of Prussia, was "in the situation of a pirate at sea who has no letters of marque" (The Times, 22 May 1809). This was a declaration that little in the way of mercy would be shown. Unlike

those taken at Stralsund, Hanskie was offered a choice of sorts. "Thrown into a dungeon" he was bluntly told that he could enlist with the French army or be chained to the oars of a galley. Unsurprisingly he chose to become an infantryman, was enrolled in a Dutch unit and marched to Holland.

Meanwhile things were not going well for the Austrians. After initial success in Bavaria they were driven back by the Grand Army. Anxious to provide some support, their British coalition partners tried to open up a second front by sending an expeditionary force to the island of Walcheren to invest the port of Flushing. Two and a half months after joining the French army, Hanskie found himself in the garrison of the beleaguered town. He promptly deserted, leaving his enforced service with the Emperor to join the 39,000 British troops that lay languishing amidst a swarm of mosquitoes (the French had opened the sluice gates to the dykes inundating much of the country; Beamish 1832, 226). Although Hanskie hoped to rejoin the cavalry, his new masters posted him to the second light battalion of the King's German Legion, a unit which played an active part in the assault on the city (Ibid.,236). Life as an infantryman proved far from pleasant. The mud in the trenches round the besieged town was knee deep and there was no fresh drinking water. There were few blankets and the cheap military issue shoes came apart at the seams in the wet (Ibid., 223 and 241). Although he was not among the nearly 16,000 British troops who contracted 'Flushing fever', a mixture of malaria, typhus, typhoid and dysentery, Hanskie found the endless drilling and excessive discipline hard to take (Howard 1809).

The King's German Legion had its origins in one of those accidents of dynastic history. As George III happened also to be the Elector of Hanover, he was titular head of the state's military forces defeated by the French in 1803. Large sections of the Hanoverian army were absorbed, however, into a new corps within the British army which rapidly grew to two regiments of cavalry, six infantry battalions and

five batteries of artillery. One of the legacies of its unconventional history was that discipline in the Legion was enforced through a mixture of British and Hanoverian procedures, as Hanskie was about to discover.

Like Schill's hussar regiment, the 2nd Battalion KGL Light Infantry was trained to operate as skirmishers. Clothed in green, the rank and file were expected to be reasonable marksman as well as being drilled in rapid reloading. Hanskie found both difficult. His broken right collarbone made it hard for him to be steady when he presented arms at the target and he found it awkward to perform, as he put it, "several motions of the infantry manual and platoon exercise". His platoon corporal was merciless, striking him with a cane. His treatment contrasted sharply with his experience of service in the Prussian hussars and Hanskie complained. Rather than be taken to see the commanding officer, as he had demanded, he was marched straight to the guardhouse. The following morning he was brought before his platoon commander, Lieutenant Meyer, and charged with insubordination. When he tried to protest the same corporal who had laid into him on the drill ground was ordered to come forward, given a stick and told to beat Hanskie once more. At the second stroke the stick shattered. A new one was produced and the punishment continued until he had received thirty strokes – enough the Lieutenant thought to thrash "any French tricks" or other republican notions out of his head.

Since the Austrians had by now been defeated there seemed little point in prolonging the disastrous Walcheren campaign and the remains of the British expeditionary force were evacuated in early December 1809 (Beamish 246). Thus it was that Hanskie found himself in the Sussex coastal town of Bexhill, the garrison base for the Legion. Although no longer on active service, Hanskie's troubles continued. The final straw came when Lieutenant Meyer upbraided him in front of the entire company. In a humiliating public rebuke he said, "if Major Schill had no better men than you with him, no

wonder that he did no good." From that moment on, Hanskie became the butt of ridicule and he resolved to desert.

On the night of 21 July 1810 he slipped out of the barracks in company with another disgruntled private, Christopher Beutler, who claimed to have been pressed into service against his will after he had secured a passage to Heligoland, a tiny British north sea possession in search of work. The two men headed for the beach where they took a small boat off the shingle and used this to clamber on board a lugger anchored about a quarter of a mile off shore. Having ridden with the Prussian cavalry, and slogged it out on the parade ground as an infantryman, Hanskie now turned his hand to seafaring. At this, however, he proved to be even more incompetent than he had been at firing practice.

The owner of the lugger, William Bennet, went straight to the guardhouse to enquire if there had been any desertions, and then onto the neighbouring town of Hastings to report the loss to the pilots there. He did not have high expectations of retrieving the lugger – the wind was fair for the French coast and as he put it "if either of them was anything of a sailor" they might cross the Channel "in a few hours." As it turned out, however, he need not have worried. As the pilot, Charles Landle, described it – the moment they saw the lugger they had no doubt that it was the missing vessel. "She had her mizzen hoisted for a foresail, and the foresail out as a main sail, and one of the men pulling at the sea oar, one of the sails was aback which arose from them not having any knowledge of what they were about". Far from making it across the Channel the two deserters had managed to merely drift down the coast. They were in fact taken six miles off Hythe Head. As the pilot continued: "when we first discovered her she was laying like a log upon the water, at the mercy of the sea."

As if this was not bad enough, Hanskie and Beutler now made a nearly lethal mistake. In the night they had become completely disorientated and thinking that the land that they now saw in front of them was the continent they shouted "France, France" enthusiastically as the pilot's boat came alongside. As soon as they

realised their mistake they quickly changed their tune, insisting that they wished to head for the coast of Holland and walk overland to Germany.

By now the two boats had attracted attention from another quarter. His Majesty's cutter *Racer* closed in on them. It had already seen the pilot's boat communicate with a ship and supposed that it had "had taken some men out of her who were liable to be impressed" and was now loading them onto the fishing lugger. As fisherman on the Channel coast were exempt from impressment this was a common ruse used to avoid the attentions of the press gang. The cutter closed in firing a shot to signal that it wanted the two boats to hove to. Mistaking the vessel for a French privateer, Hanskie and Beutler once more shouted "France, France". To be tried for desertion was bad enough, but desertion to the enemy was a charge that under the articles of war was punishable by death.

There were other reasons to suspect that Hanskie and Beutler would be shown little in the way of mercy. The French occupation of the continent had stemmed the flow of recruits into the Legion which had been forced, as a result, to accept many non-Hanovarians. Like Hanskie, many of these had come over from enemy units. Although the invasion threat had diminished there was still great suspicion of all foreigners in coastal communities. When the commanding officer of the KGL had first visited in Bexhill in 1804 he had reported that "the neighbourhood generally seems to look on us much as we do on Cossacks" (Hill, entry for 6 Aug 1804, 176). The Legion's recent recruiting history did little to ease the situation, especially when those recruits decamped with the property of the local inhabitants. As Lieutenant-Colonel Halkett put it in his opening comments to the court martial: "if this Crime was over looked" it will "perhaps justify reflections that have unjustly been cast upon us, as Foreigners, not to be depended upon".

It was Hanskie who saved the two men's necks. In their defence he

stressed the cruel and degrading nature of the punishments they had received – treatment which as he understood it was "forbidden in the British service at large and in particular in the Corps". This had the court scrambling for the rule book. The situation was complicated as the Duke of York had stipulated that "German Discipline may be resorted to" in cases "not exactly qualified for a courts martial". This gave authority for NCOs to use the stick on recruits, but there was a crucial caveat. The punishment had to be authorized by a commissioned officer who was to be held "responsible for any consequent injury to the health of the men". It was clear that both Hanskie and Beutler had been beaten against regulations. Playing on his service with Schill for all it was worth, Hanskie turned his attention to the most serious charge – desertion to the enemy.

"We had no other intention" he argued "but of endeavouring to return to our country, our friends, and our homes". The aim all along had been to try and head for Holland before attempting to reach Germany. This was an objective he argued, that they had every chance of attaining since once ashore, their language and appearance would have permitted them to blend in. Indeed why would they create suspicion "in a Country where no papers are demanded from Working People"? Besides, he claimed, "some of the Gentlemen of this garrison, nay in the very Court, … have in the last six months succeeded in going to their homes and returning to Great Britain, through that Country." Hanskie then produced his ace card. He called upon Lieutenant Meyer to give evidence.

Meyer, however, was unable to attend the court since at that very moment he was on leave from the regiment visiting his family in Germany. Hanskie and Beutler were found guilty of stealing the lugger and of deserting, but not of attempting to cross over to enemy lines – a charge which it would have been difficult to sustain without cutting all family leave for the Corp's officers. Instead of being executed, the two soldiers were ordered to be transported as felons for life.

Transported to Australia on board the *Guildford*, Hanskie was

forwarded to Van Diemen's Land arriving on 19 February 1812. Having served less than six years of his life sentence, he was issued with a conditional pardon (Colonial Secretary's Register). In the following August he married Mary Carr or Kerr, a prisoner who had been transported on the *Alexander* and the couple received a 30 acre land grant at Pitt Water. At the time of the general muster taken in October and November 1819, the couple had erected a dwelling house and had seven acres under wheat and a further acre under potatoes and were employing an assigned servant. The rest of the grant had been converted into pasture and they were running a total of 124 sheep (Schaffer, 137; and Humble Petition of Godfrey Hanskie). The sheep, however, were to be the cause of much further trouble.

In July 1820 Hanskie was tried for receiving stolen ewes and sentenced by the Supreme Court in Sydney to 14 years transportation. He was shipped first to Newcastle and then on to Port Macquarie – a station which from the start had a problem with absconders (List of Prisoners transported to Newcastle, AONSW CSP, 6023; x820, p.9.) It is not clear when Hanskie attempted to make his bid for freedom, or whether he absconded in company with others. He was picked up on his own close to the settlement of Newcastle on 21 March 1822 (Morisset to Goulburn, 27 March 1822, AONSW, CSP, 6067; 4/1808.) Rather than being returned he was despatched to Sydney on board the *Elizabeth Henrietta* and from there forwarded to Hobart Town with orders to be sent to Macquarie Harbour and to be kept there until his 14 year colonial sentence had been completed (Colonial Secretary to Major Morisset, 1 April 1822, AONSW, CSP, 6009; 4/3505, p.106 and Commandant to Colonial Secretary, 10 April 1822, AONSW, CSP, 6067; 4/1808, p. 83.) There is more than a suggestion that the attempt that he had made to regain his freedom was not his first, the indent authorising his transfer back to Van Diemen's Land charged him with "having continued to escape from Port Macquarie" (Colonial Secretary to Major Morisset, 1 April 1822, AONSW, CSP, 6009; 4/3505, p.106

and Commandant to Colonial Secretary, 10 April 1822, AONSW, CSP, 6067; 4/1808, p.83.)

Hanskie arrived in Hobart Town in August 1822 in company with another six absconders from Port Macquarie and two runaways from Newcastle (List of eleven convicts embarked onboard H.M.C. Brig *Elizabeth Henrietta*, AONSW, CSP, 6010; 4/3508, p.12.) The nine men were housed in Hobart Town gaol while they waited for the next supply vessel to be ready for the run to Macquarie Harbour. It was a place which they were in no hurry to reach. On Saturday 14 May 1822 Hanskie and five others broke out of the gaol making their way to New Town where they managed to strike off their leg irons on Colonel Davy's farm. Shortly afterwards, they were apprehended by a detachment of soldiers and brought back. Freshly ironed they were marched to the magistrates and sentenced to receive 100 lashes each (Nicholls 368). They must have been placed on a colonial brig almost as soon as the sentence was complete for they arrived at Macquarie Harbour on 27 September.

Hanskie had only been at the settlement about a month before he was off again. He was brought back on 1 October 1822 and charged with "absenting himself from his work and absconding into the woods". Once more he was sentenced to receive 100 lashes and to serve six months in irons, although Commandant John Cuthbertson, a man not usually known for his charitable disposition, remitted the sentence to 50 lashes (436 Godfrey Hanskie, AOT, Con 31/18.) Not only was this the last time that Hanskie attempted to run, but by May of the following year he had crossed the lines once more and was working as an armed constable helping the settlement's garrison to track down absconders.

Although Lieutenant Meyer of the King's German Legion may not have been impressed with Hanskie as a soldier, Cuthbertson clearly was – and when it came to military experience he was a man who had it in spades. He had participated in "12 general engagements"

which included many of the most horrific encounters of the Peninsula War. He had survived the slaughter at Albuera when the 2nd battalion of the 48th Regiment had been cut down after it had been caught in the open by French cavalry. He had participated in the bloody assault on the breach at Badajoz where he had been amongst the 2000 British casualties. He had also been wounded at Talavera and more seriously at the Battle of the Pyrenees (Sergant, 14 and 83). Hanskie was amongst a number of convicts with former military experience who Cuthbertson used to augment the forces at his disposal.

The growing number of absconders shipped to Macquarie Harbour from New South Wales presented a particular problem. Many amongst these men were inveterate 'runners'. Of those who had tried to escape from the Hobart Town Gaol, James Lunt, Edward O'Hara and James Delany all absconded never to be recaptured and John Gough, a black seaman from the Isle of Wight, led three escape attempts before he was transferred back to Port Macquarie, the administration being at a loss to know what to do with him.
(For an account of Gough's career and in particular his role in the first Norfolk Island uprising see I. Duffield 'The Life and Death of "Black" John Goff: Aspects of the Black Convict Contribution to Resistance Patterns During the Transportation Era in Eastern Australia', *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* 33, 1 (1987), pp. 30-44.)

The first of these attempts had been a serious affair. Gough and six other prisoners had managed to surprise a detachment of the 48th regiment in the bush and seize their muskets. Armed they had proceeded north along the beach, an escape route that had been pioneered by Edward O'Hara earlier in the year. Cuthbertson despatched a party in a whaleboat up the coast to intercept the runaways at the Pieman River Heads. Hanskie was one of the armed members of that party. Later, Peter Keefe, another of the absconders attacked Hanskie in the Hobart Prison Barracks for the role that he had played in tracking them down.

Although his Macquarie Harbour defection earned Hanskie the ire of his fellow prisoners it was highly successful in cutting short his sentence to a penal station. Just over a year later he was back in Hobart Town. By the time the notice of his official appointment to the police appeared in the *Gazette* on 24 August 1824 he was already part of a tracking party on the East Coast of Van Diemen's Land (Hobart Town Gazette, 20 Aug 1824).

In company with another constable and an Aboriginal youth named Tegg or Teague he was despatched to the east coast in search of Mosquito. Walking overland to Oyster Bay in just three days, the party tracked down their prisoner whom they shot and wounded and brought back to Hobart Town (Calder 52-3).

The next year Hanskie's name appeared again in the *Hobart Town Gazette*. Following an attack by the bushrangers Matthew Brady and James McCabe on the assistant surveyor, Mr Wedge, the local police magistrate despatched a party of police under the leadership of "Godfrey Hanskey" in pursuit. It was a move of which the *Gazette* heartedly approved. It added that it now expected the "speedy apprehension" of the marauders as

> Hanskey is, we understand, a Prussian, and one of the bravest that ever cocked a blunderbuss, or cut a robber's head off. If he happens to encounter McCabe and Brady, he *alone and unsupported*, will kill or capture both. (Hobart Town Gazette, 25 Mar 1825).

It transpires that Hanskey had first been employed in tracking down Brady in August 1824, a mere month after Mosquito had been hung. He has been described as one of the "bloodiest of the bushranger-chasers" and it is said that the Superintendent of Police, A.W.H. Humphrey regarded him as "one of his most useful thugs" (Fitzsymonds 38).

While it is easy to see Hanskie's military career as a series of comical episodes he had received training in two elite units. He also had active military experience, both with Schill's hussars and the KGL light infantry who were twice used to storm key positions in the French defences at Flushing. This combined with his experience as an absconder made him useful. That he operated in conjunction with an Aboriginal tracker is of interest. Teague was also employed in the pursuit of Brady. Indeed the partnership of the two appears to have been used as something of a model for later anti-bushranging and Aboriginal operations.

In this respect it is surely important that it was the magistrate Thomas Antsey who supervised much of the anti-bushranging operations in the Oatlands Police District in the mid-1820s. It was this same official who was the driving force behind the setting up of the "roving parties" that were deployed against Aboriginal people from 1829 onwards. Indeed Anstey was concerned that Van Diemen's Land would slide, not into guerrilla, but maroon warfare—a reference to the struggles between the British and runaway slaves and indigenous peoples in many plantation colonies of the New World (Pike 17-8). 28 While these "roving parties" are usually seen as being civilian bodies, many of those who served in them were men with former military experience. They included John Longworth, who had fought in the Caribbean, and Jorgen and Jorgenson, who had commanded a Danish privateer (Maxwell-Stewart 1999; Sprod 2001). These parties also included Aboriginal trackers (Pybus 98).

While the number of court martialled soldiers transported to Van Diemen's Land in the period before 1830 was relatively low, many other convicts had prior military experience in the Napoleonic Wars. Indeed, from 1824 onwards prisoners were routinely asked whether they had served with the military. Those that volunteered details of regimental service were disproportionately recruited into positions in

the field police or deployed as overseers and flagellators. As a consequence the Van Diemonian field police had a paramilitary character from the start—a point well illustrated by Hanskie's career.

We live in an era where wars are increasingly fought by contractors, a move to disguise the scale of military operations through privatisation. Something similar happened in Van Diemen's Land. Windschuttle might be right to argue that the soldiers played only a small part in operations against indigenous Van Diemonians—I would argue, however, that the operations fought out in the back blocks of Van Diemen's Land were no less militarised for all of that. The terms 'settler' and 'convict' are phrases into which complex lives tend to be collapsed obscuring past experiences and blinding us to the proportion of Europeans who had experienced service during the Napoleonic Wars.

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Johanna Perheentupa

Victims of the Past? White-Aboriginal relations in Australian historiography in the nineteenth century

Discussion about the nature and degree of frontier violence has brought Australian historiography into the limelight of public debate (e.g. Windschuttle; Attwood and Foster; Macintyre and Clark; Manne). Historical research has in the past three decades 'uncovered' frontier violence and examined the diverse aspects of frontier history. This research has challenged 'The Great Australian Silence', which held sway from the end of the nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century, holding that Australia was occupied peacefully and without bloodshed and excluding the Indigenous people from its history (Stanner: 18–29).

However, during the first hundred years of the colony, most historians did not hesitate to discuss the controversial and, for Aboriginal people, devastating impact of the expansion of European colonisation that led to violence and dispossession. At the same time, however, they aimed to justify colonisation and praised it in their works as a valuable exercise. Their writings carried an essential ambivalence about the morality of colonisation. Rather than denying or minimising the violence, as twentieth-century apologists of colonisation have done, for the nineteenth-century historians violence was the unfortunate outcome and dispossession the inevitable consequence of colonial advancement.

In this article I will focus on tracing the common features and continuity in the representation of white-Aboriginal relations in seven histories of Australia written between 1819 and 1883. These shared aspects of historiography are best underlined by pointing out the contradictions that were present in historians' works. I acknowledge the difficulty of this kind of generalised approach, as individual historians' attitudes towards Aboriginal people and the

way they discussed white-Aboriginal relations varied greatly in detail from overt racism to generous empathy. Historians' responses also reflected, though did not always follow, broader changes in European disposition from humanitarian attitudes in the early nineteenth century to Social Darwinism and 'scientific' racism in the latter part of the century.

Nevertheless, differences within the historiographic discourse did not undermine its hegemonic ability to retain an enduring and dominant understanding of colonial race relations, even when it accepted challenging views (cf. Lewis 19–20). In addition, despite variations between individual historians, certain telling aspects recur in their writings. Nineteenth-century historians' concern for Aboriginal people was equally a concern for the moral basis of the colony. Though historians of the period condemned the treatment of Aboriginal people and acknowledged their ownership of the land, I will argue they reaffirmed the image of Australia as terra nullius, land without owners, and constructed for the colony a present and a future that was free from the burden of the past by projecting the guilt associated with dispossession on other people and other times. I will first provide some background information about these historians, the way they wrote history and the way Aboriginal people were portrayed by them. Then I will examine their analysis of Aboriginal land ownership and white-Aboriginal relations in nineteenth-century Australian historiography.

Historiography, Historians and Aboriginal people

Nineteenth-century Australian historiography was the product of a combination of emerging traditions, such as journals and chronicles, which together gave it form. The historians focused on recording the rapid changes in the present and shaping the future of their country. Thus, their works can often be regarded as acts of national self-definition rather than as strict reconstructions of the past. Nevertheless, as Mark Hutchinson argues, the foundations of Australian historiography were established during the nineteenth century when it was developing and finding its form (Hutchinson 1988, 16, 23, 82, 370-371).

The historians shared the idea that it was possible to reconstruct a systematic study of the past through critical investigation of traces left to the present. Historical narratives were organised into a coherent whole around categories that followed chronological sequence. Nevertheless, this did not result in histories that were free from the personal, cultural, social, political and economic views of the historians or the needs of their contemporary society (Hutchinson 1988: 65–66). Rather they were inter-related with the historian's class, education, profession and religion. Writing history was, quite openly at times, used to support the historians' public role in the colony and advance their political beliefs about the future of the colony. For historians themselves, history was regarded as a school for statesmanship (Macintyre 1987, 14).

The works studied in this article were written by W.C. Wentworth, Henry Melville, J.D. Lang, William Westgarth, John West, James Bonwick and G.W. Rusden. They were educated middle-class white males, the majority of whom were born in the British Isles and belonged to the colonial Establishment. Their works were published before history became established as a profession. Thus, they had careers as journalists, teachers, preachers and in business, as well as studying history (Hutchinson 1989: 117). The historians also took actively part in the political life of the colony. For example Wentworth, Lang and Westgarth became members of the New South Wales legislative council.

W.C. Wentworth, whose work on the colony of New South Wales (1819) was the first book published by an Australian-born colonist, was a barrister and a landowner who became a significant figure in colonial political and cultural life. Wentworth's political rival John Dunmore Lang, who also wrote about New South Wales (1834), was a Presbyterian minister and radical democrat. Henry Melville's work on Van Diemen's Land was published in 1835. He was a journalist and a publisher. William Westgarth was a Melbourne-based businessman who wrote about the early colonial history of Victoria in 1848. John West, Congregational minister and journalist, and James Bonwick, a schoolteacher and historian, both wrote extensively about the Tasmanian Aboriginal people. Their works were published

in 1852 and 1870. In his work Bonwick mentions many personal meetings with Aboriginal people (see e.g. (1870) 1969: 279–285). George Rusden had a career in education and civil service. His *History of Australia* (1883) has been regarded as the most ambitious of the nineteenth-century Australian histories. Rusden had considerable knowledge of the Aboriginal way of life and he also spoke an Aboriginal language (Reynolds 1990: 30).

During the first half of the nineteenth century histories were written drawing heavily on testimonies and first hand experience and the use of written sources was only limited. Historians' works were straightforward narratives that described the consequences of past imperial and colonial official policies and argued for changes to create a different social order. Ideas about 'scientific' historiography reached Australia in the late nineteenth century.

Historians such as James Bonwick and G.W. Rusden increasingly relied upon and argued for the use of official documents as source material. However, in their works these influences came across more in polemics than in methodology. The focus in historiography had shifted from political argument to the search for an historical identity (Macintyre 1987: 1, 7–8, 19–20).

Colonial historians responded to and built upon the works of their predecessors. They created a dynamic internal process in which, for instance, Lang responded to Wentworth's work and West responded to Lang's work (Hutchinson 1988: 116). In relation to their representation of Indigenous people this was most apparent in the way that later historians used David Collins' descriptions (West: Vol. I, 14, 33; Bonwick 1870: 65, 96; Rusden: Vol. I, 47, 87, 131–132). Collins produced one of the first extensive historical records of the colony. He was the deputy judge advocate of the newly established colony, and responsible for its legal establishment. Collins has been described as the first colonial historian (Ward 196), though Collins' work merely recounted the early years of the colony in the form of a chronicle. The first volume of his An Account of the English colony in New South Wales (1798) contained an appendix that examined Aboriginal people and their culture in the Port Jackson area.

Nineteenth-century Australian historiography was informed by European imperial discourse (Macintyre 1998: 339), and was influenced by contemporary understandings of racial difference. The typical way of describing Aboriginal people in historical works was by way of detailed portrayals of their physical and supposed mental characteristics. These hypothesized attributes were then used to categorise Aborigines within the Eurocentrically-determined racial hierarchy. Historians deployed the assumed characteristics of Aboriginal people as signs of their inferiority. As with Collins' description of Aborigines in his *An Account of the English colony in New South Wales*, these quasi-anthropological descriptions were commonly located in a separate chapter or section of the text, excluded from the preceding historical discussion (see Westgarth; West; Rusden). Thus, Aboriginal people were situated in timeless and unchanging space, separate from the linear record of the colonial history (cf. Attwood viii). Historians' anthropological interests reflected the development of the natural sciences from the late eighteenth century, which categorised humans scientifically and systematically.

The Aboriginal culture that nineteenth-century historians described was for the most part the culture of Aboriginal men. Just as European society was phallocentric, European representations of Aboriginal society ascribed women to the margins of culture. Nevertheless, most historians discussed the position of women in Aboriginal society and in the family structure in particular, for the treatment of women was seen as an index of civilisation in the nineteenth-century European thought (Lewis 22).

In their descriptions historians focused mainly on how badly women were treated by Aboriginal men. They also disapproved of the enormous workload that women were expected to bear. (Melville: 62; Westgarth: 67–69; West: Vol. II, 79–80; Bonwick 1870: 55–56, 60–61, 74–76; Rusden: Vol. I, 102, 110). Thus, the role of Aboriginal women in nineteenth-century Australian historiography was that of victim. Descriptions of their ill treatment emphasised the superiority of Europeans and the legitimacy of colonisation (McGrath 1995: 37–38). Only Bonwick questioned the right of Europeans to judge the

behaviour of Aboriginal men. He wrote "When woman has her real rights in Britain, men may speak more freely in condemnation of customs elsewhere" (Bonwick (1870) 1969: 309).

The level of Aboriginal civilisation was also measured from the way Aboriginal women behaved, not only from how they were treated. In some respects historians' expectations were fulfilled. For example, they mostly described Aboriginal mothers as loving and caring (West: Vol. II, 79; Westgarth: 64; Rusden: Vol. I, 102). On the other hand, they often speculated whether or not Aboriginal women had 'the virtue of chastity'. Westgarth, for example, thought they lacked modesty. He (1848: 69–70) wrote that they were in "promiscuous" intercourse with white men. It is interesting to note that Westgarth scrutinised only the immorality of Aboriginal women even though men of a 'civilised' race were also taking part.

In European middle-class society, women in particular were subjected to strict sexual norms while men where allowed more 'liberties'. The perceived inability of Aboriginal men to control Aboriginal women's sexuality implied their inability decorously to manage their society. According to Westgarth (1848: 69), the attitudes of Aboriginal people towards sexuality made them incapable of 'civilisation'.

Historical writing, similar to other forms of colonial writing, simultaneously expressed attraction and admiration towards, as well as contempt and disapproval of, Indigenous people. Homi Bhabha notes that colonial discourse utilised mimicry, that is "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite*" (Bhabha: 86, emphasis in original). This discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence. For example, West expressed no doubt about the inferiority of Aboriginal people compared to Europeans even though he also emphasised their humanity and showed understanding towards differences between Aboriginal and European cultures. He wrote about an Aboriginal man who told his people that his death was near and how he prepared for his funeral. "This is touching. A savage preparing for his funeral, with a calm consciousness of his fate" (West: Vol. II,

92). While West showed admiration for the person about whom he was writing, at the same time he represented him as a savage. The Indigenous person was represented as almost an equal human being, but not quite.

In historiography, the belief in European culture and its superiority was strong. This was reflected in the way that those who wrote it described Aboriginal people and their culture as subordinate and primitive. Representations of Aboriginal women and their treatment further underlined the differences between Aboriginal people and Europeans. The historians also represented the Aboriginal family as improper, arguing that it was unable to fulfil the central purposes of the nuclear family, such as taking care of women. Even though many historians described Aboriginal mothers as loving and caring, the way in which Aboriginal men were portrayed did not fit the ideals of husband and father.

These negative representations of Aboriginal family life would have helped to justify on their part colonists' interference in Aboriginal family practices. According to Anna Haebich, Aboriginal children were removed from their families from the earliest contacts onwards. Throughout the nineteenth century this practise was sanctioned by the colonial authorities and then eventually taken over by them. Child removal, followed by the disordering of Aboriginal families and family culture, was an integral part of the destructive forces of colonisation in Australia (Haebich 130).

Legitimising colonisation

The nineteenth-century historians acknowledged Aboriginal people as the original owners of Australia in their writings (Melville 23, 84, 122; Westgarth 99–100). From the middle to the end of the nineteenth century it also became common to discuss Aboriginal rights to the land — though often in the past tense. West noted that it would have been essential to define the interest of Aboriginal people to their land in the process of colonisation. He argued that Aboriginal people had specific boundaries that defined the area of each 'tribe' and within these boundaries they moved at regular intervals, not aimlessly. West (1852: Vol. II, 20–21, 93) remarked

that they should have been granted land since even convicts were eligible to receive land grants. Bonwick and Rusden also regarded Aboriginal people as the possessors of the soil and noted that it would have been easy to recognise their ownership patterns. Instead they had been dispossessed with no compensation (Bonwick (1870) 1969: 31, 78, 215, 327; Rusden: Vol. I, 2, 95; Rusden: Vol. II, 511). Rusden further noted that Aboriginal people had occupied Australia long before the European colonisers.

Aboriginal violence was commonly seen as a reaction to their dispossession in Australian nineteenth-century historiography. For example, according to West, Tasmanian Aboriginal people were very attached to their country. Thus, they were not indifferent to the rapid occupation of it (West: Vol. II, 20–21). Bonwick ([1870] 1969: 29, 129, 215, 226) also remarked that Aboriginal people resisted the occupation of their land. He noted that patriotism was usually admired, but because of the selfishness of the colonists, Aboriginal people were not praised for their heroism.

At the same time, the historians commonly described Aboriginal people as naturally friendly people who had been provoked to hostilities by violent treatment, not by dispossession (Wentworth 116–117; Lang: Vol. I, 37–38; Melville 23–25; West: Vol. II, 8, 10, 15, 18, 33, 60; Bonwick 27, 43, 49–50, 106). In their works there is an underlying assumption that if treated well Aboriginal people would have willingly shared their country and adopted a European way of life, and thus peaceful co-existence of Aboriginal and European people would have been possible.

The underlying narrative describing frontier conflict followed the logic of colonial discourse whereby the actions of Europeans, who were superior beings, determined how the relationship between white and Aboriginal people would develop. In tune with Enlightenment ideas, the historians believed that by good example and guidance Europeans could have brought ‘civilisation’ to Aboriginal people, as a compensation for the loss of land, and there would have been no need for violence (See Gascoigne 159).

The violent acts committed by Aboriginal people were included as part of the histories, even though it was emphasised that Aboriginal people were not aggressive by nature. Only Rusden omitted discussion of this issue. For instance, according to West, "Death, by the hands of savage, is indeed invested with the darkest terrors" (West: Vol. II, 35). West (Vol. II, 42–44) also included an "Official List of Atrocities Committed by the Natives" that listed the attacks, and their consequences, committed by Aboriginal people against Europeans in 1830 in Van Diemen's Land. The occasional portrayal of Aboriginal people as 'savage' aggressors represented the colonists as victims, and in reversing the roles of the invader and the invaded justified the actions of the colonists as defending themselves (Curthoys 193.)

However, Aboriginal people were much more commonly represented as victims. The historians noted that the killing of Aboriginal people was common and accepted in the colony. Henry Melville wrote "if it were possible in a work like this to record but a tithe of the murders committed on these poor harmless creatures, it would make the reader's blood run cold at the bare recital" (Melville 23–26). Bonwick recorded how shooting Aboriginal people was like "bringing down a bird" (58). He further noted that since the Aboriginal Tasmanians' right to the land was not respected, it was no surprise that also their personal rights received little respect. Rusden (Vol. I, 575) recounted that colonists shot Aboriginal people like wild animals, and did not attempt to hide these deeds. He illustrated the mentality in the colonies by referring to the popular tenets of Social Darwinism: "No peace was hoped for until the most active and daring could be killed, and, the fittest being swept away, the decay of the miserable remnant would leave the land to the destroyer" (Rusden: Vol. I, 380).

Aboriginal people were portrayed as victims rather than agents by the nineteenth-century historians. This emphasis brought out the violence of the frontier and the treatment of Aboriginal people, and allowed the historians to express their disapproval. In this process a historical narrative was constructed in which colonisers became victims of their own actions — a narrative in which the future had to

be built on an unsettling violent past. Thus, there also remained the need to explain why the process of colonisation had been so violent, and to reason who was responsible for the frontier conflict.

Projection of Guilt

The nineteenth-century historians recognised that Aboriginal people had been dispossessed of their land. They also noted the negative impact that the expansion of European colonies had on the lives of Aboriginal people and acknowledged that this process had resulted in a great degree of violence and death. Nevertheless, they tended to project the guilt on someone or somewhere else — other people, other institutions or another time.

Class played an important role in the analysis of contact history. Lower classes, convicts in particular, were seen as the main villains in the frontier conflict. For instance, Lang (1834: Vol. I, 35–38) reasoned that it had been an impossible task for Governor Phillip to maintain a peaceful relationship with Aboriginal people, since the white population of the early colony consisted of such bad characters. West (1852: Vol. II, 8, 15, 17, 22–23) also regarded the "lower orders", such as bush rangers and convicts, as the original antagonists. The lower classes did not reach the moral standards set by the middle-class historians and hindered the process in which colonisers would have educated Aboriginal people by example.

The historians also criticised the colonial and imperial governments for neglecting Aboriginal people. Melville criticised Governor Arthur's Aboriginal policy and noted that the destruction of Aboriginal people was "authorised by the Chief Authority" (Melville 1835: 83). According to Rusden (1883: Vol. I, 132–133, 198, 375, 382, 529–532, 575–576; 1883: Vol. II, 15), every governor, except Governor Phillip, had neglected their duties to protect Aboriginal people and punish the crimes committed against them. In his opinion the Governor tacitly approved crimes against Aboriginal people that were not surveyed or punished. West thought that the crown should have taken care of Aboriginal Tasmanians and protected their rights. Instead, he argued, the imperial government had "washed their hands and averted their eyes; and threw upon the colony the

responsibility of inevitable crime" (West: Vol. II, 94. See also West: 93, 95). Hence, because of the neglect of the imperial government, colonists were, according to West, faced with a situation in which the only possible result was the "disappearance" of the Aboriginal people.

Melville, Bonwick and Rusden also pointed out the inequalities of the British legal system towards Aboriginal people (Melville 32, 35, 59–60; Bonwick 72–73, 327, 333; Rusden: Vol. II, 354; Rusden: Vol. III, 229). Even though in theory the law was supposed to give equally full protection to the Aboriginal people as to all British subjects, the level of prejudice was manifest throughout its prosecution. Legal processes were dominated by Europeans who were mostly unsympathetic towards the grievances of Aboriginal people. For example, in New South Wales Aboriginal evidence in courts was not admitted until in the 1870s (Markus 1994, 43-45). Rusden wrote that it was a "mere mockery of justice" to hang Aboriginal people, while they could not give evidence in court (Rusden: Vol. I, 142–143).

Colonists, historians included, commonly believed from the 1830s onwards that the Aboriginal population would become extinct. At first it was explained as God's will (Reynolds 1996: 121–122). Lang saw it as "Divine Providence" that "the miserable remnant of a once hopeful race will at length gradually disappear from the land of their forefathers, like the snow from the summits of the mountains on the approach of spring!" (Lang: Vol. 1, 39). From the middle of the nineteenth century it became more common to refer to reasons based on contemporary social theories, rather than biblical explanations, in order to explain the rapid decrease of the Aboriginal population (Westgarth 123; West Vol. II, 92). Only Bonwick and Rusden challenged the view that the Aboriginal people were destined to disappear towards the end of the nineteenth century. Bonwick argued, quite possibly against Lang's view that the Aboriginal people did not melt away "as the snow of the Alps (…) but were stricken down in their might, as the dark firs of the forests by the ruthless avalanche" (Bonwick 56. See also Rusden: Vol. I, 380).

Believing Aboriginal people to be inevitably an disappearing race or a "doomed" race made unnecessary any other considerations, such as the inequality of British and colonial legislative systems or government neglect, that pointed to different possible outcomes. Based on their quasi-anthropological descriptions the historians categorised Aboriginal people as primitive stone age people destined to disappear, and thus as relics of another time and of belonging to the past (cf. Chakrabarty 243).

It was also common for the historians to see the frontier conflict as belonging to the past. It could be argued that this was natural since as historians they examined the past. However, it is important to note that otherwise there was a strong focus on the present and future of the colony in much of the nineteenth-century historiography (Hutchinson 1988: 363–364). In the case of Tasmania it has been argued that the conflict between the Aboriginal people and colonists was very clear, and the decline of the Aboriginal population easily identifiable (Markus 1977: 170; Biskup 12–13; Griffiths 110). Thus conflict was easily placed in the past and the continuation of Tasmanian Aboriginal culture was silenced. However, when writing about New South Wales in the early 1830s Lang (1834: Vol. II, 112) also noted that contemporary race relations were peaceful. Thus, despite the fact that Lang's work focused on the present and future of the colony, he treated white-Aboriginal conflict as a thing of past. Situating frontier conflict in the past allowed him to discuss troubling issues without questioning the present practices in the colony.

This puts in a different light the notion that Lang as an historian appealed to the national sense of guilt. As several historians have argued, he did emphasise frontier violence (Reece 259; Biskup 12; Hutchinson 1988: 200) "There is black blood, at this moment, on the hands of individuals of good repute in the colony of New South Wales", he stormed (Lang Vol. I, 38). He also condemned past crimes committed against Aboriginal people by colonists. However, he did not address the continuing effects of colonisation on Aboriginal people. Rather Lang, a keen advocator of migration, highlighted the rapid progress of Australia towards a modern

Western nation and thus constructed white Australian identity as one of advancement and opportunities.

The nineteenth-century historians were able to justify the colonisation of Australia by portraying Aboriginal people, the original owners of the land, as a disappearing race and frontier conflict as a thing of the past. Dipesh Chakrabarty notes how part of modernity is the desire to create a "true present" which is produced by wiping out the past — by reducing the past to a nullity. This true present, according to him, is "a kind of zero point in history — the pastless time, for example, of a tabula rasa, the terra nullius, or the blueprint" (Chakrabarty 244). By representing Aboriginal people, and the frontier conflict that resulted from the colonisation of Australia, as belonging to the past, the historians excluded Aboriginal people from the present and future of Australia. In their representations they reaffirmed the image of Australia as terra nullius, a notion helping to foster settlers' sense of the legitimacy of colonisation.

The concept of terra nullius was tightly woven together with the idea of wilderness (See e.g. Langton 11–14). The historians also portrayed the Australian natural landscape as wilderness and Aboriginal people as part of it. For example Lang remarked in 1834: "This vast grant of land was doubtless given to the British nation (...) that the wilderness might be filled with cities, and the solitary place with the habitations of men" (Lang: Vol. II, 411). To see Indigenous people as a part of nature was common in nineteenth-century European writing. In the language of the Australian colonisers Indigenous people were commonly made indistinguishable from the environment (Bird 23).

By describing Australian nature as uninhabited wilderness without anthropogenic modification, the historians constructed Aboriginal people as part of nature and denied their humanity and role as active subjects. To contrast the achievements of European culture with the Australian landscape, and with Indigenous inhabitants as a passive part of it, was to celebrate the 'natural' progress of societies towards modernity and the urban state. This perceived pattern of

development was already familiar from Europe, and was used to justify domination and dominion over Indigenous people both in terms of the 'natural' law of economic progress and the authority of classical history (Dixon 4–5). Thus, in the narratives of colonial historiography imperial battles were fought over the land: who owned the land and defined its future and who had the right to settle it (Said xiii). The historians' representation of the land as uninhabited wilderness offered it as open for settlement by Europeans.

The 'Great Australian Silence' began to settle upon Australian historiography towards the end of the nineteenth century. Following the exclusion of Aboriginal people from the present and future of the Australian colony they were also excluded from its past. This change has been explained by racism and the exclusion of Indigenous people from Australian society as well as by the professionalisation of historiography. When history became an academic subject, the past of Aboriginal people was not considered an appropriate topic for historical research. Rather Aboriginal people were seen as solely a topic for anthropological or ethnographic studies (Markus 1977: 170, 175–176; Biskup 12, 14–15). Just as there was a tendency to be silent about Aboriginal people, from the 1870s a new generation of historians started to deny the violence of white-Aboriginal relations and to describe Australia as a country that had been occupied peacefully with no bloodshed (Blair 1; Labilliere Vol. II, 349).

An exception to the emerging silence was Rusden (1883: Vol. III, 227) who noted that an essay written about Australia for the New York Centennial exhibition made no mention of Aboriginal people. Rusden emphasised the fact that frontier conflict was still present in contemporary society. He remarked that the way Aboriginal people had been treated, "has been, nay, even now is (1877) a sin crying aloud to the covering heavens, and the stars the silent witnesses, can be denied by none who know the course of Australian history" (Rusden: Vol. I, 133).

Conclusion

The representation of Aboriginal people and their culture, the

Australian landscape and white-Aboriginal relations in nineteenth-century historiography was a part of the political act of colonialism. Most historians felt empathy towards Aboriginal people and acknowledged them as the original owners of the land. However, they shared European imperial and colonial discourses, which saw the expansion of the British Empire and the colonisation of Australia as inevitable. European superiority and their right for colonisation was taken for granted and it was highlighted in the descriptions of Aboriginal people, their culture and the land desired for colonisation.

Thus, it was not colonisation that was questioned in historiography, but the means by which it was carried out. The historians discussed the violence that had followed the establishment of the colony and condemned the treatment of Aboriginal people.

Ann Curthoys (186, 199) points out that present debates over how many people were killed in the course of Australian colonisation, and why, are debates about the moral grounds of British settlement in the past and Australian society in the present. In a similar manner in the nineteenth century, even though the violent past in itself was not questioned, historians' discussion of the treatment of Aboriginal people and arguments for the justification of colonisation reflected their anxiety with the troubled past and present on which the future of the colony was to be built.

The nineteenth-century historians commonly perceived the decline of the Aboriginal population as inevitable, and saw their destiny as determined by 'Divine Providence' or the 'Law of nature'. Historians also tended to describe frontier conflict as something that had happened in a more distant past. Aboriginal people were victims from the past and of the past. In this way, historians reaffirmed the image of Australia as terra nullius and constructed for the colony a present and future that was free of the burden of the past. However, it was perhaps not only Aboriginal people who were the victims of the past. Historians who tried to free themselves from the past were caught by it. The concern for Aboriginal people rose, not only from more general concern for human beings, but from the worry of what their plight said about 'us'.

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Walter Struve
In Search of "Herr O."

The name of the German-born Australian writer and broadcaster, Kurt Offenburg (1898-1946), has fallen into obscurity. At the time of his death, he was "well known throughout Australia as a hard-hitting, outspoken, and realistic interpreter of international affairs" (Anon. 1946b); in Germany he may be remembered for thoughtful, probing essays, reviews and a novel (1925a), which the Australian poet and scholar, Christopher Brennan (1870-1932), later translated into English (Offenburg 1934), as well as "a few" of Offenburg's articles and poems (Offenburg 1942c).

A snapshot of Offenburg as a writer in Weimar Germany is captured in a letter he wrote in 1924 to an older colleague, Armin Wegner (1886-1978). There he mentioned three forthcoming books, including a novel, as well as the work for newspapers and journals that was necessary for basic survival. Offenburg described the novel as the tale of a malicious bookseller and publisher. He summed up his own situation with allusions to Balzac and Flaubert: "Rastignac – c'est moi."

Offenburg touched upon what he meant by this in a short dialogue, published in the following year, where a writer ("Er") discusses with his female companion ("Sie") how a writer's energies are largely used to produce work (1925c). In an earlier reflection, on intellectuals and the proletariat, Offenburg described the intellectual as a holy stylite for the mercantile-saturated bourgeois; the intellectual, he added, offered cleverness to shine over an empty bourgeois existence (1921:376). He saw hope in the emerging voice of the proletariat, for example "the fantastic loving warmth of a Gerritt Engelke" (1925b:13).

Offenburg himself published some ten books (Struve 2006a:66), the

last five in Australia. That he was planning more is apparent from an obituary which noted that, "at the time of his death, he was engaged on several books, as well as a collection of his poems" (Anon. 1946a); these, however, appear to have been lost.

His journalism was indeed "hard-hitting, outspoken, and realistic", and a headache for the wartime censors, as can be seen in a broadcast typescript for 30 January 1942. The following lines were to have formed the final paragraph of a commentary on the advancing Japanese army and its threat to Australia (1942a):

> Singapore has ceased to be a barrier which protects this country. The Dutch East Indies have found that out already. It may be more palatable to hear from overseas that an invasion of Australia is unlikely: but nearer the truth is the FACT[1] – that the final decisions in the Pacific have become not only possible but a reality. We were warned, but it fell on the deaf ears of incurably wishful thinkers.

The journalism revealed considerable sensitivity, as seen on 6 July 1945, when Offenburg returned to the situation Australia found itself in during this "deadly-critical period" of early 1942. Paying tribute to the Australian Prime Minister, John Curtin (1885-1945), who had died on the previous day, Offenburg reminded listeners that the situation had been "dark and desperate." He also reminded them of the qualities in Curtin that had prevailed (1945a):

> His political judgement was clear and unerring; his courage great to the point of perfection; and his kindness, as I have reason to know, unselfish and without thought of applause. He was not a man who stood in the marketplace. He was a solitary man, without the facility of back-slapping. What a precious and inestimable gift for politicians!

That same year, Offenburg reprinted an essay from 1928, in which he had set down desperate, heartbreaking reflections on the First World War (1928b). Now it appeared in English translation, with newly added introductory words (1945b:39):

> We know that War exists; yet we trust, hope, desire that this modern, mad industrialized form of killing, the hopeless deliverance of living man to the machine, will come one day to an end.

Sixty-two years after Kurt Offenburg's death, the following article offers four glimpses of him, building on three earlier explorations (Struve 2004, 2006a, 2006b).

1. *Ein Mann, der sich Offenberg oder Offenburg nennt*

On 13 September 1930 the German Consul-General in Batavia, capital of the Dutch East Indies, wrote to the German Foreign Office in Berlin to report on a visitor, "ein Mann, der sich Offenberg oder Offenburg nennt" (Kessler 1930), a man who calls himself Offenberg or Offenburg. Nine days earlier this visitor had dropped in on him unexpectedly and stated that he was a representative of the *Frankfurter Zeitung,* but showed no identity papers; the visitor had quizzed the Consul-General about the conditions under which Germans in the area were living, their occupations, as well as the general economic situation. The Consul-General had been preoccupied with organizing a farewell for the departing American Consul-General. He suggested that the visitor return for a chat on the following morning and lent him a copy of the *Deutsches Jahrbuch für Niederländisch-Indien* to look through.

Next day the consulate received a telephone call from the hotel where the visitor was staying and was informed that "Herr O." – as the Consul-General now referred to the visitor – did not have time to come for a chat. Nine days later the borrowed *Jahrbuch* was returned with thanks, together with a forwarding address in Australia. It was then that the Consul-General wrote the letter in which he expressed misgivings about the German newspaperman who had passed through his patch. "One never knows what such people later put into their articles," the Consul-General wrote, adding that he had heard from others that there may be traveller's tales appearing in "the Frankfurter." To be on the safe side, the Consul-General decided to report this visit. But otherwise, he assured the Foreign Office, the man did not concern him: "im Uebrigen ist mir Herr O. völlig Hekuba…" (Kessler, ibid.)

The Consul-General was Friedrich von Kessler (1875-1933), son of a Prussian officer and himself an officer who had attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel before joining the Foreign Office in 1920. He

became German Consul-General in Batavia in 1926 (DJNI 328). At the time of his encounter with Offenburg, Kessler was fifty-five, and Offenburg not yet thirty-two.

Did Kessler's letter to the Foreign Office – an outfit described by an Australian observer in 1936 as resembling a "conservative old clubman" (Bonnell 13) – cause subsequent difficulties for Offenburg? Was the letter grounded in distrust towards the *Frankfurter Zeitung,* a newspaper that "was always regarded, and indeed regarded itself, as a linch-pin in the German liberal-democratic tradition" (Eksteins 1971:4), and its representatives?

2. *A noted German author, playwright and journalist presently visiting Australia*

Kurt Offenburg arrived in Sydney on 6 October 1930, on the *Nieuw Holland,* "one of the most graceful liners to operate to Australia before the war" (Plowman 53), and stayed at the Australia Hotel, "the nation's premier grand hotel" (Ramsland 21), where he was welcomed as "a noted German author, playwright and journalist presently visiting Australia" (Anon. 1930). Offenburg, we learn, was planning to write a book on his travels, and possibly a book on Australia, as well as reports for German newspapers.

Offenburg's practice was to observe places through "zig-zag travels" rather than to "merely" read facts and figures (1941:19-20), although he did this too. It gave his work a personal style and integrity. Insights were grounded in direct experience. On the Pacific, for example, he wrote (1941:21):

> The *old* romanticism of the Pacific – as Stevenson, Melville, and even Jack London found it – has disappeared. The *new* romanticism, which has replaced it, includes trade, investment of capital, spheres of influence and – naval bases. The adventure of yesterday no longer exists. Ten and fifteen thousand ton cargo steamers and twenty-five thousand ton passenger vessels travel with an exactness of a railway time-table. Even distant and out-of-the-way islands are regularly brought into the net of traffic as long as they can yield cargo.

Australian listeners to Offenburg's subsequent radio commentaries

appreciated his "having been there" (Elkin 72); the University of Sydney's Vice-Chancellor stated that "Offenburg was the only man from whom one learned something" and that "he was *very* good" (Marks). Back in 1930, he set to work swiftly, visiting various sheep and cattle stations in the Mudgee district, the steelworks in Newcastle, the mining town of Cessnock, and Canberra.

The Australia Hotel had been his base from October to December 1930. Offenburg returned to the hotel in March 1931, again in June 1932, in January 1933, and in February 1934. Between these dates he travelled outside Australia – for "study and writing" (Offenburg 1936) – in New Zealand (December 1930 to March 1931), British Malaya and Ceylon (May to June 1931), Germany (August to December 1931), Hong Kong, Japan and China (January to May 1932), New Zealand (January to March 1933), and Hong Kong (May 1933 to January 1934).

A more complete picture emerges from German sources. On 2 April 1932, for example, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* wrote to inform the German Foreign Office that it had retained Dr. Kurt Offenburg as its correspondent in Shanghai (BRFZ 1932). Earlier, on 28 November 1931, the newspaper informed the Foreign Office that it was sending Mr Kurt Offenburg as its special correspondent to the northern war zone in China, then possibly to Japan (VFZ 1931). One trip (November 1932 to January 1933), not listed above, was reported elsewhere: "Dr. Kurt D. Offenburg, a representative of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* is a passenger by the *Nankin,* which sails to-day for Yokohama and other Eastern ports" (Anon. 1932).

By 1936, he was naturalized, settled in Sydney, and had begun work with Australia's national broadcaster, the Australian Broadcasting Commission.

3. *Jeder einzelne Mensch eine Welt!*

In the Jewish corner of the old cemetery in Offenburg, close to the Black Forest in the German state of Baden[2],stands a gravestone bearing the names of Josef Dreifuss (1866-1915) and Rosa Dreifuss,

née Halle (1873-1916). Underneath their names is a line from *Proverbs* (20:27) in German translation, "Die Seele des Menschen ist eine Leuchte Gottes": the soul of man is a lamp of God[3]. The death notice for Josef in the *Offenburger Tageblatt* (19 July 1915) had been signed by "Rosa Dreifuß geb. Halle, und Kinder" and, one year later (29 July 1916), the death notice for Rosa was signed by "Kurt Dreifuss und Geschwister." The five Dreifuss children were: Kurt (1898-1946), Paul (1902-?), Ilse (1908-?), Egon (1910-?), and Friedrich (1912-?)[4].

Josef, the father, was born in Dürrheim, and Rosa, the mother, in Hockenheim. In Offenburg, the Dreifuss family ran a furniture business. After Rosa's death, the younger children were sent to Dürrheim, and Kurt returned to Frankfurt, to a business apprenticeship. All too soon, he was a soldier on the Western Front, where death "was no longer a surprise, but a shock" (Offenburg 1945b:16).

Years later, Kurt, who by now had established himself as the writer Kurt Offenburg, reminisced on the early years of the twentieth century, "damals, noch tief in Friedenszeiten," as he put it: those times still deep in peace. The occasion was a tribute to the poet and publisher Ernst Preczang (1870-1949), on his sixtieth birthday:

> Lieber Ernst Preczang; bald wird es ein Vierteljahrhundert her sein, seit ich die ersten Gedichte von Ihnen las; damals zu Hause im »Volksfreund« und, wenn ich mich nicht irre, auch in der »Gleichheit«. Diese Verse – ich erinnere mich noch, als wäre es gestern gewesen – waren so stark und einfach im Rhythmus, dass sie dem Knaben immer im Ohr sangen. Durch viele Schulstunden, wohin sie nicht gehörten; durch viele Tage bei den einsam melancholischen Spaziergängen am rauschenden Fluss (über wieviele Wehre brauste er schäumend, alte grün unmooste Mühlräder treibend)! Die Inhalte der Gedichte, das Bekenntnis zum Sozialismus und zur Solidarität, gruben sich selbstverständlich wie Volkslieder in die Seele des jungen Lesers. (Offenburg 1930)
>
> Dear Ernst Preczang, soon it will be a quarter of a century since I first read poems by you. It was long ago, at home, in periodicals like the *Volksfreund* and, if I am not mistaken, in *Gleichheit.* These works – and I remember as though it had been yesterday – were so

> strong and simple in rhythm that they could forever sing within a child's ear. During many a school hour, where they did not belong, and on many a solitary, melancholic walk along the rushing stream (over how many weirs had it swirled and foamed, turning old green mossy mill wheels)! The contents of the poems, the calling to socialism and solidarity, penetrated the soul of the young reader as readily as did folksongs. (My translation)

Some two years after writing this tribute, Offenburg was again reminiscing on the landscapes of his childhood. It was April 1932, in the interior of China, on a steamer heading down the Yangtze River; Offenburg was "the only white man among two score of well-to-do Chinese merchants and high Civil servants, some with and some without their concubines." After four days, with another three before they would reach Shanghai, a nun boarded the crowded steamer. Offenburg overheard her speaking Mandarin with two Chinese men and noticed occasional English expressions. When he heard the words "Black Forest," his curiosity was aroused. He approached her and it was then established that both she and he had been born in that corner of Germany (Offenburg 1945b:181-2):

And at once we began to speak in our native tongue. All afternoon and most of the next day and the next one we talked about the Black Forest, that most southern part towards the Swiss border with its dense and dark pines, its great snow-covered mountains, its low thatched houses and the old villages, where women wear white hats made of clay, decorated with big red balls, and where the girls have their names and birthplaces stitched on the collars of their Sunday frocks.

The nun had arrived in China in 1910, at the age of nineteen, and worked the whole time in the interior. She had never been back to Europe, not even to a Chinese coastal city. As the steamer approached Shanghai she contemplated the city and confided her fears of cities to Offenburg. She would be travelling to Europe, accompanying a nun who could not travel alone, and undertook to send Offenburg a postcard from the Black Forest. Three days later she set sail on the *Georges Philippar,* a French liner (Anon. 1931) returning to Marseilles on its maiden voyage to the Far East. A

fortnight later, on 16 May, disaster struck near Cape Guardafui, in the Gulf of Aden. Fire broke out and, on 19 May, the *Georges Philippar* sank; fifty-four persons perished (Hocking 269), including Offenburg's nun.

Offenburg recorded a quiet tribute to her in an article, "The Black Wing" (1945b:179-185). The nun's name is not given, but her appearance and personality come through with a gentle dignity. "Jeder einzelne Mensch eine Welt!" Offenburg had written a few years earlier (1928a:1678), when he contemplated the names of British and American soldiers killed on the Western Front in the First World War. It applies here too: every single person a world!

4. *My successor, however, was not a Communist*

Agnes Smedley (1892-1950) – described by her most recent biographer as "one of the most significant American women of the twentieth century" – was special correspondent in China for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* from late 1928 until late 1931. She was, this biographer noted, "a flamboyant journalist, feminist, and political activist who made historic contributions to letters and politics on three continents", and "not the first revolutionary to operate in Asia under the cover of the *Frankfurter Zeitung"* (Price 2005a:2,167).

There have so far been two Smedley biographies. The authors of the first biography began by stating that "even the most ordinary facts about her life, including her birthdate, were a mystery" (MacKinnon and MacKinnon ix). But, wrote the second biographer, the first biographers had dismissed "in a single sentence" the charge that Smedley "worked for the Comintern" (Price 2005b). The second biography came seventeen years later and used words by the American journalist and abolitionist leader, William Lloyd Garrison (1805-1879), as an epigraph: "I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice."

Offenburg came into the Smedley frame, as described by Smedley herself, in the following way (1935:9-10):

> During the Japanese invasion a correspondent for the *Frankfurter*

> *Zeitung* arrived in Shanghai to take my place, after the Nanking government, working through the German Foreign Office, had demanded my dismissal from the newspaper. I had refused to become an "adviser" to the department in Nanking – which meant keeping my mouth shut – and of course this proved definitely that I was a Communist. My successor, however, was not a Communist; so immediately upon arrival he dashed off to the Chinese mayor of greater Shanghai and asked for money to carry on in style. Someone blabbed, the news was cabled to Europe, and the impatient gentleman was recalled. Had he waited a week, the Chinese would perhaps have made him an "adviser" to some department in Nanking or the Japanese would have stalked into his room and plunked down a bag of yen.

Smedley did not name Offenburg here, but nevertheless aimed several barbs in his direction. Eight years later, when she again described her parting with the *Frankfurter Zeitung,* "after mutual expressions of regret," she included an ingenious barb when she wrote: "A German, later one of Hitler's propagandists, was mentioned as my successor" (1943:110).

Offenburg sent his version of what had happened to Germany (1932b), with corroboration by Wu Te-chen (1888-1953), an old associate of Sun Yat-sen. Wu, described as "a delightful gentleman" (Abend 136), was Mayor of Greater Shanghai, where "he had gained an enviable reputation for honesty and competence" (Utley 23), and "whose enlightened administration made that city famous" (Mowrer 40). Offenburg stated that he had sought advice from Wu on the possibility of a discount rate for sending cables of between 800 and 1,200 words from Shanghai, instead of resorting to the more than three weeks delay for longer reports sent to Germany via the Trans-Siberian Railway[5]. A subsequent report from the Russian news agency, TASS, claimed that Offenburg had begged for money from Chinese authorities, as the *Frankfurter Zeitung* was in financial difficulty and that, as a return favour, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* would adopt a China-friendly stance. Offenburg insisted that this was an "absolute lie" (1932b). He believed that Smedley was behind the fabrication and had used Russian connections to spread it. When Wu realized what was happening, he wrote to Offenburg (1932):

> I am glad to take the opportunity to testify that so far as my

> knowledge serves me, you approached me only on one occasion to ascertain whether, in view of the necessity of sending long reports to Germany in order to cover the international situation here in this city, it was possible to secure special cable rates for your paper. You may quote me as saying that I have never been approached by you with any request for financial assistance or any similar proposal for financial aid.

To suggest that Offenburg might have become an advisor in Nanking is as unfair as it is to hint that it was perhaps Offenburg who was "later one of Hitler's propagandists". Smedley's friend, Freda Utley (1898-1978), has mentioned "the exaggerated accusations she hurled at her adversaries", but insisted that, despite this, "Agnes Smedley was the most honest of women, aware even of her own weaknesses" (Utley 216). It is sad that circumstances had turned Smedley and Offenburg into adversaries. Offenburg, after all, as the Australian historian Charles Bean (1879-1968), subsequently wrote, was a person who "hated hypocrisy, social, national or international; and the opportunity for free, direct, sincere public speech and writing was the breath of his existence" (1946a).

In China, Offenburg had interviewed many prominent figures, including Wang Ching-wei (1883-1944), who at that time headed Chiang Kai-shek's government in Nanking; he had also read a copy of Wang's book, *China and the Nations,* which Wang had given him[6]. Offenburg summed Wang up as "an ambitious self-seeker" (1940). Regarding the Japanese, Offenburg referred to them as "the Prussians of the East" (1942b). In Germany he had spoken against Nazism and, as a consequence, his life was threatened (Anon. 1946b); while still in Shanghai, he heard that his flat in Frankfurt had been ransacked by Nazis and his library burned (Petersen 138). Or did this occur later, and could Offenburg have been in Europe in 1933, as suggested in a subsequent essay on Paris, where he began by stating that he was "nearly thirty-five" (1938a:12) when he was last there and, later in the same essay, wrote: "I was thirty-five when I sat for the last time in the Luxembourg Gardens after returning from a journey round the world and about to be off on another one" (1938a:85)[7]?

The German Consul-General in Hankou, Wilhelm Timann (1882-1961), had complained to Berlin in November 1931 about a specific article by Agnes Smedley in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (Smedley 1931), and asked that the *Frankfurter Zeitung* be informed; the article, he wrote, was one-sided, superficial and harmful to German interests (Timann 1931). At almost the same time, the German Consul-General in Shanghai, Heinrich Freiherr Rüdt von Collenberg-Bödigheim (1875-1954), added to an earlier complaint regarding articles by Agnes Smedley, and now included a letter he had received from Huang Petzian, a Chinese engineer who had been educated in Germany (Rüdt 1931). Huang asked that the *Frankfurter Zeitung* should cease publishing articles by Agnes Smedley. Within the same month, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* wrote to inform the Foreign Office in Berlin that Kurt Offenburg would be sent to China, and possibly Japan, as the newspaper's special correspondent (VFZ 1931). It seems that this was a move to minimize the need to seek further articles for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* from Smedley (Crull 1932a), although there were in fact subsequent articles by her (for example, Smedley 1932). Her employment with the *Frankfurter Zeitung* ceased in December 1931 and she was then described as a freelance journalist (DGP 1932).

It is true that the *Frankfurter Zeitung* was in financial difficulties, and also that it had succumbed to "the growing ideological crisis which pervaded German liberalism in the second half of the 1920s" (Eksteins 1975:160). It is also apparent that German officials were not helpful towards Offenburg when the TASS report came out; the Consul-General in Shanghai apparently found the Russian report credible and considered a consular protest to be incorrect (Rüdt 1932). Later that year, when the Foreign Office in Berlin noticed that articles by Offenburg were appearing in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* from Tokyo, the German Embassy in Tokyo was sent details of what had happened to Offenburg in Shanghai, so that officials there could judge Offenburg's personality and be forewarned (Crull 1932b).

It was Australia's great gain when Offenburg chose to settle there. The choice, he later wrote, was "between accepting a social philosophy which identifies God with the State, and as an end in

itself: or choosing a community which upholds individualism, humanism and reason" (Offenburg 1938b). Or, as Charles Bean put it (Bean 1946b):

> He became an Australian because he could not live in a country in which speech, writing and discussion were throttled. His high education and keen insight convinced him that certain truths, as he conceived them to be, were vital to the security and happiness of his fellow man; and he could not live unless he could speak his mind freely. In Australia he found ample and constant opportunity for this, and that was a main cause of his adoption of our citizenship, and his satisfaction in his life here.

Offenburg died far too soon, in May 1946, at the age of forty-seven.

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Abbreviations

BRFZ Berliner Redaktion der Frankfurter Zeitung

DGP Deutsche Gesandschaft Peping (the name 'Peping' was adopted by the Kuomintang in 1928 and used until 1949).

DJNI Deutsches Jahrbuch für Niederländisch-Indien

NAA National Archives of Australia

PAAA Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts

VFZ Verlag der Frankfurter Zeitung

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Amerikas treuer Juniorpartner in der asiatisch-pazifischen Region? Die historische Entwicklung der sicherheitspolitischen Zusammenarbeit zwischen Australien und den USA

Einleitung

Verfolgt man die aktuelle internationale Politik aus deutscher Perspektive, stehen in erster Linie Themen wie die transatlantischen Beziehungen, die Fortentwicklung der europäischen Integration oder aber der Nahost-Konflikt im Mittelpunkt des Interesses. Australien und seine Rolle in der internationalen Gemeinschaft werden dagegen weniger stark wahrgenommen. Bei genauerer Betrachtung stellt man allerdings schnell fest, dass dies zu Unrecht geschieht, denn zwischen der grundsätzlichen Ausrichtung der deutschen und der australischen Außenpolitik lassen sich durchaus einige Gemeinsamkeiten feststellen, die einen Vergleich interessant machen.

Erstens sieht sich die Bundesrepublik in der internationalen Politik als ein Akteur, der seinen Einfluss nicht in erster Linie durch militärische Interventionen geltend macht, sondern diese mit diplomatischen und entwicklungspolitischen Aspekten verbindet (Noetzel/Schreer 2008:211-221). Dementsprechend sieht die Bundesregierung die Einbindung Deutschlands in internationale Organisationen, wie zum Beispiel der Europäischen Union oder der NATO, als die am besten geeignete Strategie an, um deutsche Anliegen vertreten zu können. Dieser Ansatz einer Zivil- oder Mittelmacht (Maul 2007:73-85, Ungerer 2007:538-551) trifft grundsätzlich auch für die australische Außenpolitik seit der Gründung des Commonwealth of Australia 1901 zu (Hagemann

2004:79). Zweitens basiert Deutschlands Rolle in der internationalen Politik nicht nur auf einer rein politischen Strategie, sondern vor allem auf den wirtschaftlichen Möglichkeiten, die die stark exportorientierte deutsche Industrie bietet (Staack 2007:85-101). Gerade die immer stärker werdende Vernetzung der internationalen Märkte hat die Stellung vieler deutscher Industrieunternehmen gefestigt und somit indirekt auch der deutschen Außenpolitik genutzt. Auf Australien, dessen wirtschaftlichen Stärken vor allem aus den enormen Bodenschätzen und dem wichtigen Agrarsektor resultieren, trifft – vor allem aufgrund der großen Nachfrage aus China beziehungsweise Indien – dasselbe zu (*The Economist* 2005).

> Schließlich gibt es noch eine dritte Gemeinsamkeit, die die australische Außenpolitik für die deutsche Perspektive so interessant macht: die Partnerschaft mit den USA. War für die deutsche Außenpolitik die enge Bindung mit Washington seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg Teil des Konzeptes der Westintegration, hat auch die australisch-amerikanische Kooperation für die australische Außenpolitik einen vergleichbaren Stellenwert (Haftendorn 2001: 60).

In diesem Artikel sollen nun die Beziehungen zwischen diesen beiden Akteuren, Australien und den USA, analysiert werden. Dabei soll in einem ersten Schritt der historische Kontext erläutert werden, um in einem weiteren die Veränderungen der Partnerschaft nach dem Ende des Kalten Krieges und den Terroranschlägen in New York und Washington am 11. September 2001 zu erörtern. Abschließend soll diskutiert werden, ob der Regierungswechsel nach den australischen Parlamentswahlen im November 2007 Auswirkungen auf die australisch-amerikanische Partnerschaft hatte oder nicht (*The Economist* 2008).

Der historische Kontext

Zumindest in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts orientierte sich die australische Außenpolitik nicht an den USA, sondern vielmehr am Mutterland Großbritannien. Dies hängt historisch betrachtet hauptsächlich mit drei Umsrtänden zusammen: erstens waren die beiden Staaten staatsrechtlich allein dadurch schon eng miteinander verbunden, da Australien Teil des britischen Commonwealth blieb

und der englische Monarch bis heute Staatsoberhaupt ist. Zum zweiten war Großbritannien bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg eine der führenden Wirtschaftsmächte weltweit und damit der wichtigste Handelspartner Australiens (Welch 2004:337-339). Darüber hinaus waren zweifellos die sicherheitspolitischen Argumente ausschlaggebend, denn Großbritannien war mit seinen zahlreichen Kolonien im asiatischen Raum und einer der stärksten Flotten der damaligen Zeit für Australien der wichtigste Garant vor einer möglichen japanischen Invasion (Burke 2008:47-49). Deutlichstes Zeichen dieser australisch-britischen Partnerschaft war das australische Engagement an britischer Seite im Ersten Weltkrieg. Dabei hat sich vor allem die Schlacht von Gallipoli, bei der australische und neuseeländische Truppen gemeinsam die Alliierten unterstützten, in das kollektive Gedächtnis der Australier eingebrannt. Diese militärische Operation endete allerdings mit einer verheerenden Pattstellung, bei der am Ende über 8000 australische Soldaten ums Leben kamen. Sie änderte allerdings grundsätzlich nichts an der australisch-britischen Zusammenarbeit.

Nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg orientierte sich die australische Außenpolitik verstärkt an der neuen globalen Führungsmacht in der westlichen Welt: den USA. Dieser wichtige Wechsel des Bündnispartners hatte vor allem mit der veränderten Stellung Großbritanniens in der internationalen Politik zu tun. Zum einen war der australischen Politik schon nach dem britischen Rückzug aus Singapur 1942 deutlich geworden, dass London seine Führungsposition im westlichen Lager an die USA verloren hatte, zum anderen war Großbritannien auch bedingt durch den Dekolonisierungsprozess in der asiatisch-pazifischen Region nicht mehr genügend präsent, um australische Interessen während des immer intensiver werdenden Kalten Krieges zu schützen (Macintyre 2005:210). Nicht zuletzt deshalb reorientierte sich die britische Außenpolitik insgesamt nach Europa, was man beispielsweise an dem schließlich 1973 geglückten Versuch Londons erkennen kann, Mitglied in der Europäischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft zu werden (Benvenuti 2007:251-266). Die Partnerschaft Australiens mit dem neuen starken politischen Akteur in der Region wurde 1951 durch einen Vertrag besiegelt, der auch heute noch die Grundlage dieser

Partnerschaft bildet: den ANZUS-Pakt (ANZUS=Australia, New Zealand, United States). Dieses Bündnis zwischen Australien und den USA, an dem sich auch Neuseeland beteiligte, sollte allerdings nicht nur den australischen Sicherheitsinteressen dienen, sondern Washington wollte vor allem in dieser Region neben Japan noch einen zweiten Verbündeten stärker an sich binden (Firth 2005: 33-35). Diese vertragliche Verbindung wurde die entscheidende Grundlage für die australische Außenpolitik während des Kalten Krieges. Gerade das australische Engagement im Vietnamkrieg zur Unterstützung der USA dokumentiert dies eindrucksvoll. Australien blieb während dieser Zeit ein sehr enger Partner Amerikas (McLean 2006:64-79).

Australien, die USA und das Ende des Kalten Krieges

Nach dem Ende des Kalten Krieges gab es in den USA eine breite Diskussion unter den außenpolitischen Experten, wie nun die Rolle Washingtons in der internationalen Politik aussehen könne. Während der amerikanische Politikwissenschaftler Francis Fukuyama schon vom Ende der Geschichte sprach und damit den weltweiten Siegeszug des liberal-kapitalistischen Politikmodells voraussagte, wurde rasch deutlich, dass die internationale Politik nach dem Ende des Kalten Krieges weit komplizierter und gefährlicher sein würde. Auch wenn die große Blockkonfrontation zwischen den beiden Supermächten USA und der Sowjetunion nicht mehr die internationale Politik bestimmte, lieferte die Regionalisierung der Konflikte neue Herausforderungen (Haass 2005; Gordon 2007). Diese sollten vollkommen anders sein, als es sich viele Politikwissenschaftler und Historiker an der Zeitenwende 1989/90 vorstellen konnten (Fukuyama 1992 ; Mearsheimer 2001).

Diese Suche der USA nach der eigenen politischen Rolle in den internationalen Beziehungen der 1990er Jahre hatte auch Auswirkungen auf die australische Politik. Auch wenn Australien nie im Zentrum des Kalten Krieges gestanden hatte, suchte die politische Klasse nun nach neuen Möglichkeiten, die australischen Interessen in der Region deutlicher zu fokussieren, denn eine wirkliche Sicherheit, dass sich die USA nach wie vor als die Schutzmacht Australiens sähen, gab es nicht mehr. Folglich begann

eine Orientierungssuche der australischen Außenpolitik. Es kristallisierten sich in der wissenschaftlichen Diskussion drei Positionen heraus, die Australien nach dem Ende des Kalten Kriegs in der internationalen Gemeinschaft einnehmen könnte: die einer klassischen Mittelmacht, die einer internationalen Führungsmacht und die einer abhängigen Macht (Ungerer 2008:23-52). In der Darstellung des Politikwissenschaftlers Carl Ungerer versuchte Australien bereits nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg während der Amtszeit Robert Menzies sich als Mittelmacht zwischen den beiden Supermächten zu etablieren. Letztlich habe man, so Ungerer, dieses Konzept zumindest während des Kalten Krieges nicht weiter verfolgen können, da das Bedürfnis nach einer atomaren Schutzmacht zu stark gewesen sei. Auch das Konzept einer Führungsrolle Australiens habe seine Vor- und Nachteile. Wenn man darunter allein die wirtschaftliche Stärke, die gut ausgebildete Bevölkerung, oder die geographische Größe Australiens fasste, könne man Australien zweifellos die Rolle einer Führungsmacht zubilligen. Betrachtet man aber auch die militärische Komponente, so müsse man dieses Konzept wieder in Zweifel ziehen. Für viele Experten blieb daher Australien auch nach dem Kalten Krieg ein von den USA stark abhängiger Akteur. Dabei wurden vor allem die gemeinsamen kulturellen und politischen Werte zwischen beiden Staaten betont (Ungerer 2008:37 ; Firth 2005:3-18 ; Tow 2008). Auch wenn diese Diskussion heute noch nicht abgeschlossen ist, zeigte sich schon mit dem Beginn der Regierungszeit von Premierminister John Howard 1996, dass Australien zumindest – regional betrachtet – seine Rolle deutlich offensiver vertreten wollte, gegebenenfalls auch unabhängig von den USA. Einer der ersten Herausforderungen, die sich der konservativen australischen Regierung in dieser Hinsicht stellten, waren 1999 die Unruhen in Ost-Timor, das sich von Indonesien trennen wollte.

Schon seit vielen Jahrzehnten war Indonesien ein wichtiger Partner Australiens in der asiatisch-pazifischen Region gewesen (Wesley 2007: 53-72). Dabei sahen mehrere australische Administrationen darüber hinweg, dass die indonesische Regierung unter Staatschef Mohamed Suharto alles andere als eine positive Menschenrechtsbilanz hatte und auch den demokratischen

Ansprüchen, für die Australien steht, nicht genügen konnte (Burke 2008: 145-148). Entscheidend war für Canberra vor allem die antikommunistische Haltung der Regierung in Djarkata. Daher war es nicht verwunderlich, dass Australien den Unabhängigkeitskampf der ehemaligen Kolonie Ost-Timor nicht unterstützte, ja sogar die Annektierung des Gebietes durch das indonesische Militär 1975 tolerierte. Diese Passivität endete erst 1999, als verschiedene Aspekte einen Wandel der australischen Ost-Timor-Politik ermöglichten. Zum einen machte der Sturz Suhartos und die Neuausrichtung der Ost-Timor-Politik durch seinen umsichtiger agierenden Nachfolger Jusuf Habibie, der Ost-Timor nach einem positiven Referendum letztlich in die Unabhängigkeit entließ, für die internationale Gemeinschaft insgesamt eine neue Herangehensweise gegenüber Djarkata notwendig. Zum anderen hatte die australische Regierung nun anders als in der Vergangenheit die Möglichkeit, sich für die unterdrückte Bevölkerung Ost-Timors einzusetzen, ohne gleichzeitig die wichtigen wirtschaftlichen Beziehungen zu Indonesien zu gefährden. Schließlich kam noch das Plädoyer der australischen Kirchen für eine humanitäre Intervention hinzu, was die australische Regierung unter moralischen Druck setzte. Daher schickte Canberra 1999 Truppen in Ost-Timors Hauptsstadt Dili, die im Rahmen der Vereinten Nationen den Übergangsprozess Ost-Timors bis zur Etablierung eines souveränen Staates Ost-Timor 2002 gemeinsamen mit anderen militärischen Kontingenten aus anderen Staaten der Region überwachen sollte (Cotton 1999:237-246 ; Downer 2000:5-10). Auch wenn heute die politische Lage in Ost-Timor alles andere als sicher ist, war die militärische Intervention für die australisch-amerikanische Partnerschaft enorm wichtig. Zum ersten Mal seit der Begründung dieser Kooperation überließ Washington Australien in Asien eine militärische Ordnungsfunktion, ohne eigene Truppen zu entsenden (Lowry 2007). Im Ergebnis hat sich Australien mit diesem Ost-Timor-Einsatz, der bis heute andauert, als ein wichtiger regionaler Akteur etabliert. Erst in diesem Frühjahr verstärkte Australien mit der Entsendung von 140 Soldanten die 1000 Mann starke UN-Friedenstruppe vor Ort. Gleichzeitig übernahm die australische Regierung darüber hinaus auch für die Salomon Inseln Verantwortung (Morgan/McLeod:412-428).

Dass Howard grundsätzlich bei der Durchsetzung australischer Interessen vor allem im Bereich der Asylpolitik sehr robust vorging und auch vor einer Instrumentalisierung der Ausländerfeindlichkeit nicht zurück schreckte, zeigte nicht zuletzt die sogenannte „Tampa-Krise". Im August 2001 rettete die Besatzung des norwegischen Schiffes „Tampa" ein indonesisches Boot voll besetzt mit 433 Flüchtlingen, größtenteils aus Afghanistan. Der Kapitän des norwegischen Schiffes wollte, nachdem er den Flüchtlingen an Bord Schutz gewährt hatte, aus humanitären Gründen und im Einklang mit internationalem Seerecht den nächstgelegenen Hafen ansteuern, und der war Darwin. Dies war allein schon deshalb notwendig, da sich die Situation auf dem Schiff dramatisch zuspitzte. Doch die australische Regierung lehnte die Aufnahme der Flüchtlinge vor allem aus wahltaktischen Gesichtspunkten entschieden ab. Schließlich erklärte sich die neuseeländische Regierung bereit, den Flüchtlingen Asyl zu gewähren. Gerade diese starre Haltung der Howard-Regierung brachte Australien heftige internationale Kritik ein (Macintyre 2005:270-271). Dieser hielt aber an seiner Strategie fest, wozu sicherlich auch die drastische Erhöhung der Militärbudgets in den folgenden Jahren, das er interessanterweise ohne große innenpolitische Probleme durchsetzen konnte (White 2002).

Australien und die USA nach dem 11. September 2001

Ähnlich wie für Deutschland waren die verheerenden Terroranschläge in New York und Washington am 11. September 2001 auch für Australien ein einschneidendes Ereignis. Premierminister Howard, der am Tag der Anschläge selbst in Washington war, erklärte sich sofort mit den USA solidarisch und aktivierte die Beistandsklausel des ANZUS-Vertrages. Er begründete dies mit der außerordentlich engen Partnerschaft zwischen beiden Staaten:

> Of all nations that we value and whose friendship we cherish there´s no relationship more natural, more easy…and one more deeply steeped in shared experience in common aspiration for the kind of world we want our children to grow up in than the relationship between Australia and the United States"(zit. in Bell 2007:25).

Diese enge Verbundenheit zwischen der Bush-Administration und der von Howard geführten australischen Regierung wurde nach dem Terroranschlag auf der indonesischen Urlaubsinsel Bali am 12. Oktober 2002, bei dem 202 Touristen, darunter 88 australische Staatsangehörige ums Leben kamen, noch verstärkt. Von nun an betonte Howard immer wieder, dass der internationale Terrorismus nicht nur eine Gefahr für die USA, sondern eben auch für Australien sei. Infolgedessen war es logisch, dass sich Howard im Namen Australiens bereit erklärte, sowohl bei den amerikanisch geführten Kriegen in Afghanistan (ab 2001), als auch später ab März 2003 im Irak einen militärischen Beitrag anzubieten, der von Washington dankend angenommen wurde (Lyon 2008: 52-74). Howards Strategie gegenüber den Herausforderungen für die australische Außenpolitik war eindeutig: sie bestand in erster Linie in der bedingungslosen Allianz mit Washington und vernachlässigte Australiens Rolle in multilateralen Organisationen wie den Vereinten Nationen und den zahlreichen regionalen Zusammenschlüssen in Asien (Kelly 2006). Howard untermauerte diese Strategie noch durch die Vereinbarung eines Freihandelsabkommens zwischen Washington und Canberra 2002.

Dies war insofern problematisch, als dass Australien, das sich jahrzehntelang für eine multilaterale Außenhandelspolitik eingesetzt hatte, sich nun selbst an selektiven Wirtschaftsabkommen beteiligte (Ravenhill 2007:192-213). Dabei waren viele australische Handels-experten der Überzeugung, dass solch ein Abkommen vor allem den amerikanischen, aber nicht den australischen Handelsinteressen nutze (Capling 2008:229-244). Howard setzte diese Politik dennoch gegen den zunehmend stärker werdenden Widerstand in der australischen Bevölkerung durch (Gyngell 2007). So ignorierte er zum Beispiel, dass in Sydney im Jänner 2003 die weltweit größte Demonstration gegen den bevorstehenden Irak-Krieg stattfand.

Zweifellos profitierte er auch von der Unterstützung konservativer Medien des Medien-Moguls Rupert Murdoch, die die Anti-Kriegsbewegung permanent diskreditierten.

Auch unter den sicherheitspolitischen Experten war diese enge

Bindung Howards an die Bush-Administration sehr umstritten. Von vielen Fachleuten, darunter auch dem damaligen Oppositionsführer der Labour Partei Kevin Rudd, wurde Howards Strategie deshalb kritisiert, weil die australische Außenpolitik ihrer Ansicht nach aus der Balance zwischen der Partnerschaft mit den USA und dem traditionellen Engagement Australiens in multilateralen Organisationen geraten sei (Rudd 2007:21-23). Zunehmend wurde auch die Rolle des australischen Militärs, das nun stärker als zuvor in gefährliche Auslandseinsätze entsandt wurde, in den außenpolitischen ‚Think-Tanks' diskutiert. Während die einen, wie der Politikwissenschaftler Alan Dupont, diese Entwicklung als richtig und unvermeidlich lobten, fürchteten Kritiker der Howard-Regierung, dass nun die Armee nicht mehr in der Lage sei, das australische Territorium ausreichend zu verteidigen (Dibb 2006:247-264 ; Dupont 2003:55-76 ; Hirst 2007:157-192).

Die australisch-amerikanischen Beziehungen nach dem Regierungswechsel in Canberra

Der Sieg der Labour-Partei unter der Führung von Kevin Rudd gegen die Konservativen von Premierminister Howard am 24. November 2007 war ein in dieser Deutlichkeit nicht zu erwartender Triumph. Analysen zeigen deutlich, dass dabei unter anderem drei Aspekte von entscheidender Bedeutung waren: die lange Amtszeit Howards, die Befürchtung eines wirtschaftlichen Abschwungs verbunden mit einer steigenden Inflation und eben auch die immer unpopulärere Kooperation des Premierministers mit der Bush-Administration (Williams 2008: 104-125).

Insofern erfüllte der neu gewählte Regierungschef Rudd die Erwartungen seiner Anhänger, als er schon kurz nach der Wahl neue außenpolitische Akzente setzte: Abzug des australischen Truppenkontingent aus dem Irak, Unterzeichnung des Kyoto-Protokolls und verstärktes Engagement im Rahmen des Atomwaffensperrvertrag, der von der Howard-Regierung als veraltet angesehen worden war (*The Economist* 2008 / *The Economist* 2007). Formal gesehen hält die neue australische Regierung an der Partnerschaft mit den USA fest, auch wenn dies nun in einer eher

distanzierten Form geschieht.

Die Wahl des neuen amerikanischen Präsidenten Barack Obama am 4. November 2008 hat bei den amerikanischen Verbündeten hohe Erwartungen nach einer ausgeglichenen, multilateralen Außenpolitik der USA geweckt. Allerdings sollte hierbei vor zu hohen Erwartungen und vor zu viel Euphorie dringend gewarnt werden. Zwar wird die neue amerikanische Regierung zweifellos daran interessiert sein, mit den traditionellen Verbündeten ein gutes Einvernehmen zu erzielen. In kritischen Situationen ist allerdings zu erwarten, dass Obama in erster Linie amerikanische Interessen vertreten wird (Obama 2007). Es ist davon auszugehen, dass er seine außenpolitischen Prioritäten klar auf die Krisengebiete Irak und vor allem Afghanistan konzentrieren wird, und somit könnte es zu einer Lockerung der engen amerikanisch-australischen Partnerschaft kommen. Dies käme Kevin Rudd, gemessen an seinen bisherigen außenpolitischen Initiativen, sicherlich gelegen.

Für die deutsche Perspektive bleibt es eine interessante Aufgabe, die australisch-amerikanischen Beziehungen genau zu beobachten, auch um eigene Rückschlüsse auf die Partnerschaft mit Washington ziehen zu können.

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Jaroslav Kušnír

Post-Colonial Space and Australian Identity in Richard Flanagan's *Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997)

Space and Place

According to many critics, space and spatiality have become the most significant aspects of literary representation in the 20th and 21st centuries. For example, Joseph Frank (1945) spoke about spatial form in literature (Frank, 1945). And although a French philosopher, Michael Foucault, was rather interested in analyzing a more general than a specific literary space in his well-known study *Of Other Spaces*, he also emphasizes its importance in the last century arguing that *"[T]he present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space"* (Foucault, web reference).

The theory of literary representation of space acquires an even more significant position in post-colonial literatures in English. In many post-colonial novels written in English, space becomes a symbolic site of both contest and conflict between the colonizing and colonized nations and cultures. Space also becomes a symbolic site in the formation of post-colonial identities of the formerly colonized nations and it expresses a complicated nature of the transition of formerly marginalized cultures from the marginalized to a dominant position. Space is also closely connected to physical place. Physical place becomes a symbolic site of the relationship between space and identity. In Paul Smethurst's view, place

> is the foundation of our experience in the world, serves as a site of for national and imperial placing and indoctrication of value, and can be a testing ground for new possibilities. ... Places are therefore incorporated into all the structures of human consciousness and experience, and consciousness includes an awareness of objects in their place (Smethurst 2000:61).

Smethurst further understands place as a site of home and memories (61). Post-colonial thinkers often associate a depiction of place and space as some of the most important aspects of post-colonial literature and associate it with the formation of identity. In Bill Ashcroft's, Helen Tiffin's, and Garreth Griffith's view,

> A major feature of post-colonial literatures is the concern with place and displacement. It is here that the special post-colonial crisis of identity comes into being; the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place" (Ashcroft, Tiffin, and Griffith 1989:8-9).

The above authors emphasize a crisis of the formation of particular cultural identities connected with particular locality, place and territory. This crisis is perhaps most apparent in the former settler societies such as the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and other post-colonial countries. Seen from the perspective of the settlers, immigrants, and new colonizers, one of the most problematic aspects their cultural belonging is an artificial acquisiton of a new identity of these nations in a new, and for them foreign environment by colonizing and settling it. The other aspect of this crisis of identity is the conflict between an institutionalized identity of new settlers organized and constituted by a distant 'mother country' and their feeling of belonging to a different cultural sphere that is different from their colonizers. In the past, political and cultural institutions in a new colony were thus understood as an extension of the mother country's cultural identity. The colonial practises of Great Britain, Spain, France, the Netherlands and other countries serve as examples. But, in opposition to it, an attempt of the new English-speaking settlers to define and create a new identity that would express its uniqueness in a new place, space, and cultural environment can be observed. On the other hand, a transition of the status of the colonized to a colonizer (i.e. settlers who were 'colonized' by their mother countries but later became the colonizers of an indigenous population themselves) in their relationship to the domestic population after acquiring their independence from their mother countries expresses another

problematic aspect of the formation of cultural identity. This complicated and problematic relationship between space and identity is expressed in Michael Foucault's understanding of space. Foucault distinguishes between utopia and heterotopia to define different kinds of space. In his view, utopia has no real place and direct connection to reality and it is an unreal place (Foucault, web reference). On the other hand, Foucault identifies the places which he calls heterotopias "which are something like countersites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted" (Foucault, ibid.). Foucault understands utopia as an imaginary, ideal space that has no parallel in reality. On the other hand, he understands heterotopia as a space that physically exists in real societes, but is suppressed, marginalized and avoided. Thus despite its physical existence, such space is almost invisible, intimate, and tabooed because it expresses its undesirable status (as examples he cites toilets, hospitals, or cemeteries).

Foucault, however, uses the metaphor of a mirror to point out a space that lies between utopia and heterotopia. In his view, the mirror is utopia because

> it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself where I am absent (...) But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of a mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there... I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there (Foucault, web reference).

Foucault implies here that the identification of the self with a stable entity represented by space is never clear or stable, but rather a transitory composite of various spaces. Looking in the mirror indicates also a connection between the self (personal identity) and

the other, which never seems to be a a clear one between two stable entities or poles. One pole can be defined only in relation to the other, the physical one in the relationship to the virtual, and both necessarily influence each other. Looking in the mirror means one's identification of both the "other" object of the mirror itself and myself in it as the reflection of my "otherness" in the mirror. Otherness, because my reflection in the mirror takes place on the other side from where I am standing. A specific ability of the mirror to reflect/express a virtual space (my image) enables the seer (myself) to perceive it not as a separate physical object evoking a distance, but as an object closely connected to myself since I define/perceive my identity through my relationship with it.

Geographical Space and Identity of Characters

The main focus of Richard Flanagan's novel *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* is not only about the life of a Slovenian family in Tasmania, but especially on the relationship of Slovenian family members to geographical space represented by Europe, Tasmania, and the Australian city of Sydney. In their relationship to these places creating geographical space they perceive, define and try to understand their cultural identity. Most of Flanagan's novel is set in Tasmania, some of it in Sydney, and through the protagonists' flashbacks, in Slovenia. The main focus is, however, on the social and moral development of Bojan Buloh and his daughter Sonja. The relationship between Bojan and his daughter is not narrated chronologically. Sonja's childhood and Bojan's early years in Tasmania in the 1950's and 1960's are juxtaposed to the narrative that deals with their fictional 'present,' especially the 1980's and 1990's. These juxtaposed narrative lines express the protagonists' attempt to reconcile with both a tragedy of the war in Europe, particularly Maria Buloh's rape by members of an SS unit, and the immigration present in Australia. Thus Maria represents not only an absent love Bojan and Sonja try to regain, but also a tragedy of European history and, symbolically, an impossibility of acquiring a new cultural identity in a different country. Looking at the construction sites in Tasmania where Bojan started to work in the 1950's does not evoke hope and optimism in Maria, but rather frustration and despair. Her understanding of a new place and her

relationship to it is influenced by memories of the past, that is the old country, and by her desire for success in a new country. It seems, however, that her identification with both places is impossible because she associates Slovenia and Europe with war, fascism, violence, and rape, and a new place with poverty, despair, and an unhappy life with a violent husband. It can be seen in the following passage in which Maria observes a Tasmanian landscape:

> She continued looking: seeing it all anew, as if it had no connection with her. She saw[…]how to some who lived there it brought back all too painful memories of forced labor camps in the Urals or Siberia. But she knew it wasn't Stalin's USSR. Knew it wasn't Kolyma or Goli Otok or Birkenau. Knew it wasn't even Europe. Knew it to be a snow-covered Hydro-Electric Commission construction camp called Butlers Gorge that sat like a sore in a wilderness of rainforest.
> In this land of infinite space, the huts were all built cheek by jowl, as if the buildings…might possibly even not care about people[…] (Flanagan 1997:4).

This passage shows Maria's tragic past and her impossibility to cope not only with this past, but also with the present in a new country. Flanagan further develops his imagery of place and its connection to his characters' identity in the following passage:

> In those cowering corrals of huts had to live the workers, for in this remote highland country of the remote island of Tasmania that lay far off the remote land of Australia, there was no other human settlement for many miles[…].The time the new Australians came to such wild places to do the wog work of dam-building because work in the cities, which the new Australians would have preferred, was Australians' work (5).

Geographical imagery of space plays an important role in this passage. Tasmania is presented as a remote and distant part of already remote (to Slovenian and European characters) Australia, rather than as an extension of it. Thus, on the one hand, geographical imagery of Tasmania points out a double displacement of the immigrants – from Europe because of the geographical distance and the tragic past, and from Australia and the present because Tasmania is understood as having an inferior position in its relation to Australia – that is only as its extension and supplement. Nor does it help that the immigrants are excluded from better jobs.

Maria's death is thus not only a result of her unhappy personal life, but also a symbolic expression of her inability to achieve a mirror-like spatial position which would enable her to continue to live in a new country with less ambitious goals but, on the other hand, it also represents a symbolic rejection of the essentialist concept of both identity and space. Maria's oscillation between Europe and Australia, between past and present results in her inability to identify with any of these positions, spaces and identities. On the other hand, her transient position between these places opens the possibility for her to occupy any of these places and positions. This implies an openess and, if we develop this idea further, a non-essentialist, culturally constructed and transitory concept of identity and space, although only in a negative sense. Negative, because she wants to achieve ideal personal and cultural integrity possibly represented by a unified concept of space and identity, although in this sense represented by Australian citizenship. From Flanagan's perspective however, this integrity and unity cannot be achieved.

Bojan and Heterotopic Space

Both Bojan and Sonja may symbolize a connection between identity and place/space Maria has left unfulfilled and unoccupied after her death. While Flanagan's depiction of Maria points out her inability to achieve a mirror-stage position and utopia, Bojan occupies a typically heterotopic position. For him, Europe represents both a nostalgic and tragic past. He does not reject his European cultural heritage, but its tragic past – war, fascism and violence. He illustrates this by telling Sonja about the pigs which were saved by the villagers during the fire but which, paradoxically, ran back into the fire. This scene creates a metaphor for the complexity of the nature of European identity. When Sonja asks for the reasons for the pigs' running back to the fire, Bojan replies: "You ask me why? Who knows why? That's Europe" (Flanagan 1997: 227).

This idea of Europe as a tragic and inexplicable place is confirmed by another, this time a Polish immigrant who argues that "*Europe is a cancer...It spreads death everywhere*" (394). Although Bojan's identity is closely connected to the European space, he mostly holds, like Maria, a heterotopic position of an ousider. Despite being

a Slovene who used to live in his mother country, and despite acquiring Australian citizenship later, he cannot consider either to be his home. In connection with Europe because of his collaboration with the Nazis and in Tasmania because he has the status of an uneducated and despised 'reffo'. This double displacement from both Europe and Australia helps Bojan realize his position. He also realizes and understands the value and usefulness of education in a new country, of which he tries to convince his daughter Sonja. Bojan's realization of his own position represents a symbolic turn, that is his change from the heterotopic to the mirror-stage position as defined by Foucault. If we slightly simplify it, looking at himself as if in the mirror makes him realize that he is both present and absent in Tasmania. Present because he is physically present in the country and absent because he occupies only a marginal place in his society, despite his newly acquired citizenship. He symbolically represents the extension of Maria's heterotopic space to the mirror-stage position which could represent a fulfillment of the utopian project of acquiring a new cultural identity in connection with a new land. This project, however, fails because of the reasons given above. Bojan's initial belief in a better life and in a new Australian identity also fails, which can be seen in one of the most dramatic scenes of the novel. He sees a river dam he had built (as perhaps he tried to build not only a new country but also identity) collapse and break during a flood. This may also imply Flanagan's critique of an essentialist concept of space and identity. Like the river dam, which is not natural but artificially constructed, also his cultural identity cannot be defined as stable and unchanging. Space is a transitory entity and a construct rather than a stable entity. The cultural identity is related to the space like the imagery of the fragments of Sonja's favourite tea-pot. This tea-pot is broken in the old place but gradually put together again in Tasmania by her father.

In his article on this novel and its film version, Adi Wimmer emphasizes the symbolic depiction even of Tasmania as a hostile space and meditates on one of the most important scenes in the novel, a thrilling scene in which Bojan drives by the Butler George dam during a flood and watches its collapse. He views it as possibly being a product of Bojan imagination: "it is not quite certain

whether[the scene takes place] in reality or only in his imagination" (Wimmer 2003:136). His mirror-stage position in connection with his relationship to space and identity also creates another space for his daughter Sonja. In this sense, Sonja can become a symbolic fulfillment not only of the immigrant ideal, but also of the essentialist concept of identity. Bojan understands the value of education and language which, however, also means integration to the dominant culture through mastering its language and cultural practises. For Bojan, however, education does not mean a fulfillment of humanistic ideals, but of an immigrant hope of a symbolic path to prosperity. The artificiality of high immigrant hopes can be seen in one of the humorous scenes in which he buys Sonja a 24-volume of *Encyclopedia Britannica* and says:

> "No, Sonja, you will go nowhere if you speak Slovene, you will end up like me. From now on you speak English proper. Then maybe you have a chance."
> "English is no good for jokes."
> "English is good for money." (214)

> "Now you learn the English good," said Bojan with pride...Curious and alien as the gift was, Sonja felt a certain thrill both with it and more so by her father's obvious pleasure in giving it to her. But she also felt somewhat apprehensive. Without reading a word she wondered if she could ever understand all or any of it (215).

From Essentialist Identity to Postmodern Space

In this novel, essentialist concepts of cultural identity can be understood as an individual's integration to a particular cultural space achieved through the acquisition of a new language and new cultural practices. Essentialist concepts of space can be defined by stability and uniformity. Despite Bojan's hopes, the above passage does not point out Sonja's essentialist position of a clearly defined cultural subject, but indicates her doubts about integration as a means to prosperity. Her identity and her connection to place is not unified but transitory, like the fragments of the broken tea-pot she liked and which was finally reconstructed by her father. A depiction of this symbolic identity manifests itself in Flanagan's depiction of Sonja, her partner and their new-born baby daughter. Sonja can be understood, on the one hand, as the symbolic

fulfillment of her parents' ideal of success in a new country by becoming integrated into Australian society by mastering a new language and accepting its cultural practises. This is a utopian position close to Foucault's understanding of utopias. Foucault argues that Utopias are sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation or direct or inverted analogy with the real space of society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society in turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces" (Foucault, Web reference).

Despite Sonja's integration in a new country in which she is best of all her family members, Flanagan undermines her potential utopian position by a depiction of Sonja's relationship to a place and to other characters. In addition, Flanagan uses a fragmentation and the imagery of absence and travelling which break the concept of unity and imply instability and transitoriness. Sonja's partner and the father of her daughter seems to be an honest immigrant. A marriage with him would perhaps secure Sonja a more stable and better position in Australia. But she rejects marriage, which can indicate, on the one hand, her rejection of a continued immigrant status. But on the other hand it can symbolically imply her rejection of integration, unity, stability and thus also of an essentialist concept of identity understood and represented by integration. A rejection of this concept is emphasized by a metaphor of absence (of a father and husband), a blank space which is further enhanced by another absence, that is of Sonja's mother and father with whom she can never achieve an ideal relationship and who had always been missing when she needed them most. Similarly, Sonja's new-born daughter remains without a father. Thus her identity is never complete and it seems as if it has symbolically remained open, always postponed and waiting for possible future fulfillment. The stability associated with the essentialist, unchanging concept of identity and place are further undermined by Sonja's travelling and changing localities.

First she leaves her father and home in rural Tasmania, then a suburb of Hobart and, finally, Sydney. Adi Wimmer considers the flight to be one of the central characteristics of Sonja's life. In his

view, "...*Sonja's existence can be summed up in that one word, flight.*" (Wimmer 2003:137). This metaphor evokes a metaphor of movement, changeability and transitoriness associated with both her identity and belonging to place. Sonja rejects her belonging to any stable place as she rejects the identity which could be characterized as essentialist, clear and homogenous. Her identity is shifting and changing, and depends on circumstances which construct both her identity and belonging to particular place and culture. This identity consists of many fragments representing her European and new Australian cultural heritage she oscillates between. Sonja's father's repairing of Sonja's favourite tea-pot may also imply a symbolic representation of her identity. Like the tea-pot, her identity is fragmented and consists of the past and present, European and Australian cultural heritage that are gradually put together. Despite its wholeness, the tea-pot still consists of the repaired fragments that form a whole and that represent a symbolic construction of Sonja's identity. This is not identity understood as essentialist, stable, and unchanging, but rather as hybrid and transient. In one of the scenes in the novel Sonja is staring in the mirror at a service-station:

> Sonja looked at herself in a mirror behind the counter, realised she was staring, not listening...She saw in the mirror a woman approaching middle age, in her late thirties, elegant in what was almost office attire, as if off to some formal engagement with a stranger...She glanced back up at the mirror and saw reflected not herself, nor an angel, but a small frightened child holding a teapot. She involuntarily trembled. But when she looked back the child was gone and only her own image remained (18-19).

On the basic semantic level Sonja's looking in the mirror represents her realization of a vanished childhood. Seen from the perspective of Foucault's understanding of space, this scene represents a literalization of Foucault's concept of the mirror-stage as part of his understanding of space. The mirror, like in Foucault's concept of the mirror-stage of spatial experience, enables Sonja to realize both her presence and absence from space and time. It is a presence of her maturity, but also a presence of her identity constructed of the European past and Australian present. This identity is never stable, essentialist, and unchanged but rather composed of fragments – like a newly repaired tea-pot. And it is also an absence from the tragic

European past and Australian/Tasmanian childhood. This creates her moving and changing identity which she carries with her as a burden of her ancestors' tragic past and unhappy immigrant presence. Her identification with any place which would create a stable identity thus becomes problematic since her belonging to a particular place creating a stable space and identity never happens. Depiction of Sonja's belonging to place is thus close to Paul Smethurst's understanding of postmodern place. In his view,

> Like a text, place is a never 'finished' construction, but reaches backwards and forwards in time, and the experience/reading is a subjective, cultural and historical activity... Place never has complete presence, both because it is always disappearing and being reproduced, and also because much of its presence is conditoned by representational spaces which are properly absent from the concrete structures and spaces that constitute physical place (Smethurst 2000:55).

Sonja thus seems to occupy a postmodern space within postmodern places oscillating between Europe, Australia and Tasmania. Like the space she occupies, also her identity is never complete, but rather transitory, fluid, and open to further contests and interpretations.

Conclusion

In his novel *Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997), Richard Flanagan does not only depict a tragic fate of the Slovenian immigrant family in Australia, but also undermines traditional and essentialist concepts of space and identity through a depiction of his characters, but also through his imagery of place, absence and travelling. Bojan's life, hopes, and ideals represent a utopian space which can never be achieved and which manifests itself in his relationship with his wife and daughter as well as to a new country. Maria's, Bojan wife's premature death in a new country leaves a symbolic blank space to be occupied by Bojan, who may be understood as a symbolic continuation of Maria's fulfillment of her hopes. Bojan understands his success can be achieved only through an essentialist concept of identity, that is when he integrates into a new Australian society. This, however, never happens since his ideals are never fulfilled. Bojan's integration to a new society which would

represent a possible unified, essentialist (Australian or Tasmanian) identity is never achieved. Bojan, however, leaves a blank symbolic space for his daughter Sonja, who is to fulfill his essentialist concept of identity. But despite Sonja achieving a relatively secure and integrated position and identity in Australian society, it is symbolically undermined by her rejection of integrity and unity through a marriage with another immigrant. Thus the absence of her husband may imply the absence of unity. It also points out the fragmentary nature of her identity. Oscillating between utopian and heterotopian positions, she rejects a utopian position and achieves a mirror-like position in Foucault's understanding. It enables her to symbolically occupy a critical distance from an essentialist concept of identity. Her identity thus symbolically occupies a space composed of many different fragments (cultures) that are transient, flowing, changeable and that finally create a new identity which cannot be associated only with a physical presence in a place, or in a country (Australia, Tasmania, Slovenia, Europe). This identity is much more complex and consists not only of individual's perception of physical place and space, but also of culture and history related to them.

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New Poetry

William D. Ehrhart
The Secret Lives of Boys

Nothing the boy wanted
ever came true. Not the chance
to be a World War Two fighter ace
in 1958. Not the chance to save
beautiful Ursula Netcher
from pirates. Not the ability
to leap tall buildings
in a single bound.

Okay, he got that plastic
tripod-mounted battery-powered
machinegun for Christmas one year,
but it broke two days later.

And he got to pick the football helmet
with the plexiglass face mask
for selling the most
YMCA oatmeal cookies,
but it didn't make him
any better at football.

He got the job
handing out skates and changing records
on Sunday afternoons at the roller rink.

But he never got the things
that really mattered.
The courage to defend himself
from the playground bullies.
Parents who didn't show
one face to the world,
another inside the home.

The chance not to be
the preacher's kid
in a town where you couldn't hide.

He got the double chin.
He got C's in gym class.
He got his brothers' hand-me-down clothes.

He wanted to be a Wildcat pilot,
or maybe a ball turret gunner.

He wanted to rescue beautiful Pam Magee
from pirates. Or maybe Comanches.

He wanted to be
anything
but what he was.
(2008)

New Poetry

Kevin Gillam
Skin

you walk the land that first breathed
and flamed you. there's space, as if
God got bored, stopped, left the rest
to mind's eye. scrub lies low, in
sulk, on the scrim, hills. a hawk
loops, spins sky, drops, dives through you,
sews you back to ache and need.

you talk to clouds, sing the wind,
on your back, hours spent with weeds,
slow seep of damp. then called, home,
to dine on hush and bleed and
grief. hands froze then, on the wheel
that stole. 'you won't leave'. you don't
stay. you take the first that lands

New Poetry

Sarah French
Away

In the hospital car park it was important
to get the car between the white markings
to watch my hands wrap around the wheel
to see the white push of bone at my knuckles
to count breaths in, out, to prove I was breathing
to think that passed away was a description
that gifted him some last dignity
as if he'd waited for a chance to escape the chaos
of our grieving, the orthopedic squeak of nurses' shoes,
the tubes and machines that took over when the body forgot,
as if he became again the father who hated fuss and bother
who'd waited for his chance to discreetly leave the room.

New Poetry

John Kinsella
Creation Myth (‘to interpret someone else…’)

Harvest is nigh and the stalks of wheat
bunch against the cutting; the corellas
are suddenly less, and we guess
the shire have been culling.

Wheat stalks are feathers
and feathers are wheat stalks
scythed; blood of the soil, husk-
roads that rattle like beaks

when crossed, unravelling
prayer wheels, stars and crosses,
crescents and signposts
that remain elusive — gleam

of blue-metal protruding
in the macadam. It is hard
to breathe when the air fills
with drawing, so much closer

than writing. I lock in
the images to protect
against storms, which can knock
down the most robust crops

before they’ve been gathered.
But lightning pushes beyond
the skull’s casing: obsessional
as harvest and myth-making.

New Poetry

Marcella Polain
Boiling jam at Christmas

This year it's Spring up to Christmas. Daily, Jacarandas burst
and I stand surprised along the fence-line between us and the abandoned house:
our plum trees are still burdened, their slim arms bowed by the weight of fruit.
Above, a white screech of cockatoos splits the blue.
At my feet, the long grass rustles.
I tumble scores of purple plums into my skirt,
take to others with a spade,
walk home slowly, my belly rolling.

Under incandescent light, I prepare the sink,
inspect each one, bath them all,
pat them dry and lay them on the cool steel bench.
The firm are packed inside the body of our fridge;
the soft and broken set aside.
Over the greased preserving pan, I press two fingers into them, flick out their stony hearts
and make a red flesh heap.
My jam boils fast and thick.
My hands run red, red, red and I clean everything,
set out the jars, snip lengths of silver ribbon,
circles of gold paper.
I do not think of the abandoned house,
the rustling fence-line in the failing light
or the night-garden, busy with its shallow graves.

Nicholas Birns and Rebecca McNeer, eds. *A Companion to Australian Literature since 1900*. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2007, 477 pp. US$ 90.00, £50.00. ISBN 97815711-33496. **Reviewed by Gerhard Stilz**, **Universität Tübingen**

If we go by the Camden House recipe for literary companions, the present volume altogether does a good job. It "provide[s] well-informed and up-to-date critical commentary on the most significant aspects of major works, periods [and] literary figures" in Australian Literature since 1900, and it may therefore "be read profitably by the reader with a general interest in the subject" (ii). Nicholas Birns and Rebecca McNeer have chosen to conceptualize their handbook, as it were, halfway between the magisterial, encyclopaedic *Oxford Companion to Australian Literature* on the one hand (first published by William H. Wilde, Joy Hooton and Barry Andrews in 1985, now in its second edition comprising 848 pages) and *The Cambridge Companion to Australian Literature* on the other (edited and introduced by Elizabeth Webby in 2000 and accommodating ten king-size surveys on 348 pages).

Having commissioned a truly international range of contributors (twenty of them live and teach in Australia, eight in the United States of America, three in Europe and one in China), the editors of the Camden House Companion opted for an open, non-comprehensive concept of "nodes" which they find "crucial" in the national formation and international perception of Australian literature. Such "nodes" are supposed to be reflected in the thirty essays arranged in the five parts of the book (which are called "sections" in the introduction). While the first "section" ("cultural foundations") turns out to be no more than a chronological list of four pages length prefixed as "Main Events in Australian History, 1901-2005," the subsequent (and re-numbered) five parts of the book, entitled "Identities" (Part 1), "Writing Across Time" (Part 2), "International Reputations" (Part 3), "Writers and Regions" (Part 4) and "Beyond the Canon" (Part 5), contain five to eight essays each.

The entry point of the book's coverage (professedly 1901, the year of the Australian Federation, p. 12) seems a little forced. Political decisions rarely mark sea-changes in cultural processes. Since, at close consideration, this date in practice does not exclude either prior historical details or recorded reference, the publishers and the editors might have been well advised to expand the scope of the book by a section on colonial writing. Even if this companion confesses that it is "meant to counteract these narratives of emergence" and freely concedes that it neither "presume[s] to be authoritative" (9) nor "comprehensive" (11), the blind spot that falls on the historical reality of the formative phase(s) of Australian writing may, perhaps, be considered as an uneasy, unfortunate and unnecessary compromise. Privileging "potentiality" (12) over conflicts apparent in historical origins and (dis)continuous developments may superficially grant equal opportunities of representation in multicultural contexts, but it cannot really address (and therefore tends to structurally disregard) the traditional power relations in Australia that have profoundly shaped the past and the present, even since 1901, and will carry on shaping them for a good while, even after 2005.

It may therefore be regarded with great sympathy that Part 1 ("Identities") should start with two essays on the art and literature of Australia's "first nations": Both, Ali Gumillya Baker and Gus Worby, "Aboriginality since Mabo: Writing, Politics, and Art" (17-40), and Anita Heiss, "Writing Aboriginality: Authors on 'Being Aboriginal'" (41-59), form an important and basically legitimate introduction to the retributive, anti-colonialist programme of this *Companion*. Yet it is a little disappointing to find that none of the authors, in spite of vaguely antagonising the non-aboriginal racist "other", succeeds in making a conclusive point about how to ascertain, maintain and defend Australian Aboriginal identity beyond the claims of self-definition and self-fashioning. Obviously, such desperate deployment of poetic creativity cannot be fully understood without rationalising the racial and cultural confusion created by colonialism. The two subsequent essays address the complex issue of Australian national identity and provide excellent insight into historically shifting discursive terrains. Ruth Feingold, "From Empire

to Nation: The Shifting Sands of Australian National Identity" (61-71), follows Australia's subtle and ambiguously reluctant transition from colony via dominion to nation. Even though this argument is rather based on political and social than on literary texts, it is a highly valuable and reliably supported account of Australia's hesitant national *non*-separation. Wenche Ommundsen, "Multicultural Writing in Australia" (73-86), presents a concise and well-structured survey of the diversity encountered in Australian multicultural literatures and the concerns raised against the "excesses of multiculturalism" among the advocates of some kind of Australian national "mainstream." It was certainly not easy for the editors of this *Companion* to select those sub-national identities that deserved to be treated in a separate article. They decided for "Jewish Writers in Australia" by Susan Jacobowitz (87-103), "Asian-Australian Literature" by Deborah L. Madsden (105-125), and "Australian Women's Writing from 1970-2005" by Tanya Dalziell (139-53) – all reasonably informative though argumentatively rather down-toned essays. Altogether, it does not become quite clear why the latter article should not be complemented by a corresponding essay – or include substantial information – on eminent Australian women writers right from the turn of the century. Nor is it self-evident that Greek-Australian or other major ethnic groups of writers should be confined to Wenche Ommundsen's survey on multicultural writing. Moreover, the artful dissimulation of *personal identity* addressed in "The Demidenko Affair and Australian Hoaxes" by Marguerite Nolan (127-138), though evidently an unusually frequent phenomenon in Australian literature (including Aboriginal writing), does not seem to be on equal footing with the *social, ethnic, cultural and national identities* handled elsewhere in this section. The "Introduction" to this *Companion* might have been a little more explicit about the rationale of such choices.

Part 2 ("Writing Across Time") holds five articles which can be said to address the Anglo-Australian literary mainstream. Richard Carr, "Writing the Nation, 1900-1940" (157-12), in spite of the rigid limitations forwarded in the title, reaches back, if only marginally, to the nineteenth century, in order to include the *Bulletin* tradition. This is certainly convincing. We would have appreciated, however, if

Carr's most intelligent and readable integrative account had been complemented by a survey covering the period after 1940. The subsequent four essays are devoted to the canonised literary genres of verse – Nicholas Birns, "Australian Poetry from Kenneth Slessor to Jennifer Strauss" (173-89) and David McCooey, "Australian Poetry, 1970-2005" (191-205) – as well as drama – Mayrose Casey "Australian Drama 1900-1970" (207-18) and "Australian Drama Since 1970" (219-232). They all provide good, detailed and critical information. There is, of course, some flaw to be seen in Birns' exclusion of poets *born* before 1900, which actually excludes most poetry written before 1920 – a step defended, with some questionable hindsight, on grounds of the "'corporate' quality" of Australia's modern verse (174). Defining altogether the basic chronological segmentation of this *Companion* by birthdates would certainly have further narrowed down its scope. Yet, David McCooey, in his sequel covering the years 1970-2005, neatly links up with Nicholas Birns. He stages the generation of '68 and their opponents, deals with the emerging verse by indigenous writers, gives voice to women poets, highlights the pastoral and anti-pastoral mode, takes account of the recent fashions of verse novels and new lyricism, and thus creates a rich and lively panorama. Maryrose Casey's first of two essays on Australian drama sets out by contradicting the myth that the theatrical genre did not really come off before it was supported through government subsidies in the late 1960s. She points out early bush comedies produced around 1900 in the vein of the Irish Literary Renaissance, does justice to the Little Theatre movement with its left-wing workers' productions, includes the rise of indigenous plays (with Kevin Gilbert) and recognizes the dignity of non-English migrant plays. In her sequel, she continues with the effects of the systematic government subsidies for the performing art after 1968 by characterizing the New Wave Theatre with its key figures Williamson, Buzo, Hibberd and Romeril. She leads us through the development of multicultural (mainly indigenous and Greek) theatre, and she ultimately illustrates some of the features of contemporary Anglo-Australian experimental stagecraft. Yet, unfortunately, all these articles recounting the stories of two major literary genres do not sum up into something like the general survey initiated by Carr. Above all, they do not tell the tale for the most

prominent Australian mainstream genre, ie. narrative prose. Although prose is amply discussed under some of the authors portrayed under Section 3, this lacuna in the historical survey of "Writing Across Time" is hard to accept.

"International Reputations," the catchphrase in Part 3 for outstanding Australian literary representatives, is, of course, as much a distinction reflected in solid statistical accounts as it may be considered a matter of interested "potentiality." Our *Companion* privileges six authors: Christina Stead, the "expatriate writer" presented by Brigid Rooney (235-46); Patrick White, whose novels are outlined by John Beston (247-56); David Malouf, characterized as a magnificent writer of Australian reconciliation by John Scheckter (257-68); Les Murray, the glocal poet, diligently portrayed by Werner Senn (269-80); Peter Carey, praised for his "aesthetic splendour, cognitive power and wisdom" by Carolyn Bliss (281-92); and Gerald Murnane, elevated as "one of Australia's most intriguing and accomplished fiction writers" by Paul Genoni (293-304). None of the authors named (including the articles devoted to them, I hasten to add) seem altogether out of place, but the editors undoubtedly have risked more than one might wish by boldly attributing "international reputations" to some authors while apparently relegating a host of others to less prestigious frames of response. Any list of privileged authors will, of course, be inevitably contested and charged with partiality. The shorter the list, the hotter the debate. Why not include one or several more, for good reasons? Restrictions of space, to be sure. Yet, evidently, the editors should have named the criteria that guided them in their choices and according to which the privileged authors were honoured with a place this section, while others, like Dorothy Hewett or Tim Winton, are dealt with in the subsequent section on "Writers and Regions," where still others (Michael Wilding, Murray Bail, Rodney Hall, and Frank Moorhouse) seem to have been lucky enough to be jointly accommodated in an omnibus (345-58). A significant group of eminent Australian writers of international renown (notably Miles Franklin, Katherine Susannah Prichard, Thea Astley, Judith Wright, Elizabeth Jolley, Barbara Hanrahan, Helen Garner or Janette Turner Hospital) are modestly assembled in the article on Women's Writing

(139-53). Some others are spread out as diasporic existences over the whole book. Again: this does not say that one should object to the selection made in section 3 – one cannot because the criteria of the selection have not been made explicit. So we reconfirm: All articles in this section are reasonably good and informative, yielding highly welcome interpretive and evaluative comments. My medals for the most conclusive, most informative, most convincingly argued, and thus indeed best-written articles in this section go to Werner Senn, John Beston and Brigid Rooney.

Part 4 ("Writers and Regions") promotes a basically sound category, especially for Australia where, due to the sheer size of the continent, regionalism necessarily is still going strong. Some writers can therefore be expected to be particularly good at describing, evoking, perhaps even personally representing one of Australia's regions. This holds true particularly for Western Australia, as shown in "Tim Winton and West Australian Writing" (307-319). Lyn Jacobs, providing an initial panorama of the land and its authors, helps to embed Winton's novels in a topography which they both explore and imaginatively create. The following article, however, "Dorothy Hewett" by Nicole Moore (321-34), does not follow this logic of the book's subdivision but instead presents a rather straightforward account of "[t]he breadth and diversity of Hewett's work [which] makes it difficult to discuss as a coherent whole" (321). Similarly, Ouang Yu, in "Xavier Herbert" (335-43), does not closely reflect the regional issues involved. Instead, Herbert's undoubtedly West Australian novels *Capricornia* (1938) and *Poor Fellow My Country* (1975) are instructively placed in the context of white and black renderings of Australian racial relations. Jaroslav Kušnir's subsequent literary quartet "Michael Wilding, Murray Bail, Rodney Hall and Frank Moorhouse" (345-58) does not even try to explain why it has been placed in this section. Finally, Brigid Magner, in "Trans-Tasmanian Literary Expatriates" (359-71), addresses the phenomenon of authors migrating and experiencing their "double liminality" between Australia and New Zealand. Her brief but pointed appreciation of the work of Jean Devanny, Douglas Stewart and Eve Langley can be said to competently deal with territorial issues and matters of identity, though on a different scale. All this nourishes the

impression that this section on "Writers and Regions," though wisely designed, largely came to serve as a repository for authors who, for some reason, did not make it to the more privileged section.

The heading of Part 5, "Beyond the Canon," throws up an intriguing question: How does a *Companion* that in the "Introduction" did "not presume to be authoritative" (9) and confessed that "[t]his book cannot achieve comprehensiveness" (11) arrive at the notion of "canon" and, moreover, at the criteria that discern a "beyond"? The introduction gives us a hint: "The final section covers areas not traditionally considered part of 'high literature'" (7). Obviously, where editors and authors don't "presume to be authoritative," traditionalism (if only as a scapegoat) surreptitiously returns in order to play authority. – But no worries, mate, we delight in stepping beyond. Even more so, since this last section actually assembles some of the most interesting, most innovative and best researched articles of the book. – There is the article on "Australian Science Fiction" (375-86) written by Russell Blackford. A brief general introduction to the mixed tradition of SF is followed by a remarkably rich, detailed and knowledgeable study of Australian SF novelists and story writers, with an eye to typically colonial elements like lost-race romances or invasion fears, against the global backdrop of "the most international of literary genres" (378). Tony Johnson-Woods, in her excellent article "Popular Australian Writing" (387-402), starts with a substantial and most rewarding subchapter "The Colonial Period, 1860-1899" and altogether concentrates on the wide range of non-literary Australian authors such as Guy Boothby (a writer hated by Miles Franklin and respected for his huge success by Rudyard Kipling), Norman Lindsay, Arthur Upfield, Nat Gould or Colleen McCulloch. She asserts their merit, not in the "timelessness" of "literary fiction" but in their provision of "glimpses into the social desires, anxiety and culture of their time" (400). Undoubtedly presupposing that literary students and scholars should also be familiar with movies, Theodore F. Sheckels outlines this long and lively tradition in his article "Australian Film" (403-15). For reasons made explicit, he largely parades productions from 1970 to 1990, with a slightly nostalgic view that turns away from the increasing internationalisation of the more recent Australian film industry. Anne

Mills, "Australian Children's Literature" (417-28), shows that the pedagogical genre harking back to Robert Richardson's *Black Harry; or Lost in the Bush* (1877) flourished in the spheres of British (and, more recently, American) influence. She critically points out that the "verbal and visual traditions of Australia's indigenous populations" have not yet been properly honoured or appropriately integrated, thus leaving Australian children's literature in a state of immaturity.

Gary Clark's essay "Environmental Themes in Australian Literature" (429-43), though touching on increasingly important issues, cannot be said to address matters "beyond the canon": most authors (starting from Rex Ingamells, Xavier Herbert and Judith Wright, and including Roland Robinson, Les Murray and John Kinsella) have been treated elsewhere in the "canonical" chapters; the problem raised by a re-valued thematic concern is obviously different from the problem of generic canonisation. Finally, we have a similar problem with the categorical status of "Australian Gay and Lesbian Writing" presented by Damian Barlow and Leigh Dale (445-458) and correlated with the reforms of state law between 1972 and 1990. The canonised authors in this chapter (H.H. Richardson, Patrick White, Hal Porter, Randolph Stow or David Malouf, all uneasily addressed in the introductory pages) indicate that the boundary between "canon" and "beyond" is permeable, especially when it comes to favoured literary strategies like ambiguity and irony. The question seems to be: What should be regarded as generally recommended reading for certain purposes, and what not – and who should tell, if not a literary *Companion*?

Altogether, the articles are remarkably balanced in length, which bears considerable tribute to the discipline exerted by the editors. The mandatory index in this scholarly handbook is eminently useful. Printing errors are few and far between. There are minor shortcomings and oversights, to be sure, which might be mended in a second edition, e.g. the discrepancy mentioned above between the contents anticipated in the introduction and the actual structure of the book, or the uneven handling of the locations of contributors (most of which are given in headlines of the articles, while others must be traced in the list of contributors), and there is a certain amount of imbalance and inconsistency in the list of contributors

with respect to their achievements and academic titles, some of which would need to be touched up.

In spite of its limitations, however, this is a book that will be useful among both students and scholars of Australian Literature and therefore deserves our recommendation.

Barbara Glowczewski, Jessica De Largy Healy und die Künstler aus Lajamanu und Galiwin'ku: *Die Farben der Traumzeit. Die Kunst der Aborigines.* Frederking & Thaler, 2006. Originalausgabe: *Pistes de Rêves – Voyage en Terres Aborigènes.* Édition du Chêne, 2005. **Rezensiert von Corinna Erckenbrecht**

Ein inhaltsreiches und opulent bebildertes Buch über die Kunst und Kultur der Aborigines in Zentral- und Nordaustralien ist im Verlag Frederking & Thaler erschienen. Darin werden die Traumzeitmythen („Dreamings") und ihre Darstellung in Tänzen, Gesängen und vor allem in Malereien der Warlpiri in Zentralaustralien und der Yolngu in Arnhemland vorgestellt. Es handelt sich um eine (gut gelungene) Übersetzung aus dem Französischen der beiden Wissenschaftlerinnen Barbara Glowczewski und Jessica De Largy Healy, die mit den Künstlern aus den *Aboriginal Communities* Lajamanu in Zentralaustralien und Galiwin'ku in Arnhem Land zusammen gearbeitet haben.

Damit steht das Buch in der Tradition einer über viele Jahre gewachsenen Zusammenarbeit zwischen Frankreich und dem indigenen Australien, die sich u. a. auch in der Mitarbeit von Aborigines-Künstlern am neuen Musée du Quai Branly in Paris manifestiert. Hier haben acht indigene Künstler aus Zentral- und Nordaustralien mit riesigen Wandgemälden Teile des Museums ausgestaltet. Auch schon früher fand ein Kulturaustausch statt, als 1983 eine Gruppe von zwölf rituellen Führern aus Lajamanu nach Paris eingeladen worden war, um im Musée d'Art Moderne ein Bodenfresko zu malen und im Theater Bouffes du Nord zu tanzen. In den 1990ern wurde dann zusammen mit 51 Künstlern aus Lajamanu eine CD-ROM erstellt, auf der die Bildwerke und die dazugehörigen Mythentexte vorgestellt werden. 2000 wurde diese CD-ROM von den rituellen Führern auch auf einem Unesco-Kongress in Paris präsentiert (*Pistes de rêves - art et savoir des Yapa du désert australie*; *Dream Trackers*, Édition Unesco 2000).

Diese australisch-französische Zusammenarbeit geht im Wesentlichen zurück auf Barbara Glowczewski, die auch bei dem jetzt vorgestellten Band federführend war. Glowczewski, in Warschau geboren und in Paris aufgewachsen, ist die vielleicht wichtigste französische Ethnologin für den Bereich Australien. Sie hat über viele Jahre bei den Warlpiri hauptsächlich in Lajamanu am Rande der Tanami Wüste (N.T.) gearbeitet. 1979 kam sie als junge Studentin zum ersten Mal zu den Warlpiri, später kehrte sie zu mehreren Aufenthalten in diese Aborigine-Gemeinde zurück. Neben ihrer Doktorarbeit über die Topologie der Sozialstruktur und Kosmologie der Warlpiri an der Universität in Paris (*La loi du rêve - Approche topologique de l'organisation sociale et des cosmologies des Aborigènes d'australie,* 1988) veröffentlichte sie eine persönliche Rückschau ihrer Erlebnisse und Erfahrungen während ihrer Forschungsaufenthalte *(Les reveurs du desert,* 1989), die zwei Jahre später auch in deutscher Übersetzung erschien *(Träumer der Wüste. Leben mit den Ureinwohnern Australiens*, 1991).

Glowczewskis Forschungsarbeiten konzentrierten sich vorrangig auf zwei Themenbereiche: das Verwandtschaftssystem der Warlpiri, deren achtklassiges System von *sub-sections*, im indigen-englischen Sprachgebrauch auch „skins" genannt, von ihr grafisch in einem „Superwürfel" angeordnet wurde. (Im vorliegenden Band werden diese acht Gruppen mit ihren „skin"-Namen in leicht verständlicher Form erklärt, s.S. 62.) Ihre Doktorarbeit ist merklich von der französischen strukturalistischen Schule eines Claude Levi-Strauss durchdrungen, obgleich Glowczewski in ihren persönlichen Erinnerungen einräumt, durch 1968 und die Jahre danach eher antistrukturalistisch geprägt worden zu sein (1991:57). Die ganze Herangehensweise und die Art der Analyse des Verwandtschaftssystems steht jedoch für den typisch französisch-strukturalistischen Ansatz, und so verwundert es nicht, dass Glowczewski Levi-Strauss später ihre Doktorarbeit vorlegte. Dieser regte im Übrigen an, den Warlpiri den Superwürfel zu zeigen und die Reaktionen darauf zu testen, was Glowczewski bei späteren Aufenthalten auch tatsächlich tat. Obgleich die Warlpiri größtenteils weder lesen noch schreiben konnten, war ihnen die Anordnung der „skin"-Namen in dieser geometrischen Figur sofort eingängig und sie

konnten die von Glowczewski begonnene Erläuterung des Superwürfels selbständig weiterführen.

Der zweite vorrangige Themenbereich Glowczewskis ist das Ritualleben der Warlpiri-Frauen, ihre Traumzeitüberlieferungen, heiligen Stätten, Tänze und Gesänge. Es gelingt Glowczewski, beeindruckende mehrmonatige Ritualzyklen sowohl schriftlich, als auch in Fotografien und Filmen festzuhalten. Hierbei wird auch auf das dem gesamten Ritualleben der Warlpiri – ob bei Männer- oder Frauenritualen – zugrunde liegende System der Zweiteilung eingegangen: Einerseits gibt es die Eigentümer, Bosse oder Meister („kirda") bestimmter *Dreamings*, zu dessen Ehre das Ritual abgehalten wird; diese *Dreamings* sind der persönliche Besitz der „kirda". Andererseits gibt es Regisseure, Manager oder Organisatoren („kurdungurlu") dieser *Dreamings*, die für die richtige und zeitgerechte Abhaltung der Rituale verantwortlich sind. Wer jeweils welche Funktion übernimmt, orientiert sich daran, welche „skins" welche *Dreamings* besitzen.

Glowczewskis persönliche Erinnerungen (1989/1991) sind einerseits persönlich und subjektiv gehalten und daher leicht nachvollziehbar. (Die Übersetzung ist hier allerdings nur mehr schlecht als recht gelungen.) Andererseits erschweren zahllose zeitliche Vor- und Rückgriffe und das Auftauchen vieler unterschiedlicher Aborigines-Persönlichkeiten mit ihren wechselvollen Biografien die Orientierung in diesen Reminiszenzen. Man muss allerdings hinzufügen, dass die Lebensrealität einer halbnomadischen, polygamen Gesellschaft, die zudem von mehreren Umsiedlungsaktionen einer wechselhaften Ureinwohnerpolitik betroffen war, für unsere Begriffe per se verwirrend sein kann. Insofern ist dieses Buch auch ein gutes Abbild dieser Situation sowie des Feldforschungskontexts, in dem man unwillkürlich in ein laufendes Geschehen hineingeworfen wird. Unterm Strich liefern die vielen inhaltlichen Exkurse einen guten informativen Hintergrund für die im vorliegenden Bildband beschriebenen Rituale.

Glowczewskis Forschungen bei den Warlpiri, größtenteils 1979 und 1984 durchgeführt, fließen maßgeblich in das besprochene Buch ein,

in dem viele Dreamings der Warlpiri von Lajamanu vorgestellt werden. Elf Texte wurden bereits 1984 von Glowczewski auf Warlpiri aufgenommen. (Sie sind auch auf der o. g. CD-ROM zu hören.) Die Ko-Autorin, Jessica De Largy Healy, Doktorandin an der Universität von Melbourne und an der *Ècole des Haute Ètudes en Sciences Sociales* in Paris, hat neben Forschungsaufenthalten in verschiedenen Regionen Australiens zwei Jahre in Arnhemland gelebt und dort mit den Aborigines *am Indigenous Knowledge Center* zusammengearbeitet. (Anlass für die Gründung dieses Zentrums war u. a. der Wunsch, den Verbleib der durch Handel und Vertrieb in alle Welt verstreuten Kunstwerke zu rekonstruieren und mit Hilfe von Kopien und Digitalfotografien zu dokumentieren.) Drei Texte der Yolngu wurden 2004 von Jessica De Largy Healy auf Englisch aufgenommen und waren bislang unveröffentlicht.

In einem Einleitungskapitel werden beide Ethnien mit ihren kulturellen Wurzeln, ihrer jüngsten Geschichte und der Entwicklung ihrer Malstile vorgestellt. Letztere unterscheiden sich in die „dot paintings" der Warlpiri mit ihren „Zeichenschriften" (Kreise, Halbkreise, Striche, Wellenlinien und Pfeile) und die schraffierten Motive der Yolngu aus dem Arnhem Land, die Embleme bestimmter Clans darstellen. Interessant ist die ähnliche Interpretation dieser zwei verschiedenen Stile, die die Fragilität betont: die bildliche Darstellung von Mythenthemen und Schöpferwesen durch farbliche Tupfer, die Zwischenräume erlauben, „drückt unter anderem die Unbeständigkeit der Materie aus, die aus Dreaming-‚Genen' besteht, welche einst von den Ahnenwesen gesät wurden." (2006:16). Und die für das Arnhemland typischen Schraffuren stellen die ‚Schatten' der Motive dar, die die Schöpferahnen („wangarr") einst trugen.

Diese Wangarr Wesen sind dafür bekannt, „dass sie schimmern oder leuchten; für die Sonnenstrahlen wird dasselbe Wort verwendet. Linien und Schraffuren legen sich übereinander und erzeugen so den Eindruck von Bewegung. Der Leuchteffekt ist die gesuchteste ästhetische Eigenschaft, denn er bezeugt das Talent des Künstlers und seine Fähigkeit, ein Stück Holz [im Fall der Rindenmalerei] in einen Gegenstand zu verwandeln, der die Macht der Ahnen verkörpert." (2006:24) Mit der Malerei wird also eine künstlerische

Lösung gesucht, um die spirituellen Schöpfungswesen sichtbar zu machen und vorübergehend „zu materialisieren".

Nach der Einleitung werden sechs verschiedene Dreamings zu so unterschiedlichen Themen wie Erwachsenwerden, Empfängnis, Tauschen und Handeln, Initiation, Versöhnung und Wiedergeburt (eigentlich Toten-Dreamings) in Geschichten, Fotos und Kunstwerken vorgestellt. Die Landschaften, Menschen, Rituale und Kunstwerke stehen dabei im Vordergrund und werden visuell durch die vielen eingestreuten Farbfotos markant verankert. Es ist ein dichtgedrängtes Kaleidoskop von bunten Bildern, aber auch aus inhaltsreichen Geschichten, in denen sich die Dynamik der Traumzeitgeschehnisse und ihre zwingende Relevanz für die heutige Menschheit entfaltet. Wer denkt, Mythentexte seien entweder langatmig oder nur etwas für Spezialisten, wird hier eines Besseren belehrt. Rasant und Schlag auf Schlag werden die Ereignisse nacherzählt und die verschiedenen Dreamings plastisch vorgestellt.

Die bunte Bilderflut mit den vielen, dicht gedrängten Informationen birgt allerdings auch die Gefahr der Verwirrung und der Oberflächlichkeit. Hauptkritikpunkt an dem Werk ist aber, dass zwei Ethnien, die Tausende von Kilometern voneinander entfernt leben, nahtlos nebeneinander gestellt werden und so dem Laien der räumliche Überblick fehlt. Eine Karte Australiens mit den Siedlungsgebieten dieser beiden Ethnien ist in dem Band nicht enthalten. Zwei völlig unterschiedliche Kulturen, die auch in ganz unterschiedlichen Lebensräumen siedeln – hier Wüste, dort Tropen – werden in einen vermeintlich gemeinsamen Kontext gestellt, der so gar nicht existiert. Das Fehlen dieser Klarstellung ist das einzige Manko, das den Genuss dieses Bandes schmälert. Davon abgesehen ist er aber allen Australien- und Kunstfreunden wärmstens zu empfehlen.

Literatur von Barbara Glowczewski:

1988: *La loi du rêve - Approche topologique de l'organisation sociale et des cosmologies des Aborigènes d'australie.*
1989: *Les Rêveurs du désert - aborigènes d'Australie, les Warlpiri.* Paris: Plon.

1991: *Träumer der Wüste. Leben mit den Ureinwohnern Australiens.* Wien: Promedia.

2000: *Dream Trackers - Yapa Art and Knowledge of the Australian Desert.* Developed with the Lajamanu elders and artists of the Warnayaka Art Centre by Barbara Glowczewski and Virtuel Bazaar. CD-ROM, 14 hs of navigation, 500 photos, films, songs and stories, texts, hyperlinks.

Philip A. Clarke. ***Aboriginal Plant Collectors. Botanists and Australian Aboriginal People in the Nineteenth Century.*** Kenthurst, NSW: Rosenberg Publishing, 2008, 191 pp., ISBN: 978 18 77 05 8684. **Reviewed by Rosemarie Gläser, Dresden.**

The community pattern of Aboriginal tribes on the continent of Australia in pre-colonial days is commonly associated with the nomadic lifestyle of hunters and gatherers, their spiritual heritage of the creation ancestors of dreamtime and the rituals practised, the making of tools and weapons, and specific art forms such as rock drawings, bark paintings and body painting. Comparatively scant information has been provided to date on the botanical knowledge of native people. The author of this illustrated monograph on Aboriginal plant collectors in the 19th century is a well-known ethnographer and anthropologist as well as the author of several books on aspects of Aboriginal culture. He is based at the South Australian Museum in Adelaide. Clarke sets out to describe the interaction of native people with explorers, run-away convicts, and white plant 'hunters' who needed help for survival in the outback.

In Chapter 1, "Early Explorers and Aboriginal Guides", the author reports on the first European navigators who visited Australia and had encounters with Aboriginal people, such as William Dampier, Captain James Cook and Joseph Banks. There are records of native plant collectors such as Boongaree, Nanbaree and Abarro who imparted their botanical knowledge to white newcomers. Chapter 2 discusses "Settlers and Australian Plants", the use of edible berries, roots, greens and tubers that provided food and of other plants for tea or bush medicine. Chapter 3, focused on "Making Plant Names", is of special interest to the linguist. The author describes the difficulties in finding the common plant names among a wide variety of local plant names used by Aboriginal people in different parts of Australia for the same species. Plant names coined by European settlers may be misnomers because they are founded on a superficial analogy between plants of their home country and the

Australian flora:

> The historical records of Australian plants are full of terms based upon similarity to European species. Examples include *Australian sarsaparilla, bush plum, native cherry, desert raisin, wild currant, native guava, wild pear,* […]. (43)

In botanical terminology, these designations of a plant, often the same species, may count as *trivial names* alongside the "correct" (systematic) name. Clarke regards "the co-existence of different common names for the same type of plant" as "variety within Australian English, in terms of geography, social context and the period." (44)

Chapter 4 is devoted to "George Caley in New South Wales", an important botanist, who had an essential share in "organised scientific plant-collecting enterprises" (p. 59). George Caley (1770–1829) continued the scholarly work of Joseph Banks and William J. Hooker, who developed the Royal Botanical Gardens in Kew. Caley also actively involved Aboriginal cooperators in his systematic plant collecting activities.

Chapter 5 deals with "Allan Cunningham and the Mapping of Australia." As the "King's Botanist for the Colony of New South Wales," Allan Cunningham (1791–1839) worked together with Aboriginal foragers, discovered new species and sent specimens of plants to England. Botanists honoured him by naming several plant species in his memory. Chapter 6 pays special attention to "Resident Plant Collectors and Aboriginal People". In great detail Clarke describes the activities of the botanist James Drummond (1787–1863) in southwest Western Australia, of Ronald C. Gunn in Van Diemen's Land, and of Frederick M. Bailey in South Australia. A distinguished lady who collected plants in southwest Western Australia in the 1830s/40s was Georgiana Molloy. These botanists appreciated the indispensably necessary plant knowledge of Aboriginal people for their own studies. Chapter 7 highlights "Leichhardt and the Riddle of Inland Australia". In a detailed biography, Philip Clarke presents Ludwig Leichhardt (1813 – 1848?) as a great naturalist, but also as a talented linguist interested in the

languages of the Aboriginal guides and interpreters he had included in his expedition crew. Leichhardt's memory was honoured by several botanical names, e.g. *Acacia leichhardtii, Duboisia leichhardtii.* The important botanist introduced in Chapter 8 is the German researcher Ferdinand Jakob Heinrich von Mueller (1825–1896), who emigrated to South Australia and became a British subject. He played a major part in "recording Aboriginal plant uses" (107) and corresponded with a number of plant collectors across Australia. The painter Ellis Rowan (1848–1896) "employed Aboriginal people to help her collect fresh plant specimens" (112) for her water colour paintings. These are remarkable in their botanical detail and well suited for a botanical encyclopaedia. Mueller also introduced various exotic plants from Europe so as to cultivate them in Australia. His name is commemorated in the designations of some plant species, e.g. *Terminalia muelleri*. Chapter 9 treats "Inland Explorers and Aboriginal Knowledge", with a focus on the unfortunate expeditions of Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills (1860), who no longer pursued "a scientific venture", but were competitors "in a desperate race against a rival explorer, Stuart" (p. 122). They were ignorant of the Aboriginal use of bush food and perished in the desert at Cooper Creek (1861). The final Chapter 10 gives a general survey on "The Study of Aboriginal Plant Use" with implications for pharmacology, anthropology, and economic botany (in representative parks).

On the whole, Clarke's assessment of the scientific work done by European and Australian explorers and botanists in the outback is considerate, substantiated and well balanced. In striking contrast is his opinion of the German botanist Amalie Dietrich (1821–1891), who collected, classified and preserved specimens of Australian plants and animals for her employers in Hamburg, Godeffroy & Son, and for a number of European ethnographic museums. The author presents her in a totally one-sided way.

Professional collectors of natural history specimens catered for scholars interested in indigenous peoples. In Australia, German collector Amalie Dietrich spent several years in Queensland (1863–72), where she actively sought fresh Aboriginal skeletons for her

European clients. In spite of her gruesome interests, Dietrich owed her life to the Aboriginal people, for a group saved her from drowning when she was trying to collect specimens of rare water lilies (p. 144).

It is unfortunate that Clarke based his assessment solely on two references drawn from Ann Moyal (1986), and J.B. Webb (2003), and an anecdotal incidence mentioned in R. Ritchie's book (1989).

An entirely different picture arises from Amalie Dietrich's correspondence with her daughter Charitas [Bischoff] and her employers. In these letters she repeatedly expressed her deep respect for Aboriginal people and her friendly relations in bartering with them. In a letter to her daughter of October 12, 1864, Amalie Dietrich gives an account of how native people rescued her when her bamboo hut caught fire, which burned her collections and research equipment. And she mentions another incident in which Aboriginal people rescued her when she was stuck in a swamp at nightfall.[1]

From the very beginning of her professional work in remote regions of Queensland, her main concern was collecting and preserving specimens of plants, insects, reptiles, birds, fishes and mammals for her German employers. Although Dietrich had no academic background (impossible for women at her time), she acquired a profound botanical knowledge in cooperation with her husband, who was an apothecary, plant collector and private researcher in the small town of Siebenlehn, Saxony. In fact, she became a self-taught and ultimately self-made woman botanist and a hard-working plant collector in Germany. When she was commissioned by Godeffroy to make the voyage to Australia, she was prepared to separate from her family, taking this extraordinary opportunity to explore Australia's fauna. Her botanical sales collection of "New Holland" included 364 species. During her stay, she compiled the largest collection of zoological and botanical material ever gathered by a single person in the 19th century. This included 20,000 botanical specimens and more than 200 new species (B. Scheps 2008: 100). In a letter of January 1, 1865, her employers commissioned her to collect not only skeletons of indigenous mammals, but possibly also

skulls of Aboriginal people, alongside their weapons and tools[2]. Such items were most coveted by developing European museums of ethnography. In her letter to her daughter of September 20, 1869, Amalie Dietrich, however, remarked on the difficulty of providing skeletons of native adults.

It should also be taken into consideration that Charles Darwin's fundamental work *The Origin of Species* after its appearance in 1859 had far-reaching repercussions on the policy of British museums to acquire human skeletons from remote parts of the world for legitimate scientific research. Thus, skulls from various ethnic groups had become a subject of scholarly studies named *phrenology.*

It is worth mentioning that in other chapters of his book, Philip Clarke records cases of collecting native skeletons and he expresses his disapproval of, and contempt for, such dealings from the ethical point of view of the 21st century. Thus, he mentions the botanist Allan Cunningham, who was involved with the desecration of a grave site and the exhumation "of an Aboriginal king" (72). Cunningham transgressed the rules of decency on another occasion: "Among the more unusual specimens he sent back to England was the desiccated body of an Aboriginal woman" (75). Clarke goes on to remark:

> Across Aboriginal Australia, many communities kept the smoke-dried remains of their deceased kin for a time in huts, awaiting the final ritual of disposal in a cemetery. Cunningham's collection of the woman's remains can only be regarded as theft (76).

In connection with the plant collector James Drummond, Clarke mentions a hostile encounter between colonists and Aboriginal men, whose leader Yagan was sentenced and killed after being recaptured on 11 July 1833, with gruesome consequences:

> Yagan's head was removed from his body, then smoked, preserved and taken to England as a 'specimen'. It was not returned for reburial by the Nyungar community of southwest Western Australia until 1997. The Western Australian Department of Agriculture recognised his status as an indigenous resistance fighter in 1988

> when they named a new early maturing cultivar of barley bred for sandy soils as 'Yagan' (82).

Clarke's discussion of this state of affairs highlights the fact that present-day existing collections of bones of indigenous people from once colonial countries displayed in European museums have remained an extremely sensitive issue from the perspective of shifted moral standards of human rights. Amalie Dietrich's achievements should not be measured with this yardstick alone. As an experienced plant collector and hard field worker she made a remarkable contribution to the exploration of Australian flora and applied the Linnaean nomenclature consistently to newly discovered species. After her return to Hamburg (1872), she disseminated her botanical knowledge by taking part in meetings of learned societies. Several plants and animals were named after her, e.g. *Dicranella dietrichiae*. Her memory is held in high esteem in her birthplace of Siebenlehn, where a small museum has been devoted to her work, and the local school conducts project work following her footsteps.

Throughout the book, it becomes evident that Philip Clarke is a determined supporter of the Aboriginal cause in that he intends to bring to the fore the indigenous people's share in identifying and using wild plants, and their contribution to the development of Australian botany as a research subject. The author's personality appears in this unique volume in many respects: as an ethnographer and anthropologist, an arduous plant collector and a skilful photographer. His plant photographs taken between 1985 and 2007 in different parts of Australia are of an excellent technical quality and provide aesthetic pleasure to the beholder. The reader cannot but share the author's enthusiasm for Australia's indigenous flora and feels included in the fascinating exploration tour leading from chapter to chapter, spiritually guided by native botanists of the past. The author presents the plants in their natural outback habitat, and draws from archival sources such as explorers' and botanists' diaries, journals, correspondence, and publications in periodicals. Each chapter conveys detailed information on the exploration of the Fifth Continent, on plants and botanists. Moreover, in the descriptive passages, Clarke favours common English and Aboriginal plant

names. For the general reader's and the specialist's benefit, the scientific plant names are listed in the appendix.

The book is written in an elaborate, literary and user-friendly style. In summary, the present volume is an outstanding botanical, historical and ethnographical introduction to a complex topic, a work of reference, and a most enjoyable book of popular scientific writing.

References

[1] Charitas Bischoff (1909): *Amalie Dietrich – ein Leben.* Reprinted 1980, Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag. Literary critics and ethnographers hold the opinion that Charitas Bischoff modified her mother's letters in some details although they are assumed to be authentic in essence.

[2] Quoted from the doctoral dissertation of Birgit Scheps (2005): *Das verkaufte Museum. Die Südsee-Unternehmungen des Handelshauses Joh. Ces. Godeffroy & Sohn, Hamburg, und die Sammlungen „Museum Godeffroy".* Hamburg: Goecke & Evers, Kelternweiler. Birgit Scheps is custodian of the Museum of Ethnography in Leipzig, Germany.

Tim Flannery: An Explorer´s Notebook. Essays on Life, History & Climate. The Text Publishing Company, Melbourne, 2007, 284 S., ISBN 9781921145957 (pb). **Rezensiert von Reinhold Grotz** (Stuttgart)

Vom Naturforscher und Entdecker zum Mahner in Sachen Ökologie

Tim Flannery ist einer der weltweit bekanntesten Wissenschaftler in Australien. Derzeit lehrt er an der Macquarie University im Westen Sydneys, er war aber auch schon für ein Jahr als Gastprofessor für Australienstudien an der Harvard University (1999). Zuvor forschte Flannery als Zoologe und Paläontologe an verschiedenen wissenschaftlichen Einrichtungen in Australien. Er war u. a. Principal Research Scientist am Australian Museum in Sydney und Direktor des South Australian Museum in Adelaide. Der 1956 geborene Wissenschaftler ist aber nicht nur wegen seiner herausragenden Forschungsergebnisse bekannt, sondern auch wegen seiner oft provokanten Einmischung in aktuelle politische und wirtschaftliche Fragen. Denn Tim Flannery entwickelte sich während seiner Forschertätigkeit allmählich vom Einzelphänomene untersuchenden Biologen zum Zusammenhänge betrachtenden Ökologen. Dabei geriet er fast zwangsläufig in Widerspruch zum gängigen Wirtschaftshandeln und zu den dafür verantwortlichen Akteuren aus Politik und Wirtschaft. Flannery legte sich mit dem früheren Prime Minister Howard an, weil dieser das Kyoto-Protokoll nicht unterschrieb. Im Oktober 2008 mischte er sich sogar in den Wahlkampf in Kanada ein, indem er während einer Vortragsreise die Entwicklungspläne zum Abbau der Ölsande in Alberta, die von der Harper-Regierung vorangetrieben werden, heftig mit den Worten kritisierte "one of the most polluting enterprises ever developed by humanity".

Dieser Wandel von einer naturwissenschaftlichen Sichtweise hin zur Betrachtung der vielfältigen menschlichen Einflüsse auf die

natürliche Umwelt lässt sich recht gut an den Veröffentlichungen Tim Flannerys ablesen. Das vorliegende Buch *An Explorer´s Notebook* liefert Proben aus den verschiedenen Schaffensperioden des Wissenschaftlers. Es handelt sich neben wenigen Buchauszügen hauptsächlich um den Nachdruck zumeist kurzer Zeitschriften- und Zeitungsartikel, die nicht nur für ein Fachpublikum geschrieben wurden.

Bereits in den ersten Kapiteln des Buches merkt der Leser, dass der Autor fesselnd erzählen kann. Er nimmt sein Publikum mit auf Expeditionen, berichtet über spannende Einzelheiten seiner Forschungen und macht in leicht verständlicher Weise mit den wissenschaftlichen Fragestellungen und den erzielten Forschungsergebnissen bekannt. Überschriften wie *The Fall and Rise of Bulmer´s Fruit Bat* oder *The Case of the Missing Meat Eaters: Why are Australia´s Carnivores such Cold-blooded Killers?* oder *Men of the Forest* mögen langweilig, sehr speziell oder reißerisch klingen, aber Flannery gelingt es in jedem Fall, seine Leser durch eine Kombination aus Naturschilderung, Abenteuer, rätselhafte Geschichten sowie fundierte Naturwissenschaft zu fesseln, zu unterhalten und zu informieren. In seinen Berichten aus Neuguinea vermittelt er außerdem Respekt und Verständnis für die Kultur der lokalen Bewohner.

In diesem ersten Teil des Buches präsentiert sich der Autor als Naturforscher, der von Säugetieren, Fossilien und Australiens Vergangenheit fasziniert ist. Bereits für seine Dissertation beschrieb er 29 neue Känguru-Arten und er entdeckte später in Melanesien 16 bislang unbekannte Säugetier-Arten. Durch seine 1980 erstmalig gemachten Funde von Dinosaurierfossilien wurde er in Australien noch vor seiner Promotion bekannt.

Die erste Serie von Aufsätzen und Essays im vorliegenden Buch endet mit einigen Arbeiten zur Ökologie Australiens, worin er wohl begründete Stellung zur derzeitigen Bevölkerungsentwicklung, Siedlungsstruktur und zur australischen Wirtschaft bezieht. Ein Text gibt die Rede wieder, die Tim Flannery als offizielle *Australia Day Address* im Januar 2002 verfasste. Bevor er darin auf aktuelle

gesellschaftliche und politische Fragen eingeht, führt er seinen Landsleuten vor Augen, was etwas mehr als 200 Jahre Landesentwicklung durch Weiße bewirkten:

> For most of the last two centuries we have believed that we could remake the continent in the image of Europe – turn the rivers inland and force the truculent soils to yield. …Much … reads as a rush towards development, which was then, and still is, just a soft word for the destruction of Australia´s resource base. …Already one of every ten of Australia´s unique mammals is extinct, and almost everywhere – even in our national parks – biodiversity is declining. Australia´s soils are still being mined … while our rivers are in great peril and sustainable fisheries everywhere have collapsed" (S. 113-114).

Der zweite Teil des Buches, der mit "On Other People´s Words" überschrieben ist, enthält eine Reihe von Buchbesprechungen, die zwischen 1999 und 2007 im *New York Review of Books* oder *The Times Literary Supplement* erschienen. Die Inhalte der besprochenen Bücher sind weit gespannt: Beispielsweise handeln sie von den präzisen Naturbeobachtungen eines später erblindeten deutschen Händlers, die dieser in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts auf den heute indonesischen Molukken (Ambon) machte, und die erst jetzt in englischer Übersetzung erschienen. Oder er befasst sich mit zwei Biographien von J. J. Audubon, der auf 435 großformatigen Platten (das Buch ist etwa einen Meter hoch und wiegt 90 kg) vor über 150 Jahren die Vogelwelt Amerikas lebensgroß und farbig portraitierte. Auf unterhaltsame Weise erfährt man etwas vom Leben des Zeichners und vor allem von der Entstehungsgeschichte des Vogelbuches, von dem nur 170 Exemplare gedruckt wurden, eines davon wurde im Jahre 2000 für US$ 8,8 Mio. versteigert. – In seinen Besprechungen begnügt sich Flannery nicht allein mit den Buchtexten. Er gibt weitere Hintergrundinformationen zu den behandelten Themen, knüpft interessante Verbindungen und fügt eigene weiterführende Gedanken an. Dabei wird nicht nur das breite Wissen und die intellektuelle Neugier des Autors deutlich, er versteht es auch hier, seine Begeisterung auf den Leser zu übertragen.

Der dritte Teil der Textsammlung *Climate* enthält Beiträge aus den Jahren 2006 und 2007. Die Titel der einzelnen Aufsätze, die in *The Age* und in *The Bulletin* erschienen, "Lies about Power", "Saving Water and Energy", "Tropical Forests" sprechen Themen an, die weltweit diskutiert werden. In ihnen schildert Flannery eindringlich und in klarer Sprache die Ursachen und Folgen der globalen Klimakrise und er hält seinen Landsleuten, insbesondere der Regierung in Canberra, einen Spiegel über ihr Verhalten und Nichtstun vor. Er wundert und ärgert sich darüber, dass in einem Land mit überreicher Sonnenenergie viele Haushalte ein Drittel bis die Hälfte ihrer bezogenen Elektroenergie – sie wird fast ganz aus Kohle gewonnen – für die *Warmwasserbereitung* (!) verwenden. Ein weiteres Argument fügt er hinzu:

> Why is Australia a global dumping ground for inefficient electrical goods? And why … have Australian governments done nothing (or next to nothing) to increase our energy efficiency targets for electrical goods?" (246).

Der Leser spürt, dass der Autor beim Thema Klimaschutz mit vollem Engagement schreibt. Sein 2005 erschienenes Buch *The Weather Makers* wurde in viele Sprachen übersetzt (dt. *Wir Wettermacher*, 2007), es tauchte auf vielen nationalen Bestsellerlisten auf. Mit ihm gewann er den Literaturpreis von N.S.W. für 2006, und das Buch gab wohl vollends den Ausschlag für die Wahl von Tim Flannery zum *Australian of the Year 2007.* Die sehr kurze Dankesrede bei der Verleihungszeremonie ist ebenfalls im Buch abgedruckt. Darin erinnert der Geehrte daran, dass die Australier pro Kopf den weltweit höchsten Ausstoß an klimaschädlichen Gasen verursachen. An den anwesenden Prime Minister Howard gewandt sagte er: "And, Prime Minister, I need to add that I will be passionately critical of delays or policies, by anyone, that I think wrong-headed" (251).

Trotz scharfer und mahnender Worte über Versäumtes ist Tim Flannery kein Untergangsprophet. Er zeigt Wege aus der Misere auf und er sieht Zeichen der Hoffnung. Das macht ihn bei seinen Lesern so beliebt. Durch seine vielen Reisen lernte er innovative Lösungen und Ideen kennen – auch Deutschland wird lobend erwähnt – aber

er konnte auch die ersten katastrophalen Auswirkungen des Klimawandels beobachten. Darüber schreibt er im letzten Kapitel, dem einzig originären, mit der Überschrift "A New Adventure". Das neue Abenteuer wird durch einen Bewusstseinswandel und zukunftsorientiertes persönliches, wirtschaftliches und politisches Handeln angestoßen. Zwar steht im Buch darüber nur wenig Konkretes, doch die 11 persönlichen realistischen Ratschläge, die Flannery seinen Landsleuten gibt, um die Erderwärmung zu verlangsamen, kennen heute bereits viele Australier. Schlagzeilen machte auch die Warnung an die Verbände des Kohlebergbaus und der Energieerzeugung, dass in Zukunft Kohle als ebenso gefährlich angesehen werden wird wie heute Asbest.

Es gibt wohl keinen zeitgenössischen Australier, der mehr als Tim Flannery das Denken und Handeln auf dem Fünften Kontinent hin zu mehr ökologischer Verantwortung geprägt hat. Auch wenn *An Explorer´s Notebook* nicht die weltweite Aufmerksamkeit genießen wird wie *The Weather Makers*, so sind die Texte doch eindrucksvolle Zeugnisse vom Wandel der Sichtweise eines Mannes, der sich in 25 Jahren vom Entdecker zum unerschrockenen Umweltaktivisten entwickelte. Daher ist das Buch nicht nur lehrreich, sondern auch unterhaltsam, stellenweise sogar spannend zu lesen.

Sadanand Dhume: *My Friend the Fanatic: Travels with an Indonesian Islamist*. Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company, 2008, 273 pp; A$ 34.95. ISBN 978 1 921351 40 2 (pb). **Reviewed by Marion Spies, Wuppertal.**

Although the prologue of Sadanand Dhume's book *My Friend the Fanatic* begins in 2002, shortly after the Bali bombings, and its epilogue is from 2007, the book is only based on his travels as a researcher in Indonesia in 2004. Dhume is a journalist from new Delhi, who for some time studied in the United States. Part of the time his travel companion in Indonesia is the Muslim Herry Nudi, managing editor of a fundamentalist Indonesian paper.

Until the Bali bombings Dhume shared what he now considers to be a common mis-conception about Indonesia, i.e. that its Muslims are moderate and that Indonesia's strong Hindu-Buddhist past is still relevant at the beginning of the 21st century. But after the bombings he comes to the conclusion that the old tolerance is giving way to a new orthodoxy and that Indonesia is torn between globalisation – visible as capitalism – and Islamisation. To his mind, Islamism is the stronger force of the two and also responsible for the fact that Indonesia's economy is stagnating. In his book, Dhume wants to show Indonesia's transformation from moderation to Islamisation.

In order to do so, he on the one hand portrays sickening Western decadence, mainly in cities. This description of his visit to a night club in Jakarta is typical:

> A makeshift stage on the dance floor below was decorated with naked white mannequins arranged like crash-test dummies, their arms and legs and necks at impossible angles. The cover of Djenar's [the guest of honour's] book, a bright red background with PlayStation [sic] controls superimposed on a blurred pair of breasts, filled a large screen above them. After a few minutes the music died, the red on the screen faded, and an amateur video came on. It began with a man at a urinal, his pants down, his arse partially exposed; then it cut to a long-haired man in a denim jacket seated on a toilet (14).

Dhume generally paints globalisation as decadent behaviour in night clubs, low budget sex for tourists, and Indonesian girls slaving in factories, only too grateful to the sophisticated Westerner (i.e. Dhume) for buying them some lunch. On the other hand, he sketches a narrow Islamic fundamentalism. Throughout the book Dhume maintains the sneering attitude of somebody who is well-educated, comes from a threshold country and is fairly independent. As far as religion is concerned, he repeatedly stresses that he is an atheist (see 149 and elsewhere). Many a time he makes it obvious that he looks down on backward Indonesian society:

> We [Indians] could at least claim Nobel-winning economists and Booker-winning writers and legions of engineers with stock options at Microsoft and Oracle. In Indonesia you had nothing, no accomplishment on the world stage to speak of, and only Islam to fill the void. It gave you a glorious history, a great cause, a worthy adversary. Most of all it gave you order: Avoid silk and gold. Teach your daughter how to swim. Stop eating before you're full. If on a motorcycle be sure to greet a walking man first (261).

The last sentences do not exactly convey the impression that Dhume has a clue what religion in general and Islam in Indonesia in particular are all about. This becomes most obvious in those parts of the book in which Dhume wants to expose the fundamentalism of Indonesia. Each time the situations are fairly similar: Nudi travels with Dhume to an Islamic community somewhere in the country and introduces him to its leaders so that Dhume can visit the place and talk to devotees. In this way he gets to meet, among others, an Islamic evangelist and inspects several schools and model villages. The impressions Dhume puts to paper are always almost the same: the students are dumb and indoctrinated, they only know how to be obedient to faith, the model villages are religious on the outside only.

This is what you repeatedly get:

> At my [i.e. Dhume's] request, the teacher agreed to take us on a little campus tour. The school had no basketball or tennis courts, no sports field of any kind and, needless to say, no gym. It supported only two kinds of extra-curricular activity - scouting and first aid training. The solitary computer had broken down, said the teacher, and there was no one to fix it. ('You can still push the buttons, but

> nothing happens.') He showed us the science lab: a couple of ancient globes, a fierce looking plaster model of the human eye (a blue eye) and a handful of beakers on rusted stands. Then he led us to a corner of the school compound, not far from where we had stood by the schoolyard, to a half-built mosque. They had been at work on it for a year, said the teacher. Inshallah, it would soon be ready for use.
>
> Or:
>
> I pondered the large mosque across the narrow street and the smaller one coming up inside the school. While Indians learned computers and maths, Chinese crammed English, and Vietnamese ratcheted up worker productivity in factories, here they were building a little mosque right next to the big mosque (171).

When Dhume interviews those in charge, he always gets stereotypical answers. The reader, however, wonders: not so much about the replies, but rather about the question asked. Yes, 'question' in the singular: as we know, the quality of surveys also depends on the interviewer, and the journalist (!) Dhume only has one stock question; no matter where he is and whom he talks to, he invariably enquires about the imposition of sharia law. It is Dhume who reduces Islam and life in an Islamic society to living under the sharia (cf. 12 and elsewhere). And then he ridicules the almost identical answers he gets: America, the Jews and the Christians are the enemies who want to destroy Islam; living under the sharia means no alcohol, women have to be covered, people have to speak Arabic, evolution is rejected. Granted: those replies are problematic, but what is more problematic is Dhume, who complains that with such backward people no dialogue is possible (cf. 220 and elsewhere).

The last straw is Dhume's attitude towards his "friend the fanatic" of the title: To the reader Nudi seems to be moderate in his views. It is only when Nudi and Dhume stay with a particularly strict Islamic community that Nudi tends to adapt his behaviour to that of the people he is visiting. One might call him a considerate guest, but Dhume brands him as a hypocrite (cf. 193 and elsewhere). But, as far as I can see, Nudi only does not want to offend anybody, he is just observing that people live differently, and is trying to understand why they do so (cf. 258 and elsewhere). What makes me feel uncomfortable with Dhume's judgement is also the similarity

between the title "My Friend, the Fanatic" and Hanif Kureishi's famous screenplay *My Son, the Fanatic* (1997). Uncomfortable, because Dhume's judgement on Nudi clearly shows that he has not understood or cared about Kureishi's message, that he has probably only used a well-known title to cash in on Kureishi's success. Kureishi's message in a nutshell is that no man has the right to judge a religion (cf. Kureishi 336 and elsewhere) and, the other way round, that no religion has the right to judge a man (according to the way he lives, cf. Kureishi 368 and elsewhere). In the last scene of the play, Parvez, the main character and a 'lapsed Muslim', comes to the conclusion: "There are many ways of being a good man" (Kureishi 382). This is akin to Nudi's attitude. It's almost incredible that Dhume missed this point, not only in relation to Nudi, but also to Indonesian Islamists and a possible dialogue with them.

Dhume's second reference to a seminal work makes matters even worse: Fond of name-dropping, he alludes to Clifford Geertz two or three times. Geertz' most relevant work here – not explicitly named by Dhume - is *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (1968). By mentioning him Dhume probably only wants to remind us that it was mainly Geertz who propagated a liberal Indonesia. And as I understand it, Dhume is under the illusion that by his book he once and for all refuted this view (by painting Indonesia's Muslim society and its economic prospects as bleakly as possible). Frankly speaking, I do not think that he did. I would still stake my claim on Geertz. Let me tell you why: in his book, Geertz repeatedly pointed out that in the long run Islam in Indonesia will be able to survive and perhaps even flourish because the Muslims there are ready for compromises, both with their own traditions and with the West (cf. Geertz 16). So, the West is not only the enemy (as in Dhume), but also a force from which one might learn. By these strategies, Islamic traditions are frequently re-assessed. Such attempts to evaluate one's own (religious) traditions are lacking in Dhume, perhaps have to be lacking in the book of an avowed atheist. But Geertz, on his part, respected Islam for struggling to realize a conception of the divine in the secular world (see Geertz 56). This would also explain the frequent change between a religious perspective and common sense in people (cf. Geertz 110), for which

Dhume censors Nudi so sharply. After reading Geertz, who pointed out that Orthodox Islam is just an aggressive counter-tradition which, after all, has existed since the nineteenth century (cf. Geertz 66-67), one can also not help thinking that Dhume is overly concerned. One has to ask whether his "fanatics" will be of any political, economic or religious consequence in the long run – in spite of the Bali bombings. Last, but not least: Geertz repeatedly stressed that human culture (which, of course, includes religion) does not consist so much in customs and institutions as in the "interpretations the members of a society apply to their experience, the constructions they put upon the events through which they live" (Geertz 90). But Dhume only writes about the surface of people's lives, i.e. customs and institutions, and does not make sense of what he sees. Therefore, to my mind, in his micro-sociology of Indonesia Dhume fails to interpret changes in Islam in general and to come up with something more broadly relevant than a field-study, like Geertz did (cf. Geertz 22, 57 and elsewhere), i. e. Dhume fails to find a scientific explanation why Indonesian culture is changing.

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Zabus, Chantal. *Tempests after Shakespeare*. New York: Palgrave, 2002, 332 pp., £ 19,99. ISBN 0-312-29548-0. **Reviewed by Igor Maver,** University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Shakespeare studies have become subject to post-colonial readings since the late nineties of the previous century, a process emanating from the revisionist studies of new historicism, Marxism and feminism of the late eighties and early nineties (e.g. *Post-colonial Shakespeares*, 1998). These approaches attempted to 'postcolonialize' Shakespeare's work and provided new important insights into the relation between his texts and attitudes to race, class and gender.

Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* has since the early seventeenth century for all its ambiguity in intention, and being written at the beginning of the British colonialist pre-imperial expansion, invited numerous critical responses and reworkings/rewritings in several genres, where it was treated as a major ur-pretext mirroring the European domination (symbolized by Prospero) and oppression of Caribbean/African/Latin American cultures including slavery (e.g. George Lamming). The Prospero-Caliban relationship features particularly strongly in this debate around the psychology of British colonization, which practically destroyed the indigenous cultural (and linguistic) identity of the Americas. The role of Miranda came to be challenged and properly contextualized only later and this is what the book under review does especially well in Part II in the chapter called "Miranda and Sycorax on the 'Eve' of postpatriarchy".

Tempests after Shakespeare by Chantal Zabus is an eye-opening work of interdisciplinary cultural criticism working in loops and unexpected illuminating turns, which amazes even a well instructed reader with its erudite background and scholarly knowledge of various art forms and genres, where *The Tempest* has loomed very large during the past fifty years. Zabus most insightfully shows just how the rewritings of this play from the 1960s onwards can help us understand the three movements she tackles in each of the three

larger chapters: postcolonial discourse, feminism/postpatriarchy, and postmodernism. These are aptly represented by the *dramatis personae* of Caliban, Miranda/Sycorex, and Prospero. Zabus researches how these *fin de siècle* discourses vie for ownership of meaning. Clearly the characters of Prospero, Caliban, and Miranda are all somehow hostages of a power relationship:

> In Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, Australia, and Québec, Caliban becomes the inexhaustible symbol of the colonized insurgent. In Canada and the Caribbean (after the 'Calibanic' phase), Miranda revisits the Bardscript while, in African American texts, Sycorax embodies the threat of gynocracy. Both women characters as well as Ariel represent 'Others', who ''potentially challenge patriarchy" (2).

The book covers the period from the Sixties to the turn of the millenium in 2000 and considers a great geographical variety of writers, from the Commonwealth, Australia, Britain, Canada, the Caribbean, West Africa, Latin America, and the United States, occasionally even India, New Zealand, East and South Africa, including various genres, poems, plays, novels, film scripts, and critical essays, all of which have made a textual transformation of the original play *The Tempest*: imitation, parody, pastiche, satire, duplication, revision, inversion etc, i.e. rewriting as "the appropriation of a text that it simultaneously authorizes and critiques for its own ideological uses" (3).

When reading this book, it soon becomes evident that the play has been a much-visited site of contest and negotiation, since scores of writers (that it would be impossible to mention here) of diverse ideological, cultural, racial, and sexual persuasions have decided to rewrite Shakespeare's play, which can obviously accommodate various discourses "from countless subjectivities, and over multiple spaces" (7).

In Part I Chantal Zabus argues that the original dramatic text was first seen from the standpoint of Prospero-qua-colonizer and it became necessary to wrestle with this emblem of (post)coloniality and to rewrite *The Tempest* from Caliban's perspective. She

explores, for example, rewritings by Mannoni, Mason, Ngugi, Césaire, Fanon, Memmi, Lamming, Brathwaite, and Dabydeen. As an example, let me dwell here briefly only on the Australian component. Zabus describes the "Antipodean metamorphoses" of David Malouf. His novel *An Imaginary Life* (1978) speaks about exile as, in fact, most of his work does, about Australians as exiles who find death after encountering the 'Aboriginal' Caliban, although they also "feel themselves Calibans in relation to England", and "nonetheless tend to play Prospero in the South Pacific" (81). Zabus reads Malouf's novel as a "warped" rendition of the colonial encounter between the settlers and the Aboriginals. The (Wolf-) Child via Caliban becomes the Australian "Red Man", namely the Aboriginal whom Malouf never mentions, who teaches Prosper-Ovid the language *in exilio* at the very edge of the known world: "And possibly only an Australian, as someone who has been driven from the center to the edge, could comfortably speak of that transformation at the edge" (83).

The second work by Malouf under scrutiny, engaging more directly with *The Tempest* than his novel *An Imaginary Life*, is his play *Blood Relations* (1988) which takes the viewer back to the "edge", a dystopic island between the desert and the sea in remote Northwestern Australia:

> In *Blood Relations*, the storm is the climax of the play rather than the prelude to it as in *The Tempest*, and the Prospero-Caliban encounter is etherealized in one abrogative moment, which is death itself, as in *An Imaginary Life* (89).

A Christmas family reunion in a secluded beach house brings together Willy, his children Dinny and Cathy, Hilda and her gay son Kit. Several other characters that appear in the play can also be preidentified in *The Tempest* and they sometimes merge into one single voice. Prospero/Willy's power is felt from the very beginning when he reminisces about his coming from a small Greek island some twenty years ago to literally change the Australian landscape: in the intricate and complicated story Dinny of partly Aboriginal stock is the Australian Caliban, who accuses Willy of having raped her mother *and* the ancestral land, which he now claims as his own.

He would occasionally break into an Aboriginal chant and additionally blame Willy for sending him, as a Stolen Generation victim, to a Brisbane school (cf. Malouf's own Brisbane school years) "to learn to think like a white boy", thus severing him from his "mother's people" (66). Zabus in her fine analysis of Malouf's play concludes that in both Malouf's novel *An Imaginary Life* and the play *Blood Relations*, written within a decade of each other, death is the ultimate transformer for the Australian Prospero while Caliban lives on.

The third Australian work based on *The Tempest and* discussed in the book is Randolph Stow's *Visitants* (1979), featuring the deprivileging of Prospero, often through death, and the rise of Caliban playing Prospero in the Pacific. Zabus aptly traces the precarious Australian history with Papua New Guinea, officially designated as an Australian territory until 1949, rightly claiming that Malouf's two works, and Stow's *Visitants* describe "crucial steps in the history of Australia, from the beginnings of convictism, whereby Prospero is marooned, through penal servitude, on the isle of Caliban, on to Australia's neo-colonial role in the South Pacific" (95).

Part II of the book discusses the characters of Miranda/Sycorax as virgin/whore on the "eve of postpatriarchy", blending the feminist critique of patriarchy, postmodernist technique of representation, and postcolonial retrieval of discourses "under erasure" (103). The figure of Miranda is thus elevated, rightly so, into both a pre-feminist and what Zabus calls a "postpatriarchal" icon. The third part of the book is about the future, the return of postmodern Prospero "in an intergalactic exile", this "global male oppressor", and more than that because he shows his fragility as the result of an increased introspection, in literary works (e.g. Fowles, Murdoch), films (Jarman, Greenaway), as well as contemporary science-fiction novels and films.

Chatal Zabus's book of critical essays *Tempests after Shakespeare* is sure to cause a few 'tempests' in the critical domain. It is a book *sine qua non* in contemporary postcolonial literary criticism and written in an assured and erudite style. It has to be consulted not

only by scholars working in the field of (post-colonial) literatures and cultures written in English but also by Australianists.

Leitner, Gerhard, Ian G. Malcolm, eds, 2007. *The Habitat of Australia's Aboriginal Languages. Past, Present and Future*. Viii + 389pp. ISBN 978-3-11-019079-3, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, € 98.-. **Reviewed by Allan James,** University of Klagenfurt

This volume offers 'the broad picture' of the language heritage and practices of Australia's Aboriginal population from an overall 'habitat' perspective, as developed especially by the first editor in substantial previous research (e.g. Leitner 2004a, 2004b). In a complementary fashion, the extensive research of the second editor has covered linguistic, sociolinguistic and educational aspects of Aboriginal English (e.g. Malcolm 2000). With this pooled expertise then, it is the intention of the editorial team to elucidate linguistic, educational, socio-cultural, legal – and political – issues in the language use of Aboriginal Australians to "help overcome the shortage in accessible information", while aiming for "a comprehensiveness in coverage that is academically founded, yet accessible to the non-specialist" (1). As such, the volume has a more exclusive focus than previous comparable volumes such as Romaine (1991), who covers also non-anglophone immigrant languages as well as mainstream Australian English as indeed Leitner himself does in (2004b) and (2004a), respectively (reviewed by Arthur Delbridge in no. 19 of this journal).

The 'habitat' framework is of course particularly appropriate for the interpretation of Aboriginal languages and cultures, since as Graham McKay makes explicit "languages have a foundational relationship with the land and a derivative relationship with the people who are linked to that tract of land" (121). When another language intrudes to disturb the habitat, then that language (here English) is restructured for the Indigenous habitat, being modified to meet its needs and thereby creating a distinct group of speakers (Malcolm and Grote, 101). In turn, the Aboriginal habitat impacts on English, and with it helps shape postcolonial Australian society as a whole. Such points are already introduced in the general Introduction,

which gives an outline sociolinguistic history of language contact in the Aboriginal habitat, summarising past research and introducing the papers to come.

While there is a thematic progression of sorts from a focus on Aboriginal languages to pidgins and creoles to Aboriginal English (and Aboriginal influence on mainstream Australian English), other topics such as languages policy, languages in the educational system and the legal system as well as case studies are more scattered through the book. A tighter ordering and grouping of articles, as well as more cross-referencing, would have undoubtedly augmented the cohesiveness of the volume and focussed more sharply the central issues treated.

The first of the thirteen articles, appropriately, offers a linguistic overview of Australia's traditional languages by Harold Koch, covering typological reconstruction and historical comparison (as pioneered by the Viennese scholar Pater Wilhelm Schmidt in *Die Gliederung der australischen Sprachen: geographische, bibliographische, linguistische Grundzüge zur Erforschung der australischen Sprachen* of 1919), and a succinct, but nonetheless sufficiently detailed structural sketch of Aboriginal languages (phonological, grammatical, lexical, semantic, toponymic characteristics). This is followed by a case study of the Yolngu language habitat by Michael Christie, sensitively depicted in terms of local metaphors for meaningful social processes and structures in the community (e.g. 'bread' as metaphor for 'due process, right place'; 'hunting' for education; 'lagoons' or "ganma" for the meeting of Yolngu and Balanda (Europeans), etc.).

In the next article, Michael Walsh traces the development of Aboriginal languages over time, highlighting not so much their demise and loss but rather the ways in which those which have survived have changed under contact conditions in their own habitats. As a case study he takes the position of Murrinhpatha in the Port Keats (Wadeye) area of the Northern Territory. Questioning more traditional measures of language vitality, he shows how 'new languages' are emerging for new times and new uses (e.g. Areyonga

Teenage Pitjantjatjara, Children's Tiwi, neo-Dyirbal, light Warlpiri, etc.) and sees the future of Aboriginal languages more confidently now than, say, ten years ago. Complementary to this, Graham McKay's following article on "Language maintenance, shift and planning" outlines institutional language policies historically (or the lack thereof) in the light of decline, discussing the Census-derived findings of 2001 (e.g. alarmingly, seven times as many people speak Italian at home than speakers of all Indigenous languages together!) and the National Indigenous Languages Survey Report on vitality of 2005. While acknowledging the various initiatives taken in recent decades (e.g. the Senate National Language Policy of 1984, the National Policy on Languages of LoBianco (1987), the 2004 Maintenance of Indigenous Languages and Records), McKay concludes nonetheless that planning and policies have ultimately been too 'scattered' for full effectiveness and that important issues such as ownership and copyright for Aboriginal people in language maintenance still have to be properly addressed.

The next two papers naturally fit together, examining 'restructured' Englishes emerging from contact. John Harris treats Australian pidgins and creoles and Ian Malcolm and Ellen Grote Aboriginal English. Macassan Pidgin, a Portuguese-Arabic-Malay-derived South-East Asian trade lingua franca may be regarded as the first external contact language of the Aboriginals of northern Australia, also being used among Aboriginals themselves, as well as being initially employed with the Balanda too. However, the prime disturbed language ecology was of course brought about by Anglophone colonisation leading to the establishment of New South Wales English Pidgin and its spread via the pastoral frontiers (as cattle station pidgin) to the Northern Territory and subsequent creolisation to Kriol. A good overview is given of both varieties. Subsequently a detailed structural sketch of Aboriginal English - as the product and symbol of maintenance of Indigenous identity in the face of linguistic and cultural domination by immigrant Australians- is provided by Malcolm and Grote. They also discuss discourse level and pragmatic characteristics of the language which draw on linguistic conceptualisations of Indigenous communities (e.g. those present in oral narratives), where English is modified to meet the

needs of a particular habitat and, within that habitat, a distinct group of speakers. Finally, the authors point out ways in which new (post-)modern spaces are being created for anglophone Aboriginal discourse, e.g. via literary expression, hip-hop sub-culture, teenage emailing, as a means of challenging European representations of aboriginality in the post-colonial era, thereby linking in to Walsh's previous discussion.

Also the next two articles are thematically linked, focussing on traditional Aboriginal languages and i) their position within their own historical habitats (Farzah Sharifian) and ii) their contribution to Australia's language habitat at large (Gerhard Leitner). On the assumption that "human languages are largely a witness to the ways in which their speakers have conceptualized experience throughout the history of their existence" (181) and taking kinship relations as an example, Sharifian examines the ways such cultural conceptualizations as constantly (re-)negotiated schemas and categories are realised in linguistic structure – lexically, morphologically, syntactically – with reference to various Aboriginal languages. He further shows how such conceptualisations are also carried over into Pidgin. After briefly tracing the social history of language contact in Australia, Leitner considers the lexical impact of Aboriginal languages on mainstream Australian English – directly and via contact languages – in particular with reference to the onomasiological domains of *inter alia* social units, land and ownership, kinship and religious beliefs.

In conclusion he demonstrates convincingly via sample data analysis that the Aboriginal impact on the Australian linguistic habitat may be effected via Aboriginal languages, Kriol, a range of Aboriginal English(es) or indeed mainstream Australian English itself, singly, or more usually, in combination.

The focus of the following two articles is on the education system. Gary Partington and Ann Galloway, in a brief survey history of education practices in Australia, highlight clearly the fundamental differences between Aboriginal and Western concepts of education and then concentrate on policy, social and school factors which have

influenced the pattern of Indigenous education. Here issues such as the chequered history of policy initiatives, poverty and derivation, health and linguistic factors are seen as co-determining educational failure. In conclusion the authors review more recent measures taken to ameliorate this depressing picture with special reference to the professional development of Indigenous teachers. In a related vein, Ian Malcolm and Patricia Königsberg address the language gap in education where Indigenous school students are thrust into clothes….designed for different bodies. They critically evaluate the effect of past well-intended but ultimately unidirectional government bilingual/bicultural initiatives to increase literacy levels, and view positively more recent initiatives such as the Western Australian *ABC of Two Way Literacy and Learning,* which also change teacher perceptions of Aboriginal English itself. As a paradigm example of an educational project which aims to combine 'global' and 'local', conforming and diversified bilingual/bidialectal schooling on the basis of Aboriginal self-determination, the authors cite the integrative Yirrkala school initiative in Arnhem Land.

Diana Eades' article on Aboriginal English in the criminal justice system shows how insensitive (non-)appreciation and (non-) interpretation of Indigenous language use has led to gross misrepresentation of suspects' positions (and rights), including downright fabricated confessions in two much publicised cases historically. Highlighting three specific linguistic sources of misunderstanding, the author does, however, signal some more recent improvement in intercultural communication awareness by professionals, not least promoted by the widescale adoption of her own *Handbook for Legal Practitioners* of 1992. Nonetheless there remain severe travesties of justice involving the Aboriginal English practice of legal suspects such as evidenced in the striking Pinkenba case of 1995 in which the gratuitous concurrence and silence of suspected young male offenders was manipulated to dismiss the case against the police which they had initiated.

Rob Amery's paper traces the position of the Aboriginal language habitat in research and tertiary education, noting that historically more attention has been paid to the linguistic description of

Aboriginal languages themselves rather than to matters of their learning and teaching. However, a certain shift in focus towards more sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic sensitivity can now be seen evident in current projects such as those on e.g. child language acquisition, code-switching and language mixing, language and cognition, language and the law, language and health, etc. Issues of research ethics and ownership of materials are shown to be significant in this context and examples of best practice pedagogical projects are given.

The final article by Terry Ngarritjan-Kessaris and Linda Ford takes the form of a very appropriate extended statement on epistemological, ontological, ideological and political aspects of research into the Aboriginal (preferably, *Tyikim* - the Mak Mak term for ourselves - or *Blekbala* – Northern Territory creole) language habitat. Employing a *Tyikim* mode of discourse, Ford critically addresses via her Indigenous knowledge system *wuwa ngung* various shortcomings of *Padakoot* , i.e. "non-Indigenous", research with regard to these issues. For example, she stresses the necessity of contesting 'the ideological force of Western research as a field of imperialistic knowledge-creation' by the adoption of corrective *Tyikim*-based practices in research activity, by drawing on Indigenous conceptual frameworks of interpretation e.g. reference to Entities, their relations and the practice of these relations after Booran Mirraboopa (2001), and by employing metaphors from oral traditions to reinforce the idea that *Tyikim* ontologies can help in theorising Indigenous research. Ngarritjan-Kessaris in his own statement highlights the central position that Aboriginal English has as the voice of the *Tyikim/Blekbala*, debunks the Western scientific myth of objectivity and criticises Western research practices that can still be colonizing and disempowering for Indigenous people. Finally, he reviews the contributions in the present volume and concludes positively that they serve to create a healthier equilibrium, while reminding us that "[a]ddressing imbalances and creating structures and processes that maintain balance in *Blekbala/Mununga* [i.e. "white people", Aboriginal English] interactions are ongoing challenges and goals for language researchers in *Blekbala* contexts in Australia" (367).

This is a very successful volume, promoting in a culturally sensitive way a balanced picture of educational, language support and legal practices in the Aboriginal language habitat and elucidating the complex (socio-)linguistic realities of the habitat in a more comprehensive way than has previously been attempted. In highlighting the proprietal, locational/areal and historical/mythical properties of Aboriginal cultural contexts, the authors amply demonstrate the appropriateness of the 'language habitat' concept itself as a productive interpretive framework.

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James Boyce: *Van Diemen's Land*. Melbourne: Black Inc Press, 2008, 388 pp., AUD 49.95 (hc). Isbn 978 1863954136. **Reviewed by Adi Wimmer**, University of Klagenfurt.

Van Diemen's Land continues to be an enigma for both Australian and European observers. Having lived in the state for six months, I can understand both the fascination with this isle as well as the resentment that the locals bear against mainlanders. All too often Tasmania does not even figure on commercial maps of Australia, and it is still the butt of jokes by stand-up comedians for its alleged endemic in-breeding. Manning Clark did a relatively poor job writing up its history; he presents the development of Van Diemen's Land as largely parallel to the development of NSW. And here I already come to the core of Boyce's engrossing study: Clark's view, prevailing as it was for half a century, is wrong. Van Diemen's Land has a history as separate from that of NSW as, say, the history of the USA is separate from Canada's.

Boyce presents the differences convincingly. While NSW was created by administrative planning and proceeded to develop under strict control of the authorities, the 'founding fathers' of Van Diemen's Land was an unruly mob of whalers and sealers. While NSW had an uninterrupted inflow of convicts, the colony-to-be Van Diemen's Land was started in 1803 with a few shiploads – which then stopped coming. During the Napoleonic wars, in which Britain was heavily involved, it forgot about its new colony south of Bass Strait, to the near-despair of Governor David Collins. Provisions ran out and he was forced to release many convicts, sending them out into the wilderness for the purpose of hunting wallabies so that the colony would not starve. A handsome price was paid for the kangaroo meat collected by the independent foragers, although most of the profit went to the officer class. Thus, the convicts of the first 20 years had an existence much preferable to that on the mainland. Their freedom was far greater than that of the first convicts to NSW and it was not until the 1820s that secure gaols were built. While the dependence on kangaroo meat remained, imperial control over the

island almost broke down. Their income was no less than that of the first colonists – and since everyone wore kangaroo skins they even looked like them. Tempting fate, many became bushrangers and teamed up with Aborigines in robbing isolated farms. Colonial control over the island almost broke down.

Even so, the farms of the early emancipists are described as amazingly productive by Boyce. The colony fast became an exporter of agricultural products to the mainland even though the farming practices by untrained colonists were ridiculed by the administration. Incidentally, Boyce also tells us that for the first decades of the antipodean settlements the most important export commodity were sealskins harvested on the islands to the north, northeast and south of Van Diemen's Land. In 1803, 57.000 skins were taken, and in 1804 a record number of 107.000. Most were exported to China (16). Over-hunting led to a rapid decline of the seal population thereafter. It was only in the 1820s that wool became the main export commodity.

A sea-change occurred on Van Diemen's land with the start of governor Arthur's rule in 1824. The end of the Napoleonic Wars saw a substantial increase in the flow of convicts as well as free settlers seeking free land grants over the grasslands of the island on which they profitably placed sheep. Arthur was able to introduce effective controls over the convicts, and had considerable success in moulding them into a subservient labour force for the gentry estates. He achieved this by two means: first, he eliminated bushranging. This he did either by military force or by coaxing the bushrangers back into the fold. Second he introduced a range of economic reforms backed up by a fierce punishment regime for secondary offenders, including the mighty fortress of Port Arthur (which was, incidentally, the largest gaol in the British Empire for many decades to come.)

Arthur also escalated the war with the Aborgines. A particularly obnoxious method was to put a bounty of five shillings on the head of any Aboriginal man brought in by settler or bushranger (less for women and children but still a bounty). This effectively broke all the bonds between whites and blacks. Secondly, he forced the small farms out of existence and replaced them with the farms of the well-

heeled, for which land grants of 10.000 acres were provided. In other words, Arthur created serious class conflicts where none had existed before, and since the small farms were more likely to leave the indigenous population alone while wealthy farmers were inclined to drive them off their land, this measure was also aimed at 'eradicating' the Aboriginal 'problem'.

In Boyce's narrative Governor Arthur emerges as an administratively capable, but truly evil presence: he continued the genocidal fight against the Aborigines with the infamous Black Line (the biggest government military operation against Aborigines in Australian history!) even after receiving written orders from Whitehall to seek alternative ways of dealing with the indigenous population. And when the last remnants of mainland Aboriginality – some 300 people – laid down their arms in exchange for a treaty that should have allowed them access to their traditional food sources, he reneged on it and had them all transported to a concentration camp (my term, not Boyce's; but I choose the word not without caution) to Flinders island, where 80% of them perished in just one decade. The 'philanthropist' George Augustus Robinson, self-appointed 'protector' of Aborigines, was complicit in this vile treachery.

Not being a historian, I am a poor judge of how Boyce used existing resources or how new his findings are. As a cultural studies person however, I am highly impressed by the observations on the actual life of the colony which he makes. For instance, he explores the significance of imported dogs. (There were no dingoes in Van Diemen's Land as the island separated from the mainland before dingoes penetrated the mainland from the north). Wallabies were hunted almost exclusively with the use of English hunting dogs; the rifles of the time were ineffective against the elusive, nocturnal marsurpials, and in any case it would have been dangerous to provide convicts or emancipists with fire-arms. As pointed out before, this put emancipists and free settlers on a comparatively equal footing; what was new to me is that Aborigines adopted the method as well. So 'efficient' was this method that within only 30 years, the Tasmanian emu became extinct, while wallabies, barely avoiding the same fate, became scarce almost everywhere. Since dogs were an important ingredient in the emancipation of convicts

Governor Arthur banned their possession to serving prisoners and instituted a dog tax to reduce ownership among the emancipist class. His intention was to degrade them to the status of wage-dependent agricultural labourers; in this he largely succeeded. Another intriguing observation concerns a report of the late 1830s that a large number of trees were dying in the heartland of Van Diemen's Land. Boyce explains this by the extinction of Aboriginal hunters with the consequence that the possum population exploded.

For reasons that are not quite clear to me, Boyce chose to create a separate, 57-page appendix titled "Toward Genocide: Government Policy on the Aborigines 1827 – 1838." The history of the genocidal war against the indigenous population of Tasmania has of course been treated elsewhere, but Keith Windschuttle's revisionist book *The Fabrication of Aboriginal history* (2002) re-opened the debate adding a tone of urgency. Boyce contributed an important chapter to Robert Manne's collection of rebuttal essays *Whitewash: On Keith Windschuttle's Fabrication of Aboriginal History* (Melbourne: Black Inc., 2003) and in his appendix elaborates his argument. He makes quite extensive forays into the central question of how many undocumented killings occurred: Windschuttle's argument, if you remember, was that since colonial administrations reported only a handful of lethal encounters with the indigenous population, the charge of a genocidal war against Tasmania's Aborigines must be dropped. Well, Boyce presents substantial and convincing evidence (letters, diaries and other forms of personal testimony) about who the killers were: settlers and their private police forces of bushrangers and other hired desperadoes. Obviously their murders (and the settlers were well aware of the nature of their bloody business) would not be recorded, would not be reported to the authorities. They were clearly against the laws of the colony.

This study is an important contribution to Tasmania's *Trauerarbeit*. As late as in 1980 a feature film (*Manganinni*) put the blame for the massacres firmly on the colonial police, while the Van Demonian settlers emerged as innocent bystanders or, at worst, unwilling extras.

In 2003, the state of Tasmania could have celebrated the creation of a penal colony (as part of NSW) two hundred years ago. It did not. In 2004, the city of Hobart could have celebrated its bicentennial. Again, it did not. The unacknowledged reason is that Tasmania's history is still considered raw and shameful. James Boyce's study confronts the shame head-on and so delivers a valuable contribution to the discourse of Reconciliation. Perhaps it is useful to quote a few lines from Graeme Hetherington's poem "Hobart Town" to illustrate what the poets already knew before the historians:

> Our history here is nasty, brutish and short-lived:
> Convicts and one exterminated race.
> The hulking mountain's twilight markings tell
> Of aboriginals cold as gun-metal blue
> Of convicts in the shadows cast,
> A past that's better buried with the dead.
> Perhaps that's why the people's nerves are bad.
> There's a kind of lean-to of the mind
> In folk who have no once-upon-a-time.

In short, this is an excellent and eminently readable study. Boyce has drawn together a number of aspects of early Tasmanian history (the impact of sealers, the economics of farming, the deliberate creation of class conflict in an effort to re-create a pre-industrial England, the relations between early farmers and Aborigines, and so forth) and has thus created a new, multifaceted narrative. Read it – and no good library should be without the new 'Boyce'.

Halligan, Marion. ***Murder on the Apricot Coast*****.** Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2008. ISBN 978 174175 84 4. 249 pp, pb. **Reviewed by Peter Stummer**, University of Munich.

Halligan, author of some twenty novels and another one in the pipeline (*Valley of Grace*, publ. April 2009), was brought up in Hackett, and, as far as one knows, lives there today. Small wonder, then, that she seeks to put Canberra on the literary map, and be it only in the realm of the novel of suspense.

The armchair cosiness of the book cover, designed by Pauline Haas and illustrated by Maggie Fooke, signals the tongue-in-cheek tenor of this Jane Austen plus Agatha Christie project. So one great asset of this multi-layered, well-phrased novel consists of the manifold forms of irony. It is a fair guess what else, apart from their abode, writer and persona might share. Newly-wed Cassandra has just become M(r)s Marriot and works as a freelance editor of fiction. Somewhat reminiscent though of Sartre and Beauvoir, they live in three houses, with the most spectacular being one of Al Marriot´s on the coast, where he grows the apricots of the title. The reader sees everything from her point-of-view, in a kind of stream-of-consciousness narrative mode. In this way, it does not make sense that reviewers of the predecessor *The Apricot Colonel* (2006) pedantically complained about the lack of precise punctuation. Although she is supposed to be in her late thirties, as it turns out, she often sounds somewhat more advanced in age.

As Halligan maintained in a recent interview (Heanue 2008) on Stateline (ABC TV). she writes "domestically." Consequently, the world is unravelled, Austen-like, through dinner parties of mainly three couples and their children. One meets at a book launch in the National Library, has tea at Tilley´s, or discusses food at Moutarde. Fate takes its course, first with a friend confiding in her about a secret liaison with a married man and then with the sudden demise of the beautiful daughter of one of the friendly couples. When it becomes known that drug abuse was involved, the complementary detective work of Cass and Al are set in motion.

They both lament the present-day demoralisation and bemoan that "these middle-class people" tend to be so "unselfcritical." The inclination to moralise as well as to digress mockingly recalls the ways of the eighteenth century. The learned play on names confirms this trend, from Cassandra to Pomona and Amabel. Fob watches are contrasted with their wristlet successors, and pin money is thrown in for good measure. Cass demonstrates a considerable mobility of register and repeatedly excels at explicit reflections on language and style. She happily introduces 'hard words,' such as meretrix and meretricious, consults the *Shorter Oxford* and the *Macquarie*, delightedly teaches her Mac new words, and effectually comments on the usage of such words as adore, alleged, cad, spiv, trope, adultery, and the meaning of "cutting the mustard."

Numerous are her literary ruminations. She deplores that they teach 'communication' these days at English departments in the university instead of literature proper. She defends the history-truth relation in story-telling, "a good novel never lies." She chides a youngster for wanting to become the next Matthew Reilly in terms of profit without the effort of reading. By implication, various types of thriller are ventilated or traditions alluded to, when, for instance Al poses jokingly as Hercule Poirot. More important still are her good-natured swipes at Australian literary prizes and more recent bestselling literary hoaxes. She mentions James Frey and the unmasking of his sensational autobiography by the smoking gun web site (Wyatt 2006).

Jibes at literary fashion comprise thoughts about genre and closure, and, demonstratively, she congratulates herself on being an "unreconstructed reader."

No doubt, the model of the enterprise is the murder mystery. What eggs Cassandra on is her distinct feeling that there was something "murky" that "needed to come out," in that superficially intact Canberra between Lyneham and Manuka. A motto from Horace stresses the satirical angle, and a kind of prologue plays on the notion of sequels. Instead of risking the misfortune of Austen or Bronte in our times, you had better sit down and write your own

sequel, before anybody else does it. It also ties in with a more classical tradition that Cassandra very sparingly comes up with truly poetic metaphors, and it is certainly not accidental that they all occur in an emotional context celebrating the Cass – Al relationship. Thus, when she is shocked, he cups her hands "which were sitting like scared mice on the table" (128) or, more detailed, at the beginning of chapter nineteen:

> When the big cat moment [with reference to an American article, this notion had been introduced in chapter seven to denote sleeplessness] came in the middle of the night I didn´t worry but snuggled up to Al and let my mind do a bit of ruminating. We were lying like spoons, him behind, and it was very comfortable. I like cuddles in the night. Sometimes he spoons behind, sometimes I do. Sometimes we entwine.

Her stylistic sensibility is put to good use when she analyses, in the core of the novel, the alleged memoir of a young prostitute. Echoes from *Moll Flanders* to *Fanny Hill*, on the one hand, and present-day kiss-and-tell pulp volumes, on the other, cannot be overlooked.

All of which leaves two important aspects of the book open for discussion. One is the oscillation between some feminism light and a distinct tendency toward romance. Cass and her mother are a case in point of the former. Moreover, men are far from being foregrounded and many are rather dubious specimens. But then there is also the ideal of beautiful prose explicitly extolled as necessarily "singing" and commanding a rhythm "which speaks to the heart." And on the plot level, there exists a beloved husband who is allowed to remain totally enigmatic, who is not supposed to answer any question about his rather secretive activities and who nonetheless clearly dominates the relationship. It adds to the happy-end romance that Cass announces her pregnancy at the end of the novel. The other point of interest is clearly the combined agenda of debunking Ozzie provincialism and mateship masculinity at one and the same time, which incidentally could explain the lack of critical attention so far which Dorothy Jones (2008) remarks upon. Not only is there a great emphasis on education and learning, on French and French cooking, on travel, on the experience of asparagus time

in Hamburg for example, on the knowledge of great literature, but also on the deflation of violent machismo. Male pomposity is definitely diminished and devalued. Perhaps some (male) readers may find it a bit rich that the fascinating Al Marriot fought in the Gulf War, it is true, but is much more lauded in the novel for being an expert in preserving apricots, and for being a fantastic ironer, and for being able to pass himself off very convincingly as a woman by cross-dressing. For, after all, his big decorative Priapus statue was not overturned in his garden for nothing.

Nonetheless, to use the common thriller jargon, the novel might not be a stunner or a real page-turner, but it certainly represents an entertaining and a rewarding good read.

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Venero Armanno: *The Dirty Beat.* University of Queensland Press, 2007. ISBN 978-0-7022-3614-3, pb., 274 pages, AUD 32.95. **Reviewed by Veronika Starnes**, University of Silesia

When a copy of this book ventured into my hands I did not know what to expect. With the words *Dirty Beat* seemingly spray-painted on the cover in the middle of a semi-circle of red giving it an urban *grandeur*, I did not at first notice the splintered drum stick nor the decaying part of a drum kit that plays a significant role within the plot. Yet here it lay withering on the back of the cover; much like the narrator in the story. However, the words highlighted in red – rock, jazz, sex, love, life – struck a chord with this reviewer.

They come up in that precise order but seem to be unrelated to the story until one takes a closer look. The words and their connotations are indeed splashed out as raw as the blood-like ink used to accentuate them on the cover. Instantly they grab your attention, like a horrible car accident with fatalities; yet you cannot turn away.

The originator of this novel's simple prose is called Max, later on referred to as "the smashed-up drummer who's the audio man" (250). He weaves in and out throughout the two sections of the book named "I Feel So Strong" and "Soul Cakes", creating a feeling as though one were attending a séance, with the ghost performing all the parts and all the characters needed, that, like himself, weave in and out of his life. Unlike the plot, the prose flows easily, and if you listen closely you can perhaps hear music playing in the background. Maybe it is just wishful thinking or maybe one actually can adjust the volume of what Max presents in a chaotic yet understandable fashion. The events, like a beat, like a heart pounding, like adrenaline rushing through one's veins when the pressure gets too much, constantly has the reader at its mercy, the harshness or simplicity of a scene, a memory, a voice, never allows you to rest. This again, like a *Grateful Dead* album, creates a whole that is fashioned out of disparate parts to suit any reader with a love

of music, introspection, and a love of life that fuels the desire to create music: "you've lived and died and that's what every good musician wants to do if they're going to make memorable music" (203). Armanno's Max is just as candid, and real as Marilyn Manson could ever hope to present himself within his own autobiography *The Long Hard Road Out Of Hell*. That is exactly the feeling one has when confronted by Max's stories, anecdotes, or recollections of what at times is the equivalent of "dying by degrees" (190). Yet, to every tale of failure, of heartbreak, of another lesson learned, Armanno allows the reader a second of positive thinking: "maybe the upside is that I can put myself back together any way I want" (194).

And this is what lies at the core of this ridiculously simple scenario, the fact that it can be prescribed to so many aspiring, established or even day-dreaming musicians who live among us and supply us daily with doses of fantasy to enlighten our often dreary lives. All those who entertain us, who break the monotony, our "cookie cutter" (245) existence, only to perish in the very world that was meant to save both them and us: "You never get the chance to get ready for change; you simply hurtle in, blind, lonesome and always ill-prepared" (221).

Yet, there is no feeling of regret when all has been said and done, and Max's coffin is eased into the ground which concludes the story. It is, maybe, an anti-climactic ending. By this gesture however Armanno professes a philosophy that summarizes every tale the novel extols, namely "Plenty of passion but passion burns and leaves ashes" (253). Put another way: when life burns out it leaves a corpse, it ends the passion. The reader, if managing to compose her own thoughts after having a *tete-a-tete* with this stranger who says he provides "the dirty feel of old" (245) and could have been encountered anywhere, whether at a bar, bus-stop, library, whether drunk or sober (but more likely the former); that reader has unraveled a gripping story and has lived vicariously through various woes, loves, excesses. It is what modern society thrives on. As Lacan has remarked "nowhere does it appear more clearly that man's desire finds its meaning in the desire of the other, not so

much because the other holds the key to the object desired, as because the first object of desire is to be recognized by the other" (*Ecritis: A Selection* 1985:58). Impossible to leave Max's side without a smile, and unlike some novels which feel "as exciting as getting pounded by a side of beef" (245), Venero Armanno's *The Dirty Beat* manifests that "distance is nothing, time is immaterial, a sigh travels across decades and hits you in the same places." (p.251)

Venero Armanno: *Candle Life*. Milsons Point, N.S.W.: Vintage, 2006. 351 pages, AUD 32.95. Isbn 174166120X.
Reviewed by Catherine Schwerin, University of Hamburg.

Armanno's dreamlike novel opens with a man being roused from sleep after an illness, a nameless man cut adrift in a foreign city, roused from a dream of his beloved.

> When a man can't sleep any more, any sleep is a good sleep, and this one turned out to be something like a coma, and filled with you, Yukiko, only you.

This is the tale of a journey which weaves in and out of darkness and light. In large stretches of the narrative the man, an Australian writer, is speaking to his absent beloved, Yukiko, his Japanese-Australian girlfriend. He tells her of his encounters in Paris, the city the two of them had planned to travel to for a year, a city he is now experiencing alone. Interspersed are memories of his life in Australia that gradually reveal Yukiko's fate (her sudden accidental death before their planned trip), the extent of the protagonist's grief, and consequently the reason for his dislocation in both the literal and figurative sense.

The protagonist decides to go ahead alone with their plans to live in an arts commune in Paris, where his daily excursions and night wanderings bring him into contact with the lost, lonely, invisible people on the streets of the romanticised metropolis. These include the beggar Harry, who is burdened by the horror and shame of his experiences at the outbreak of World War II, Zoya, a mute Russian girl working as a prostitute who has deep powers of empathy, and the Cuban-American writer Jackson "Sonny" Lee, who is just as lost as the Australian writer but driven in his quest for retribution. It is the meeting with the latter that sets the protagonist on a path leading him to explore the depths of his grief, which is ultimately symbolically reflected in his myth-like journey down to the catacombs beneath the city of Paris.

In a parallel strand, the forlorn Australian writer is visited by a French friend whom he and Kiko knew from Australia. Carefree, erratic André Domain lobs into the writer's life as an interlude and intrudes into his solitude. André's subsequent unexpected death brings the man into contact with Emilie, André's niece. Her sensual and vivacious presence offers the man an unexpected pathway back to life. Despite this, the protagonist is irresistibly drawn to seek Kiko, drawn to the darkness and the desire to relive his hours with her. And to achieve this he sets his sights on the establishment *Les Belles Endormies* (*The Sleeping Beauties*), where sleepers, after imbibing a mysterious beverage, fall into a deep slumber in which they may relive the most significant moments and memories of their lives.

This notion of sleep runs through the narrative as a theme. It frames the story in the opening, as the man wakes from his post-illness sleep, and in the close with his drug-induced comatose sleep that seems to prevent him from re-emerging to the world of the living. Conversely it is his sleeplessness that drives him out into the streets at night where his chance encounters with people propel the story in its path. Sleep is connected with his friend André who seems to be blessed with a capacity for deep slumber. André speaks of sleep as death, "No, no. I'm dead... Bed, bed" (54), and of waking as returning from the dead, "Well, after all, I have to come back from my land of the dead" (62). Ironically, André's sound sleep is the symptom of an illness, and it is while he is staying with the Australian writer that he fails to return to the land of the living.

There are sequences in the story where the sleep is drug-induced, and these take on an almost supernatural quality, where, despite the physical torment of the sleeper, the soul is raised to commune with the stars and attain a level of blissful enlightenment. This occurs in the protagonist after André's funeral, and in Sonny Lee after the brutal attack on him in Turkey where he almost loses his life. The Australian writer has a similar elevating experience when he descends to the catacombs to drink the beverage stolen from *Les Belles Endormies* in the hope of finding a pathway in the underworld that will reunite him with Kiko. He manages to emerge from the

symbolic underworld of the catacombs, but it remains uncertain whether he truly returns to the surface. In the final scene where he almost reaches out to the women who could bring him home to Emilie, he collapses into bitter-sweet oblivion instead, united with the stars. Ultimately sleep and death in the story are facets of the same phenomenon.

The narrative is also imbued with a sense of isolation and disorientation. It focuses most keenly on his loss, the loss of his loved one, Yukiko (the cause which is only gradually revealed – her death). This is what leads to his aimlessness. His decision to continue with their shared plan to go to Paris, although Kiko is no longer there, is more due to an inability to choose another direction and a desire to maintain her presence in his life as long as possible than to a focused desire to be in Paris. He is emotionally lamed.

This isolation and disorientation is also reflected in hindered communication. The writer loses his ability to write, becoming frozen in time like "a bug trapped in amber" (p.104). In addition, he faces a language barrier – he is unable to express himself freely in the foreign language of his environment. The Russian girl, Zoya, is hindered in her communication in a different way. She has lost her power of speech and in fact is working as a prostitute to finance her treatment to restore her ability to speak. Her loss of speech, however, seems to enhance her qualities as a vessel for the sleepers' dreams at *Les Belles Endormies*.

Loneliness and desperation are encountered everywhere in the story - the policeman at the door at the beginning who engages in conversation; the beggar Harry; Sonny Lee in his apparently futile search for the murderers of the woman he loved, who savagely beat him and left him to die. Despite this the story remains in a mode of the magical, never taking on a laboured or burdensome manner. The narrative itself is light, propelling the reader forward. What is more, the story is embedded in a framework of celebration, commencing with the 60th anniversary of the armistice at the beginning and concluding with a street protest-cum-party at the end, so that the darkness of the inner events is played out against the confusion of

light and colour and noise that forms the backdrop. This further highlights the contrast between the internal and external, the light and the dark.

The narrative style conveys a sense of the episodic, yet each episode pours fluently into the next. Armanno picks us up in the gentle tide of events, slowly carrying us out to the sea of one man's loss and emotional isolation. This man journeys to the depths of his emotional Hades in an attempt to retrieve his beloved (symbolically in the catacombs) and manages to return to surface. Despite the somehow ambiguous ending, which seems to contradict the logic of the preceding narrative, Armanno's *Candle Life* is haunting, magical and strangely uplifting.

Bob Mainwaring: *Escape to Van Diemen's Land*. Hartwell, Victoria: Temple House, 2006, 388 pp. $29.95, ISBN 1921206268. **Reviewed by Paula Kreiner** (University of Klagenfurt)

Bob Mainwaring's *Escape to Van Diemen's Land* is unapologetically a convict-cum-pioneering success story set in the new colony of Australia. Four words on book's back cover say it all really: "Fortune favours the brave". Say no more.

Set in the mid-19th century *Escape to Van Diemen's Land* tells the story of Martin Maynard born into a yeoman's family on the Ashburton Estate in England. His childhood on the estate is nothing short of idyllic, living "in a comfortable cottage with a secure life within the tight little clan of the estate community" (4). His father, bailiff to the enlightened landowner, Sir Reginald Palliser, teaches him about farming and love of the land. From the estate's steward, Petala Smith, he learns about breaking in, training and managing horses. Also an expert wrestler, Petala finds in Martin a keen student, to whom he can pass on his expertise. Martin's formal schooling is taken care of in the estate's school established by Lady Palliser but his love of reading is fostered by his parents who read with their children every evening. Working at times as a pageboy in the manor house finely tunes Martin's social skills. In short, Mainwaring presents the reader in the opening pages of the book with a paragon. An honest hardworking well liked young man with a range of skills and abilities that will ensure success later in life. Unfortunately, there is a stiff one-dimensional shallowness about all this down-to-earth manly goodness that proves difficult to digest page after page. This coupled with the narrator's somewhat pedantic approach leaves an impression early on that Martin is just too good to be true.

The good life comes to an end when his father dies. Unaccountably, given the narrator's earlier praise of Sir Reginald Palliser as a "good

squire", Martin's family is forced to leave the estate and fend for themselves. In the space of a few sentences the family is torn out from the idyllic estate community and forced to cope as best they can in the turbulent upheavals of discontented rural England in the 1840's. It is a change of fortunes that tests the reader's credulity. Safe, secure and well on his way to becoming a well rounded hero one day, Martin suddenly sees his options reduced to life in the poorhouse or a miserable death the next. The narrator, apparently unaware that his opening pages have engendered in the reader a sense of implausibility both in terms of character and plot, proceeds for another 350 odd pages in a manner that only strains our credulity further. This is a success story *par excellence.*

Sounding like a university commerce graduate considering his options, Martin looks at means and ways of getting transported to Van Diemen's Land "to get on" in life as he prosaically puts it. In his matter-of-fact tone he discusses with his brother-in-law, George the village blacksmith, the option of becoming a "rich colonial squire" as opposed to "being a downtrodden English farm labourer" (11). George duly helps him become convicted for theft and after receiving the local vicar's blessing for his actions – what else! – Martin is transported to Hobarton in 1845.

In the fledgling penal colony, Martin's skills, abilities and general nice-guy persona naturally stand him in good stead. Assigned first to a public works gang he quickly becomes part of a hand-picked surveying group and is soon the respected right-hand man of the surveyor, Mr Kentish. The next step on his road to success is as land owner Charles Drewitt's convict servant. Martin quickly makes an excellent impression on Drewitt, is rapidly promoted to farm manager and subsequently takes on the role as assistant manager at Drewitt's timber mill. Let us not forget this is, in part, a Tasmanian success story. By 1850 at the age of 25 Martin is granted a full pardon with Drewitt's support. The fact that he single-handedly manages to overwhelm four armed bushrangers and obtain celebrity status following an article in the *Launceston Examiner* undoubtedly helps. The gold rush of the 1850's literally provides Martin with his golden opportunity. Too sensible to succumb to the lure of searching

for gold itself, he sets up a business carting freight to the goldfields. This is, of course, a resounding success. From freighter he then moves on to becoming hotelier and finally, after one heroic brush with death, part owner and managing director of a public share timber company in Tasmania. The moral of the story is clear: Australia is the land of opportunity for those upright souls willing to work hard and persevere.

The problem is, as I mentioned, it is all too improbable. Nobody is that good, nobody that lucky. Even the legendary heroes of the ancients had one small blemish. Not so Mainwaring's Martin. He effortlessly bounds from strength to strength. The narrator seems only to pause in his description of well-earned successes to provide Martin with appropriate opportunities to display his good qualities: he is the upright hero disgusted by homosexual approaches on board the convict ship, the good Samaritan who saves a stowaway on a steamship to Melbourne, the good mate to fellow convict Thomas Carter, the honest business partner, the defeater of bushrangers (on a number of occasions) and the opponent of corrupt goldfields police. The result? The reader quickly begins to suffer from fatigue at a narrative that consists of a linear trajectory of success upon success with cumbersome repetitions detailing Martin's numerous accomplishments.

Not only does the perfection of Martin's character and his extraordinary allocation of luck undercut the plausibility of the narrative, it is accompanied by a degree of narratorial clumsiness that is, well, at times almost funny especially when it comes to emotional or intimate scenes. One of the more intimate scenes in the book illustrates this best

> He had been in bed for another hour and was sleeping lightly when he became aware that Alice was in the room with him, sitting on the side of his bed with her hand on his shoulder. He woke with a start, but soon realised what was happening. The thought flashed into his mind that he wasn't really surprised by the turn of events.
>
> 'Is there something wrong?' he asked
> 'No,' she said, 'not as far as I'm concerned.'

> 'Can I do something for you?'
> 'You can give a lonely woman a bit of company, that's all I want'[...]

The narrator goes on to provide a brief outline of Alice putting her arms around his neck and Martin putting his arms around her etc etc, to finish with the sentence:

> Within a couple of minutes, she mounted him and accepted his manhood with enthusiasm. A few minutes later, they were sated and lay in each other's arms. (202)

The above excerpt also sums up the main role of women in the novel. Aside from cooking, they are there to ensure Martin's sexual satisfaction. Their own satisfaction is not deemed necessary, nor are they entitled to any form of commitment from Martin in return for services rendered. Mainwaring does not seem to see Martin's willingness to leave his partners as the next business venture beckons as a flaw in his character.

Mainwaring's depiction of convict transportation and the fledgling colony in Van Diemen's Land also poses problems for the critical reader. He promulgates the philosophy of 'terra nullius' packaged in the language of a boy's own adventure with more than a touch of modern tourism spin. The description of Martin's journey to the colony in the convict ship *Emma Eugenia,* "the fastest ship on the run" (22) appears to owe as much to the travel brochure genre as to Enid Blyton's *The Adventurous Four*. Mainwaring actually uses the word 'cruise' to describe the journey and at one point has one of the soldiers say "Don't say that we fail to give our passengers good service" (24). The convicts are portrayed as "companions and associates, in the manner of old school chums" (25). In case the reader has missed the point, we are told a couple of pages on that cleaning up after a storm was a shared experience that "generated a spirit of camaraderie amongst all on board" (27). The convicts pass the time of day "by fishing from the lower decks and playing games of their own making" (27) while live entertainment is provided by the "catchy hymns that all could sing" (30) and the moving sermons at Sunday church service.

Arriving in Hobart, "the weary travellers" are welcomed by "the clean smell of eucalyptus and myrtle forests" (29). After a day of rest Martin and Co. begin their walk northwards to Deloraine to meet up with the public works road gang they have been assigned to. Effusive descriptions of Hobart and the Tasmanian countryside accompany the group of convicts as they hike and camp along the way in a vein that would do today's *Tourism Tasmania* proud. Mainwaring describes the countryside as having "a shining cleanness and magnificence" (37) while Pontville is described as a delightful little village 15 miles from Hobart. The peace and tranquillity of some of the vistas make Martin think of paradise. Not one sentence in the entire book reflects the harsh and brutal conditions that the majority of transported convicts faced in what was Australia's 'premier' penal colony.

Once Martin joins the surveying group, Mainwaring moves from appreciative tourist to enthusiastic pioneer mode. The Kentish group discover "a vast expanse of beautiful, open country that stretched away to the west as far as they could see" (63). In line after line, Mainwaring tells us that this open country, a new and unexplored land. Aboriginal Tasmania is dismissed in a mere one sentence warning the convicts that they were entering 'blackfellow country' (41). There is no sense in the narrative that Mainwaring appreciates the irony of this statement. Indeed, it is this total absence of critical enquiry which makes the book so frustrating to read. Mainwaring's attitude towards white colonial Australia is one of unstinting admiration. Perhaps he is simply naïve. Or perhaps family pride plays a role in this regard, given that Mainwaring's forbears settled in and grew prosperous in Tasmania. Nonetheless, the fact that the indigenous Aboriginal population was systematically killed off in Tasmania as a result of white colonial policy is ignored as is the inhumane nature of the penal system itself.

It is an unapologetically rose tinted view of colonial history that gained particular prominence during the Howard era. Sadly, as Robert Manne comments in his *Whitewash: on Keith Windschuttle's Fabrication of Aboriginal history*, this uncritical view of Australian history is 'a song many people want to hear'. Mainwaring, while

obviously much less prominent than cause célèbre Keith Windschuttle, nonetheless plays a part in determining how our national past is remembered, commemorated and celebrated. In telling such a one-sided story of progress, the story of a heroic young man who settles in a strange country and, along with others, transforms it through hard work, innovation and bravery, Mainwaring uncritically reflects Australia's settler mythology. *Escape to Van Diemen's Land* is simply another telling of the heroic tale of the British as the discoverers, explorers and pioneers of the country and of how white men created a civilisation out of a wilderness. (Attwood 2005; 14). It is also a celebration of that mythical Australian Adam – the working class, rugged, taciturn, courageous hero. A mate in need. The battler who succeeds. A stronger, harder and more masculine version than the original British settler.
A creature forged through his experiences with the land.

Ultimately *Escape to Van Diemen's Land* is about national identity, since it is through *stories* that a people come to understand their nation. In Martin and his life story Mainwaring celebrates an archetype and a history of a nation that excludes Aboriginal Australians, ethnic Australians and women. His is a safe, smug exclusive Australia. An Australia, that to my mind, actively prevents the reconciling of the nation's past and present, the rise of alternative voices and ultimately the development of a nation at ease with itself and its past.

Francis Bacon held that some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested. Reading is obviously a matter of personal taste. But to my mind, *Escape to Van Diemen's Land* is not a book to be tasted, swallowed or digested. It is best left on the shelf.

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Tim Winton: *Breath.* London: Picador 2008, 215 pp., £14.99 (hardcover), isbn 9780330455718. **Reviewed by Adi Wimmer, University of Klagenfurt**

Breath is Tim Winton's ninth novel. The last one (published in 2001) was *Dirt Music*, so there has been quite an interval. He started his publishing career with *An Open Swimmer* (1982), a novel which has much in common with *Breath*: the fascination with water, the thrill of danger, danger which is deliberately courted in an attempt to escape from ordinary, bourgeois existence. The sea has been a constant presence in Winton's novels: *Shallows* (1984, winner of the 1985 Miles Franklin award) connects the W.A. whaling business (which continued well into the post WWII period) with a 19th century crime story; *Blueback* (1997) outlines the life of Abel Jackson, a professional diver who becomes a sea-life biologist, from when he was only 10 years old into his adult life, which is another parallel to *Breath*; and *Cloudstreet* (1991, winner of the 1992 Miles Franklin Award) has a character with the telling name of "Fish" making a 'return to the water' in a half-planned suicide.

The first-person narrative begins when Bruce, a 50something paramedic with an all-Australian first name, is called to a suburban home where a 17-year old has accidentally hanged himself in an autoerotic asphyxiation game. (Kerryn Goldsworthy thinks there is a real case as background; one of Winton's schoolmates very likely met his death that way though at the time the official cause was given as 'suicide', the mother preferring the embarrassment of the latter over the shame of the former, and the same story is told in Winton's novel. This reminds Bruce that breath is the essence of life, that when a new-born baby is forced to take the first painful gulp of air it encounters "the rude shock of respiration" (40). From then on we hardly ever think of our breath again, so he reasons, unless it is somehow knocked out of us or cut off: "It's funny, but you never really think much about breathing." In the course of this novel Winton returns to his title theme time and again, albeit obliquely: the surfie characters are always pummelled by waves and feel their

"lungs near to bursting", they feel "throttled", are "gripped by the throat", or, in less harmful circumstances learn to play the didgeridoo with its skill of circular breathing. The connection between breathing and life is given a comical dimension when one of the teenage boys discovers his father screwing a whore in his bedroom and this wayward *pater* is given away by his heavy breathing.

But back to the plot. The initial episode of seven pages leads you to think that we will be given the life story of a paramedic, a "bloody good one" to boot as he say about himself, while at the same time he sifts through the carnage that he is called out to handle as well as the carnage of his own existence. But no – the introduction (and for me it was the best part of the novel) is only the starter to a different memory genre. Bruce turns the clock back to 1971 when he was a 12-year old and called Pikelet. He lives in a Western Australian backwater town where logging is the main business; Pikelet's father works in a sawmill. Pikelet makes friends with 'Loonie', the publican's son (whose surname is 'Loon'.) Their city is located by a river in which the boys try to outdo one another in staying underwater until "[their] heads were full of stars"; it is their initiation into flirting with the danger of drowning. But they yearn for the sea which is two miles away: "I hankered after the sea like I'd never done for anything before" (29). Neither of their parents share an iota of the boys' enthusiasm. The sea is the realm of reaching out, of doing dangerous and outrageous things, while the citizens of Sawyer prefer ordinary, safe existences. Pikelet's father dreads the sea as one of his mates drowned in it before his eyes, and as long as he has authority over his son, forbids him to go there. But inevitably that authority wanes, and so Pikelet and Loonie one day find themselves at the coast and there come across a shoal of surfies. Both boys are transfixed by the elegance they encounter: "How strange it was to see men do something beautiful" (23). With money earned from splitting firewood they buy their first cheapo Styrofoam boards. And then they encounter Sando, an ace surfer with a past, who is so taken with their furious dedication he takes them under his wings, loans them a variety of surfboards (he owns about two dozen of them), teaches them the art. For Sando, surfing has an

existential dimension: doing something as extraordinary and dangerous as surfing 20-foot high breakers, dancing before a thousand tons of white water threatening to crash down and to suck the surfie to the bottom of the sea makes the difference between being fully alive, and vegetating:

> When you make it, when you're still alive and standing at the end, you get this tingly electric rush. You feel *alive,* completely awake and in your body. Man, it's like you've felt the hand of God. (76)
>
> It's like you come pouring back into yourself said Sando one afternoon. Like you've exploded and all the pieces of you are reassembling themselves. You're new. Shimmering. Alive. (111)

So it all comes down to this: become a member of a surfing elite and you escape ordinariness. As Pikelet muses: "was I just ordinary or could I do something gnarly?" (76) He decided he would not end up like his father, a cipher in a "puny and pointless" community (117). Pikelet is the more intellectual of the two boys, and when Sando gives him books by Melville or Jack London or Hans Hass to read, there emerges a new dimension to their bonding. But ultimately this common interest falls by the wayside, becomes secondary to Sando's and Loonie's brutal determination to defy death in ever more risky surfing exploits. Three years pass, and when Sando and Loonie disappear for a few weeks to explore new surfing opportunities in Indonesia and Malaya, Sando's wife Eva, partly bored partly angry at her husband's selfishness, sexually initiates Pikelet. This turns out to be every bit as dangerous as those monster waves when, already jaded with 'normal' sex after two weeks, Eva introduces her unlikely 15-year old lover to asphyxiation games. (At the end of the novel we briefly learn that she was found dead hanging from a Colorado skiing resort hotel door, having lost control over that obnoxious sex game.)

She is pregnant, but we never learn what happens to her after delivery or what the fate of the child is. Wisely, Pikelet extricates himself from Sando's and Eva's influence, and over just a dozen pages we fast-forward through his subsequent life: the father killed in an industrial accident, university paid for by the pay-off, a safe

lab job, marriage, two daughters, the death of his mother from cancer, finally a divorce, a second career as paramedic and the sort of bourgeois existence that he once loathed. Now ordinariness has become his credo:

> I made myself quite safe and ordinary – a lab bloke, a threat to nobody … I withdrew into a watchful rectitude, anxious to please, risking nothing. I followed the outline of my life, carefully rehearsing form without conviction, like a bishop who can't see that his faith has become an act (204-5).

At the ripe age of 16, Loonie disappears from Sawyer and is only heard of again ten years later, when he is shot dead by a fellow drug dealer somewhere in Mexico, after stops in Indochina, Peru, California and a few more places.

Breath is full of wonderful description of the sea and equally haunting descriptions of the lonesome, endless forests that extend into the hinterland. But his descriptions defy the popular images we have: there is always a storm brewing, and rain pelts the characters wherever they go. Storminess seems to be a Leitmotif of *Breath*. Gone is the warmth of *Cloudstreet* and the resolute solutions of *Riders*. Carolyn See (2009) has argued that Winton's scenarios are firmly tied to his own life. There is a rough and young country, originally populated by indigenous blacks, then "cleared" together with much of the forested land by convicts and their progeny. There is the sea, always the sea, and lonely beaches.

> Winton she argues writes about trailer parks and long bus rides, about swimming, about whether travel abroad is worth the trouble. And he writes about human beings' relationships to their parents, lovers, spouses, children and the cosmos. He writes about how these relationships yield up great beauty, but also how we almost always screw them up.

The novel has, so it seems, been a huge success in terms of sales; Nathanael O'Reilly (2008) claims that over 100.000 copies were sold in the first twelve weeks after publication. The surfing community will love this novel; as far as I know there has never been an Australian novel with surfing as its context and cultural matrix. ABR

reviewer James Ley (May 2008) calls it "flawless", irresistible" and "elemental". I am not so convinced. For all its stylistic brilliance, *Breath* strikes me as light-weight. It's not only that at 215 pages it is the shortest of his novels, there is also a lack of complexity. Almost all of the narrative is about three guys and their mutual affection who find life's meaning in – surfing. Apart from these three blokes and the wife of one of them there are no further characters that grow beyond cardboard status. Maybe dedicated surfies will find this novel "irresistible", but I doubt many of them are interested in reading. In one passage Pikelet comes close to the core of the problem: the alleged greatness of surfing is hard to communicate to the non-initiated: "You felt shot-full and the sensation burned for hours – *yet you couldn't make it real for anybody else*." (111, my emphasis). Yes, quite so.

Apart from this major problem there are nagging questions at certain loose ends: Why are Sando and Eva out there in a no-man's land? What do they live on year after year without a job, how does Sando finance his trips to all those Asian destinations? Why are their only friends two lonely little boys? How did they get there? Why did Bruce's marriage break up? Also, there is a banal literality about the novel's names: "Pikelet" is a little ocean fish trying to become a big fish, his crazy friend's name is "Loonie", the puny community where they live is a saw-mill town and so called "Sawyer", and when Pikelet is sexually initiated it is by a woman named, of course, "Eva."

What cannot be overlooked is Winton's stylistic skill. There are great passages – not necessarily those out at sea amid the boring crash and thunder of waves, mind you – but in Bruce's interior monologues at the start of the narrative and in his winding-up passages that are graceful, intricate and engrossing.

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Diane Fahey. *Sea Wall and River Light*. Carlton: Five Islands Press, 2006. ISBN 0 7340 3654 X.. **Reviewed by Werner Senn**, University of Berne, Switzerland.

Sea Wall and River Light, Diane Fahey's eighth volume of verse, is a strong addition to a substantial body of work comprising such fine and distinguished collections as *Voices from the Honeycomb* (1986), *Metamorphoses* (1988), *Turning the Hourglass* (1990) or *The Sixth Swan* (2001).

The formally crafted composition of this latest book is too striking not to attract attention: eighty-four pages hold eighty-four poems, each of the same length, fourteen lines, i.e. sonnets of a kind, many even arranged in octave and sestet though without the customary rhyme scheme. The present tense dominates and with it the sense of immediacy, of strong physical sensations and sensory experience of shore, sea and sky. The arrangement of the poems from "To the Estuary" to "Farewell to Summer" hints at a temporal sequence and progression, but this is countered by the foregrounded timelessness of the tides, the sea and its tributary river. No single item is made to stand out but all contribute subtle nuances to this rich and colourful panorama.

The setting of the poems is the Victorian coastal town of Barwon Heads, although the location is never specifically named. Shore and estuary are places marked by liminality, a characteristic image also of the dominant experiences (e.g. "this tideless hour", 11, "a liminal paradise", 37). These places offer innumerable sweeping and changing views – "all boundaries are fictions" (p. 47) – but also occasions for meditation and strange encounters, e.g. with a dead penguin, a stranded dolphin, dried starfish, a manta ray (devilfish), an elephant seal, ghost-shrimps, moon snails, sea-dragons, and birds of all kinds. Beyond mere description each of the eighty-four texts aims at fathoming, assessing, interpreting the occasion, the moment, as each day offers both "gift and lesson" ("White-Faced Heron", 44).

The overall tonality, subdued and controlled, suggests emotion recollected in tranquillity. The speaker presents herself very much as

an experiencing self and at the same time positions herself as a figure in the landscape/seascape, which is sometimes empty, sometimes peopled: involvement and distance are combined in highly poetic and often rhythmical language:

> On a rise of sand, my body foregrounds
> the scene of which it forms a minute part.
> ("Sunbathing", 12)
>
> A space opened
> as one kind of seeing lapsed, and I flowed,
> a minute part of everything – then glimpsed
> my own absence from all this process and
> particularity: the world as poem. ("The Wind", 31)

Animal life, especially birdlife, is rendered with extraordinary empathy but the discourse remains centered in the individual self and never abandons the human perspective, never attempts translations from the natural world, as it were, even though its signs call for interpretation. The speaker strives to render as accurately and as imaginatively as possible the natural phenomena and objects of her observation. A flying tern is seen as "brave and / subtle beyond belief: a silent Mozart" (84). "Cormorants at Solstice":

> Body shapes – comic, ingenious or
> statuesque – evoke an alphabet
> of pictograms, odd pieces of furniture. (36)

There is a particularly strong focus on the physical encounter and intimate contact with water. Many of the texts figure an immersion, often quite a literal one: "[I] bathe / and float myself into serenity" (82), or: „Bolsters of surf roll you in over wrinkled / jade sheets" (66); or: "I wade, / half water, half flesh" (61).

But although swimming, sunbathing, paddling, diving, struggling with surf or being buoyed up by it, are part of the daily experience, these texts have nothing of the hedonism of popular Australian beach culture. Their mood is largely serene, poised, contemplative, only rarely disturbed by outside events: a thunderstorm, or the experience of panic at an unexpected, dangerous crosscurrent. At such a time the usually calm sense of being "a minute part of

everything" can suddenly and dramatically fall over to its inverse side:

> I was taken beyond my depth, my strength –
> sideswiped by the sea – to become a cypher
> in stretched crystal. ("Rip 2", 68)

After this it takes the speaker a long time to regain her poise,

> breathing
> my body back into self-possession,
> gazing, under a bone-white sun, at
> unstoppable waves, the unanswering sea. ("Rip 3", 69)

This is the strongest reminder, in this book, that human beings, in spite of feeling accommodated, are never quite at home in the world of nature, while animals go about their business in it with the unerring certainty of instinct. Thus, watching albatrosses makes the speaker doubt her ability "to be as actively at ease in life / as they are in flight" ("Albatrosses" p. 79), or, like a gull, to be

> at the will of
> each moment – but in a completeness,
> rowing the abyss with voluptuous ease. ("Pacific Gull" p. 78)

Or again:

> Only the white-faced heron airing its wings
> has mastery of the way ceaseless change
> may find accord with complete stillness. ("High Summer" p. 58)

Throughout the collection the poetic voice displays a quiet, impressive assurance and astounding inventiveness not only to render adequately the infinite variety of lights, shadows and tidal movements, of the animal life that goes on in the air and the water, but also to explore the human position and role in this apparently shifting universe. The insight into the (at best) moderate success of this endeavour gives a wistful beauty to the conclusion of the last poem, a kind of summing up:

> One last swim before I stand, mirror-skinned,
> centering myself, till I no longer know
> what I am looking at, and there is only
> a cormorant high above the bridge,
> heading off to where it needs to go,
> to where it is being taken. (“Farewell to Summer“ p. 84)

With this collection Diane Fahey has again proved herself a poet of great sensitivity and impressive linguistic ability, fully in control of her craft. *Sea Wall and River Light* will appeal not only to nature lovers but to lovers of poetry.

David Brooks: ***The Balcony***. University of Queensland Press, 2008. 120 pages, pb. Isbn: 978 0 7022 3669 3. **Reviewed by Adi Wimmer** (University of Klagenfurt)

This is David Brook's fifth volume of poetry. He has also published two novels, three short stories, a book of essays, and has distinguished himself as an editor – of the journal *Southerly* for example, or of three volumes of A.D. Hope poetry and criticism. The "balcony" of the volume's title provides a vantage point of view onto two lives and the discourses running between them. It is also a collection that views two worlds, Australian suburbia and rural Slovenia. Why Slovenia? Because that is where the poet met and fell in love with Teja who is David Brooks' third wife. In "Tilt" the speaker declares: "sometimes the heart shifts / and there is nothing to be done. / Sometimes the soul speaks in another tongue / and there is nothing to do but learn" (8).

The line "sometimes the soul speaks in another tongue" is repeated, like a coda, indicating that the speaker now has a love speaking a tongue different from his own; the sensual aspects of her "tongue" are explored elsewhere. The whole volume is dedicated to Teja. In fact, Brooks' dedication claims that 77 of the volume's 91 poems are love poems. So the majority of the poems in this volume are autobiographical, are about Teja and the speaker's overpowering love for her. In the poem "Faces in the Street" (70) he is quite outspoken about the volume's context: The poet had "died at 45," and at 50 he was "re-born". In "Spirit", he refers to love as "that old bastard" who is "coming in now full sail". A whole section of the volume is called "Padna 18" and that is the address of Teja's father's' house in Istrija, about 20 km from Piran, Slovenia's Adriatic jewel. Teja is a translator, which is frequently mentioned, and her profession provides a bridge between the two continents Australia and Europe.

Some of the poems are nakedly sensual. Here are just four lines from the poem "Starlight": In the dark we are / eating each other, /tearing, smelling, entering / with fingers, memory, desire (…)". The juxtaposition of concrete and abstract nouns works particularly well in this passage and ends in the metonymic "our tongues taste starlight." A poem in the same section intriguingly titled "Postmodernism and the Prime Minister" alludes to Teja's role of 'Muse' for the poet:

> After making love
> we sit on the balcony in the dark,
> and pretty soon
> an idea for a poem has come, and then another (…) (22)

The 'Muse' provides inspiration, which justifies all those erotic action-snatches that pop up in this volume time and again, for instance in the title poem "The Balcony":

> The flying foxes are screeching in the trees outside the window,
> they are angry and jealous and want us to stop.
> We have been making love
> for almost 18 hours, they say,
> and they are afraid for their reputation. (18)

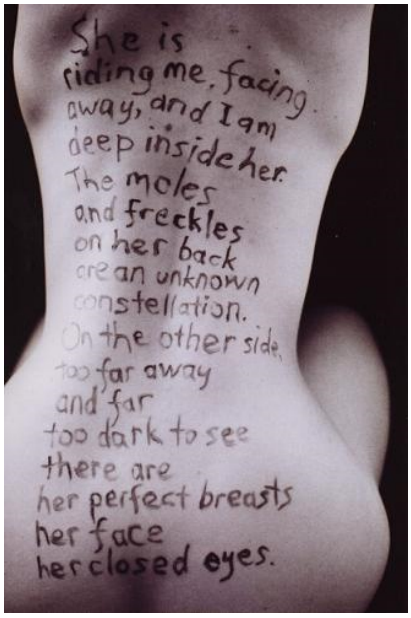
Or here, in "Grace":

> A door opens,
> the room is flooded with light.
> A man
> spills his seed on his lover's belly,
> wipes it away,
> kisses the place where it fell.

A beautiful example of an erotic poem that "tells it slant", to use Emily Dickinson's phrase, is "Cat." In most European languages including Slovene "Cat" is a female epithet, comparable to "bird." This cat is a thinly disguised Teja again, licking the persona's fingers "with a rasping tongue", and then, "as if she *were* a cat, turns / her back towards me / ready." Mhm, say no more. The feline image returns in the second section when the persona sees himself kept captive by a love-hungry "panther" who has gutted his body and is

now wittily gnawing his "bone" ("The Ibex", 50). But the frankest depiction of practical love comes in part 3 of the title poem "The Balcony":

She is
riding me, facing
away, and I am
deep inside her.
The moles
and freckles
on her back
are an unknown constellation.
On the other side
(…)
there are
her perfect breasts,
her face,
her closed eyes.



Is all that intimacy legitimate? Erotic poetry is not a favourite with academic critics these days, female critics in particular – they smell "exploitation" at every corner. But when I googled 'Teja Pribac', I was in for a surprise. Not only does one of her websites offer a wedding photo, it offers a close-up Teja's naked body, facing away from the camera, with parts of "The Balcony" superimposed on her back. So the visitor to the website is, in fact, offered an illustration of that love-making scene. This is daring enough, but click on the next image and you get two shots of (presumably) David's hairy legs and genitals, and another shot of erotically entwined legs.

This is not to detract from the general high quality of Brooks' poetry. I was particularly struck by the deft handling of the 'translation' trope, applied here to a speaker who finds himself attracted by and transported to a Central European language and culture. When he observes his beloved out on the balcony translating poetry, she

is carrying words
from one language to the other, bribing
the border guards, arguing with the grammarians,
pulling the wool
over the eyes of the lexicographers.

Lines as artful as these are pure joy. The subject is given further treatment in a poem aptly titled "Language" in which the two lovers "talk all night / peeling back the layers"; when morning comes, she "put[s] it all on again / the language / the past / the mind's clothes as well as the body's". Clearly, it takes great intimacy to "peel back" the layers of two life stories and two cultures, and without them there is nakedness and vulnerability. But mostly the tone is that of confessional poetry, which genre David Brooks handles with immense skill and care. After so much affection and passion expressed in his verse, one begins to wonder what happened to the former wife; is she out of sight and out of mind? Not at all. The speaker re-visits her ("for the first time in ages", 24) and in another painful recollection admits to a great failure when denying her assistance at a time of physical need ("Blood" 86). There are one or two narrative poems as well, poems presenting snapshots of a particular time and space, sometimes with historical people, but always turning back to the speaker, such as that whimsical poem "Lovers in Wentworth Park", which tells us of something we only remember from the movie *Woodstock*, a couple making love in full view of the public. The poem hints at the mixed feelings of passers-by at a sight that is both comforting and outrageous : "we all try to act as if they were not there / while giving them the widest berth." The final line makes a natural admission: "as we walk back / I am raging for you". But even at the most intense moments of love, thoughts of death creep in, which is also natural. And this brings me to a final observation: Teja coming from Slovenia, it is to be expected that those awful, atrocious wars of the 1990s make themselves felt in the poet's awareness. "Vukovar" is the title of one such poem, the place where the Croatian PM Franjo Tudjman provoked the Serbian army into a fully-fledged Civil War which he actually wanted and in which tens of thousands died. But history, as well as US military backing, was on the side of Croatia, and Slovenia too. Nonetheless, we still scratch our heads wanting explanations for those years of inexplicable bestiality. God certainly does not provide any, as "Pater Noster" (parts of it translated from a song by the French poet Jacques Prevert) demonstrates: "Our Father / who art in heaven / stay there / and we'll stay down here / in the mess you have left for us." But then this "mess" is made to

appear tolerable by the love which so warmly pulses through this unique volume. *Buy it!*

Philip Brophy: *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*. Series: *Australian Screen Classics*, Sydney: Currency Press 2008. ISBN: 978-0-86819-821-7, AUD 16.95. **Reviewed by Mandy Kretzschmar,** Research Academy Leipzig

As the Closing Ceremony of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games unfolded, the *Parade of Icons* culminated in the entrance of the Priscilla tour bus. Headed by an adult tricycle in the form of a floral stiletto shoe, the procession was completed by the 'pit chicks', well-known Sydney drag queens, carrying oversized powder puffs, mascara bottles and lipsticks. The ambiguity of this image both celebrating Australia, her film culture, her coarse humour as well as local gay culture, but simultaneously mocking her way of self-representation, points to the continuing dilemma of being insecure about her status, her history, her image in the world. Philip Brophy's provocative reading of Stephan Elliot's 1994 classic addresses the problematic of stereotypical formula regardless of appearances. His multifaceted essay, rich in image and metaphor, questioning the "dumb semiotics" of Australian culture and film (5), adds another challenging work-of-art to the Currency Press series on Australian Screen Classics.

In the prologue, Philip Brophy, acclaimed Australian director, editor, composer and lecturer, sets his agenda in reading the film as "a meandering road-map" that "celebrates the great nothingness of white Australia" (4). Disliking *Priscilla*, his review is a straightforward assault on the conservative Australian film industry and an uncritical audience celebrating a comedy-drama that is trapped in the exhausting deployment of iconic representations. Brophy resists close textual analysis of the film. In contrast, his map reading is non-linear, rich in sidetracks, but always taking the reader back to the main road. His response is passionate, though often fierce and cynical. In addition to drawing on a wide corpus of academic writing on *Priscilla*, on Australian cinema as well as film and on popular music for his argument, it is foremost Brophy's style of writing, heavily laden with irony, similes and metaphors, frequently used in

excess, that make this monograph an enjoyable, intellectual and invaluable read.

The focus of the first chapter "Silencing Women" is on gender representations, the category of Woman and the excessive use of the inflatable sex doll as an icon for the exclusivity of male drag (13). The reader is thrust into the middle of the plot: Sydney drag queen Mitzi (alias Tick) has been offered a gig in a small casino in Central Australia, owned by his ex-wife Marion. There he will reconcile with his son whom he hasn't seen since adopting his drag queen persona. Enlisting two of his friends, Felicia/ Adam, a young gay cross-dresser and aging, transsexual Bernadette/ Ralph, to perform with him, the trio is now on their journey to the heart of the continent. In the bar of the Paradise Hotel, Broken Hill, Shirl, middle-aged, rough looking and the only woman in a crowd of locals, approaches the drag queens and openly confronts the outsiders with repulsion. Brophy compares her open mouth to a "black hole of the white void at the red centre of Australia" (9). When Bernadette responds to her insult, the men unite with the trio as a mob, laughing and thus affirming the humiliation of Shirl. Brophy argues that the female characters in *Priscilla* are largely portrayed in a derogatory way. Exemplary in the above-mentioned scene, Shirl signifies the stereotypical nagging wife who needs "to be shut up" (10). However, his argument of "repressed identification" and the silenced, "unheard woman" (11), continued throughout the essay, generalises the complexity of the female characters in *Priscilla*. Though Brophy illustrates the non-traditional construction of women in the film, he disregards their representation as a threat and source of fear and further, their ability to liberate from male hegemony (Tincknell 2002: 154). To offer but one alternative reading of the scene, Shirl is also a respected member accepted in the (male) community at the bar, participating in boozy sessions and even matching Bernadette in a drinking competition.

The strongest sections of the book are concerned with the film's soundtrack ranging from voice, popular song, opera to lip-synching and the use of the didgeridoo. As evident in Brophy's essay, music, performance and drag are central and closely interlinked in *Priscilla*'s narrative. This intertwining is first encountered in Brophy's map,

when he reflects upon the use of opera aria in connection with an inflatable doll atop the tour bus. He is reading the caricature of the kite-flying female corpus played over by a passage from Verdi's *È strano! Ah fors`è lui* as an example for opera as a form of drag: A man writes the melodic sequence that is then vocalised by a trained woman bearing "his breath". She is trapped on stage, "draped with costumery and weighted with wigs" (16). The female performer is becoming a doll, "less a breathing body" (16).

From there, Brophy proceeds with the literal staging of gender and sexuality in the second chapter "Synching lips". He argues that *Priscilla* should be classified as a musical, and generalises: "all musicals are drag revues as they feature lip-synching" (18). Although it can be agreed that Priscilla like other films of the early 1990s such as *The Full Monty*, draw on conventions of the genre (Tincknell 2002:147), Brophy stretches the idea to make his point. In his view, the focus is upon the embodiment of gender via the visual spectacle rather than the song and its meaning. Thus, the visual image is but a deadly silent foreword, only coming to life in the technical process of post-production through audiovisual juncture (18). In drag, however, all songs exist prior to the performance. Brophy states that in accord with the "Musical's 'breathing of life' into the already-recorded song", drag similarly "creates the ghostly aura of a human presence" (19). In short, while drag performers like Mitzi and her friendsvisually shape themselves as mannequins of anthropomorphic form, their actual performing on film (or live) stages through lip-synching lays claim to the performance being the locus of the song (19).

Indeed, Brophy's rich poetic writing style in approaching the deadly compulsion of *Priscilla* to make use of familiar Australian tropes and icons is advanced to its climax in the following chapter "Drinking fire". His criticism relates to the representation of male Australian identity and sexuality in the film through the consumption of alcohol. Pondering on the stereotypical celebration of Australian drunkenness, Brophy reveals the hidden symbolism: the sexual aura of beer that is "the constitutional elixir of Malestralia" and "fuel for masculation" (24/25). Further, he claims that both drinking and

urinating are acts of men bonding. Amongst many, one moment of wonderful linguistic excess summarizing what in his view is an Australian icon is but the following:

> Beer is the atomised mist of the rough outdoors; the sweat of humungous men who toil under the sun. Like salinated water seeping underground, beer overcomes the water table of the male corpus, constituting him as a hulk bronzed on the outside and jaundiced on the inside (25/26).

In contrast, the drag queens resist the foaming liquid. However, they are also dependent on the alcoholic spirits, mainly in the form of cocktails. Brophy's comparison of Mitzi, Felicia and Bernadette to female torch singers that due to the loss of their love and their awareness of their plight drown their sorrows in alcohol, then guides the reader back to the central characters of the film.

Brophy's bias against *Priscilla* is based on its deployment of national symbolism, its sweeping window dressing, often to a level of exhaustion. In other words, like many Australian films, he blames *Priscilla* in failing to consider alternative voices. For him, the Australian desire to control its self-representation and image in the world, penetrating its national film industry as well, is meaningless. It is an expression of both insecurity and subordination. To make his point, Brophy contrasts the images of Australia as produced by its citizens to similar images of Australia produced by European visitors in the fourth chapter "Staging Reality" (36). Exemplary, he draws a unique and out of the common comparison between the film and David Bowie's 1983 video clip "Let's Dance". In contrast to *Priscilla*'s overload of archetypes and icons, Bowie's "opaque blancmange of indigenous assimilation, racial tension and cultural isolation" (37) reads counter to the ambition of the Australian cinema to propagate certain national self-images.

In addition to challenging the use of cultural signifiers of Australiana, Brophy is aware of *Priscilla*'s mobilisation of oppositions, in particular a differentiation between good and bad communities of belongings: town and country, inclusion and exclusion (Tincknell 2002: 150). While Sydney represents the cosmopolitan cultural space, where a

gay lifestyle is possible, Tick, Adam and Ralph are confronted with aggression and rural homophobia on their journey across Australia into the outback. In "Doing Landscape", Brophy's reading is most attentive toward the representation of the encounter between the drag queens and a group of indigenous people in the middle of the desert. The trio stages a lip-synched performance of Gloria Gaynor's disco anthem "I will survive" for them. Again, Brophy joins the dots between drag, music and standardised Australian signs to question what kind of Australian consciousness is celebrated in the visual narrative of *Priscilla*. As the song swells, the music is suddenly marked by the sound of a didgeridoo, while the camera swings back to capture the two marginalized groups, the drag queens and the Aborigines, dancing together. In biting tone, Brophy criticizes the "white" employment of the indigenous instrument for national promotional topography (46), referring to similar instances in Australian TV shows and advertisements. There is no deeper understanding of indigenous space:

> It's fractured covering of an assimilation fantasy is an awkward attempt to mock, frock and cock what is a sono-molecular fusion of black and gay culture. The didgeridoo is the tell-tale sign of this operation (44).

At the latest, it is at that point that the Brophy map unfolds before the eye of its readershi The reading of Priscilla seems to serve but only as a possibility to call attention to this self-distorted mirror image of Australian culture.

Clearly, one of the shortcomings of Brophy's passionate response is his disinterest in assigning *Priscilla* to a specific film genre or trend. Only once does he mention that it is an Australian version of an American road movie (Wimmer 2007: 108). Even more, *Priscilla*, like *Strictly Ballroom* (1992) and *Muriel's Wedding* (1994) is part of what Emily Rustin has termed the "Glitter cycle", a sub-genre of Australian film, criticizing national narrative traditions (Craven 2001:9). The protagonists of these films are able to change the circumstances of their lives and to liberate themselves from social conditions that restrict them (Rustin 2001: 133). Through making use of a camp aesthetic, the possibility of sexual and gender fluidity

is mediated (Tincknell 2002: 151), denouncing a celebrated (and constructed) white, male heterosexual Australian national identity.

In "Being Gay" and "Making Monsters", Brophy concentrates upon the post-*Priscilla* effect on Australian gay culture and how the film presents the identity shaping of Mitzi and his friends. Here, Brophy is looking for allies in his criticism, recalling an episode from the 1995 Sydney Mardi Gras, where drag queens protested the celebration of the Australian film's industry's unreconstructed projection of gay stereotypes. Once more, Brophy reflects upon the appalling inability to portray subcultures and diversity of sexuality on the screen. Exemplary, he refers to the periodic flashbacks in Priscilla, intended to explain so-called gender-turning points of Mitzi, Bernadette and Felicia to the audiences, and concludes:

> Each back-story is a textbook explanation from the mouldy couch of psychoanalysis here given insincere lip service for the sake of character explication. The explanations are unconvincing. The queens are not made by others: they make themselves as monsters. (…), their performance remains nothing but inhuman, as they shift their representation of Woman to a series of animalistic, reptilian and monsterised figures (61 passim).

Returning to music and gender representations in the last chapter "Sounding ABBa", Brophy reviews the Australian cinema's embrace of ABBA and *Priscilla*'s exploitation of the same. But he is quick in generalising, when interpreting Felicia's showing off of her most precious possession, the bottled turd of Agnetha: "Women-are-shit, pop-is-shit, gays-like-shit" (70). In such moments, his provocative generalisations slip, depressing the level of his reading without taking into account the complexity of female representation and inter-gender relations in the film. Further, the chapter is a rare moment in his essay when comparing *Priscilla* to another Australian feature film, *Muriel's Wedding*, of the same decade. The chapter concludes with his argument that as a result of the film and its exhaustive use of their songs, exemplary referring to Mitzi and Felicia's drag to "Mamma Mia", ABBA has "insinuated itself into iconic codings of Australian identity" (77).

In the epilogue, subtitled "Burning Maps", Brophy summarizes his concerns and again, explains his proceeding in reading Priscilla against its affirmation of a consciously constructed Australian national identity. If reading his map correctly, the message is to break the self-distorted portraiture of Australia into pieces and critically reflect on the *Other*'s images of Australia:

> Australia's self-image has never evolved from contact with a looking lass, it only sees itself through logos, brands and icons streamlined and stylised rather than impressed or reflected (81).

Despite minor criticism, his reading of Priscilla, pulsing with striking associations connecting the dots of a detailed, colourful map, is an exceptional contribution to and critical view upon Australian screen culture.

Thus, Brophy's essay is a valuable and most needed read that will both leave a sour taste in one's mouth about the "dumb semiotics" (5) of Australian film and culture and further, nourish hope for a more critical audience and an Australian screen culture that is not "pre-labelled and self-proclaimed", but "nurture(s) discovery and allow(s) repulsion" (1). In the light of the most recent success of Baz Luhrmann's *Australia* (2007), however, I can see Philip Brophy throwing up his hands in horror.

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Henry Reynolds: *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith*. Sydney: Currency Press in conjunction with AFC (*Australian Screen Classics* Series), 70 pp. ISBN 978 086819-824-8. **Reviewed by Adi Wimmer.**

There was not enough thought about what the film was actually saying and this was due to Schepisi's commitment to stay true to Keneally's novel (60). Thus a central point in Henry Reynold's critical study of Fred Schepisi's film *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith* (1978). That a film adaptation is not 'true' to its novelistic origin is a frequently heard complaint in film reviews, particularly if the reviewer is a writer or fiction critic. The opposite reproach – the film stays *too close* to the original – is hardly ever heard in film reviewing. But this film is more complicated than that, it being based on a novel which was in turn based on real events. How about "the film did not deviate enough from the real events on which it was based", would historian Henry Reynolds argue that way? Hardly.

Currency Press, the Sydney-based publishing house best known for its valuable publication of Australian playscripts, has started a new critical series titled *Australian Screen Classics*. Three scripts were published in 2008 and all three are reviewed in this issue (see Mandy Kretzschmar's reviews of *The Piano* and *Priscilla Queen of the Desert* in this section.) They are slim booklets of between 70 and 90 pages, modelled I think on Methuen's successful series *The Critical Idiom* started in the 1960s, which it resembles in design and format.

According to the introductory editorial by Series Editor Jane Miller, Australia possesses a national cinema which "plays a vital role in our cultural heritage", but which is hampered by a polyphony of competing critical voices, dubious artistic claims, political interferences and constantly changing parameters in screen education. What is needed, writes series editor Jane Mills, is a series of academic studies that serve as a "glue" to stick the above forces together. Hmm. A curious metaphor, "glue". Whether such a glue can ever be found is not only arguable, the glue itself would be highly undesirable. The very idea smacks of censorship, of laying

down aesthetic laws. It would be the end of critical debate if we submitted to a glue tying us to film production units, political functionaries or deans of media study faculties.

But let us progress to the actual booklet. It is neatly organized, with a pronounced emphasis on the real history forming the backdrop to this movie. On 20 July 1900 a 'half-caste' Aborigine named Jimmy Governor and his full-blood brother Jacky Underwood battered to death five whites: Mrs Sarah Mawbey, in her forties, Miss Helen Kerz, her children's mistress, who was in her early twenties, and three Mawbey children aged 11, 14 and 16. 18-year old Elsie Clark, who was visiting, escaped with serious injuries. After leaving his foster-parents' care at the age of 16, Jimmy had become an agricultural labourer and for a short period also a police constable before marrying a white girl and settling down as a rural worker on a large NSW farm. According to Henry Reynold's research, he was good-natured, reliable, not a drinker. He was well liked and there was no ostensible reason why he suddenly turned into a killer.

Thomas Keneally's – and Fred Schepisis's – narrative follow those events closely. A child is born to his wife, but it is not Jimmy's. When an uncle and his half-brother turn up at Jimmy's shack in order to be fed and housed as his relatives, there is a sharp change in the pastoralist' attitude. He cannot accept the company of these "black bastards" who turn his farm into a "natives camp." From that moment on Jimmy gets cheated of his pay and is generally pressured to evict his blood relations. The final straw is Mrs Newby's attempt to separate Jimmy from his white wife: "you must leave them boongs" she advises an apoplectic Mrs Blacksmith. When Mr Newby refuses Jimmy his pay and does not provide any groceries, Jimmy snaps and goes on a rampage in the farmhouse while Newby is away. His murders form the central episode of the narrative, and the homicides are amply explained by the dichotomy between what the whites promise – acceptance in their midst if Jimmy works just like a white severing – and the reality that this is an empty promise.

Five out of the eight chapters in Reynold's study are devoted to the exploration of the historical events. Two chapters are on the critical

and the audience reception, respectively. Even the final chapter is described as a "historian's reflections." So where is the chapter on the merits of the film *as a film*? Nowhere to be found. Reynolds is candid about his approach to the subject matter: it is that of a historian. He does not claim to be in any way a qualified film critic. The admission is admirable, but it does not justify the total absence of any reflections on the aesthetics of the film. Which is there, in no small measure. From the opening of the film with its wonderful vistas of rural and mountainous NSW to its clever inside-outside opposition also in the opening sequence, from shots which show Jimmy's dignified work as an expert fencer or a stableboy to Schepisi's brilliant handling of the 'massacre' scene in which much violent action occurs, but which is conveyed in metaphors such a broken eggs or spilt wine – none of these qualities are noted or debated by Reynolds because he does not discuss the film as a work of cineastic art, but as a variation of a historical document.

As a historian, however, Reynolds is excellent. His knowledge of how rural Aboriginal society functioned at the time results in many interesting glimpses; 60% were in full employment while 30% combined living off the land with part-time work. They were keen to have their children educated and more than 30% attended public schools. Many were landowners who had purchased the land from the government and some had been given land grants. Aborigines were "constantly applying" for 'selector' status, writes Reynolds, but he does not tell us how many were granted the right to select land.

This is the stuff of contextual research, but there are also the records of the case itself. And here we are in for a few surprises. In the film, Jimmy goes berserk because of Mr Newby's duplicitous, arrogant behaviour as he cheats him of the fruits of his labour. In reality, Jimmy got on fairly well with his employer Mr Mawbey. No, it was his wife and daughters plus the teacher Miss Katz with their constant harassment of Jimmy's wife as a 'boong's slut' and other invectives that caused the catastrophe. So much for the alleged greater female sensibility! According to Jimmy Governor's testimony, Sarah Mawbey had taunted Ethel Governor that any white woman who married a 'savage' should be shot. So Jimmy went into his

violent actions in defense of his wife Ethel, in principle a chivalrous action. But what astonished me most is that the real Jimmy Governor was even more brutal than Jimmy Blacksmith. During the subsequent three months while he and his half-brother were on the run, he killed three more women and a baby, he raped a 15-year old girl, he held up nine parties on the highway and robbed them, he burgled 15 huts and set one house on fire (19). The abduction of McCreedy which dominates the final sequence of the film is Keneally's invention. A whole region was terrorized: everyone was armed, no-one worked, whole communities lived as if there was a war or a siege going on. When he was finally captured he showed no remorse – unlike Schepisi's Mort and Jimmy, who show regret and contrition. Reynolds concludes that Jimmy Governor did not plan the murders of Mrs Mawbey or Miss Katz, but he and his brother had for several weeks planned to become bushrangers. In this, they succeeded – and according to the police records Jimmy Governor was proud of "having made [his] name" as a bushranger and "glorified in many of his performances" (20). Local as well as Sydney newspapers turned Governor into a celebrity, journalists vied for interviews, which Governor gladly gave. After his arrest, he chatted amicably with the constables about details of his actions, as if there had been a sporting event. He was, it seems, not maltreated. The film, in the interests of political correctness, has it otherwise. Jimmy is rendered 'speechless' by the law enforcement system and its racist brutality. From the moment that he is shot through the mouth (which technically makes speech impossible) to his execution he never says another word. Others talk about him, size him up, define him. Those are the paradigms liberal academics know and are comfortable with, but they may be false.

Towards the end of his booklet Reynolds engages in an interesting speculation. What can we learn about Australian society in the 1970s by the film's financial failure while it was universally praised by the critics, and why has the film stayed with us – in university courses, in film clubs, and also through regular re-runs on Australian TV? He only raises the question and does not come up with any conclusive answer. Which seem fairly obvious to me: In 1978, Australian society was not yet ready to accept its racist past, while at the same

time there was already a youthful elite of intellectuals around that saw the story of Jimmy Blacksmith in terms of romanticized bushranging, or equally romanticized Vietcong warfare.

So this is a study well worth buying that will more appeal to historians than film lovers. Still, Currency Press ought to produce a second booklet on the same film, one written by a film expert.

Gail Jones: *The Piano*. Series: Australian Screen Classics**,** Sydney: Currency Press 2007. ISBN: 978-0-86819-799-9, AUD$ 16.95. **Reviewed by Mandy Kretzschmar,** Research Academy Leipzig

The Piano is another recent instalment in the *Australian Screen Classics* series published jointly by Currency Press and The ACF/ National Film and Sound Archive. As series editor Jane Mills points to the significance of national cinema in cultural heritage in the preface, this handy paperback provides an intelligent, illuminating and dense interpretation of one of the masterpieces of antipodean screen culture. However, it fails to pose one question: What is Australian about this film? This international co-production (New Zealand, Australia and France) is set in 19th century New Zealand, is directed and produced by Jane Campion (born in Wellington, but working in Australia) and peopled with actors from the United States, New Zealand and Canada. The soundtrack is by an English composer.

In an assemblage of nine chapters, distinguished Australian novelist Gail Jones observes the interplay of the social, historical and cultural aspects as well as the aesthetics of the film and ponders the strengths and shortcomings of the cinematographic translation of the narrative. Similar to a voice-over or the 'mind's voice' of the main character Ada, Jones accompanies her readers in a chronological manner, escorting them through the experience of seeing the movie again. Her lyrical re-description pauses at times, allowing the reader to perceive in a very sensual way different angles and perspectives of the motion picture. The strength of this essay lies in a literal translation of Jane Campion's visual aesthetics, in short the contextualisation of the image. In less than one hundred pages, Jones is able to realize her ambitious and impressive project.

Her introductory chapter "The Sea, the Sea" begins with one of the last and most agitating images of the film, the drowning of Ada, the female protagonist. Through a detailed, sensual description of the

heroine, tied to her beloved piano, floats to the bottom of the ocean Jones points to the iconic place of the sea and from there develops her research perspective. Her focus is upon "the physical quirkiness of *The Piano* (its representations of the body and sense experience) and "its peculiar, and peculiarly insistent, metaphysics" (4). However, her aim to provide the perspective of someone "who sees the movie for the first time" (5) is a clear understatement. The additional knowledge carefully interwoven into the unfolding interpretations is based on careful research of a variety of sources. For example, she frequently refers to Campion's project *Ebb* which was never produced, but offers striking similarities in deeper themes reoccurring in *The Piano*.

In the following two chapters Jones offers an introduction to the plot, the main characters and their relations to as well as their dependencies on one another, the storytelling and literary influences. Sometime in the second half of the 19th century, the mute Scottish heroine Ada McGrath is sent to colonial New Zealand, where according to her father's wish, she is married to Alisdair Stewart. Accompanied by her young daughter Flora, probably the offspring of an illegitimate relationship, mute Ada manifests an iron will, communicating through her Broadwood piano and Flora. As Stewart trades his new wife's piano to colonist George Baines in exchange for (Maori?) land (even though George cannot play the piano!), Ada is seduced into a romantic relation in order to recover her precious possession. As the plot develops further, Flora betrays her mother. In a move of dramatic violence, Stewart attacks Ada and cuts off her index finger, later confronting Baines. Nevertheless, the story resolves romantically as Ada, Baines and Flora settle together in Nelson and create a new family.

The Piano is a provocative film, as Jones emphasizes, especially in regards to racial, sexual and colonial representations. Through an analysis of inter-cultural scenes involving Maori and Europeans, Jones approaches the critiques of earlier reviewers about stereotypical depictions of the indigenous population (26 passim). Thus, she summarizes the ethical challenges to filmmakers in questioning if the relations between Maori and Pakeha are justly

represented (21). The strength of Jones' analysis is to offer different readings of colonial culture without aiming to reach a singular conclusion. For example, at a theatre night taking place in the school hall, the mixed audience is shown the play *Bluebeard's Castle* performed partly as a shadow play and by a group of young children dressed in white. Jones argues that this violent narrative in which Bluebeard murders his six wives, but is outwitted by the seventh, symbolizes similar desires and betrayals as in the main narrative. During the performance, some of the Maori tear away the screen to 'save' the screaming women on stage. The incapability to differentiate between the real and the theatrical has been interpreted as dishonouring the Maori, depicting them as naïve and simple. As criticized by Bell Hook and Leonie Pihama, *The Piano* thus reinscribes the dichotomy between Maori nature and European culture (Mayer 2007:154). However, Gail Jones favours a different, less convincing interpretation. Rereading the moving images in a positive light, she identifies the noble aims motivating the action of the Maori making allowance for their non-understanding of an unfamiliar cultural form (32). In comparing this misunderstanding of vision to the first public screening of an arriving train by the Lumière brothers in 1895, Jones claims the significance of shadow and light as well as illusionism as particular themes reoccurring throughout Campion's career as filmmaker.

The emblematic title of the following section "Hush-hush-hush" pinpoints the issue of sound and its absence in *The Piano*. Jones asks how Campion represents her silent heroine. As Jones observes, there are different ways to express and communicate, referring as an example to the intimate scenes between Ada and Flora where sound is absent, but language is expressed in signing or Ada's voice-over. The larger part of the chapter, however, is dedicated to the "prostethic of identity and self" (37). The piano serves as Ada's displaced voice, thus being a substituted or extended body part (40). Jones not only reflects upon the music by composer Michael Nyman, but also about the way Ada never plays from sheet music to express her feelings as evident in the title of the signature tune "The Heart asks for pleasure first". Without Ada's consent, her husband Stewart hands the piano to Baines in exchange for land. Jones

recalls how the musical score in the scenes between Baines and Ada accompanies, even anticipates the intensity of their developing erotic relation. She supports her argument in referring to the titles of the soundtrack such as "Big my secret" or "The Attraction of the Pedalling Ankle" (40).

The detailed approach and passionate encounter with the screen culture of Jane Campion is advanced to its climax in the following chapter. In "Erotics, Feeling and the Masculine", Jones composes a picture of erotic symbolism and the exploration as well as manipulation of gender roles in *The Piano*. Carefully choosing sample scenes, she discusses masquerade and cross-dressing as a way of investigating gender roles, Stewart's attempted rape of Ada, the sexual agency of Ada finding no understanding in her husband as well as the depiction of the heterosexual romance with Baines turning from harassment and sexual exploitation into love. Her vivid descriptions are supplemented by a variety of references, such as when she discusses the wedding photograph scene criticizing the arranged marriage and disadvantaged woman as similar to in *The Portrait of a Lady* (47). Apart from the importance of symbolism, Jones also reflects upon how the visual material is staged and framed, the so-called *mise en scène* (Giannetti 2002:44). As Jones notes, the emotional response of the audience is achieved by making use of facial close-ups, especially Ada's. Further it is argued that restrained filming and voyeurism are combined when Stewart watches Ada's and Baines' lovemaking (53).

In "Mutilation" and "The Uncanny Child", Jones concentrates upon the trauma narrative and Flora's role that is often overlooked by critics. Stewart having discovered the love affair, boards up the house as a cage to keep Ada from continuing her relation to Baines. However, in an act of self-mutilation, taking and inscribing a key of her returned piano, Ada seeks a renewed meeting. But Flora, asked to act as a go-between, betrays her mother and turns in the evidence to Baines. Jones recalls the violent attack of the husband, the slowing time and vision, the soundtrack and close-up shots as well as the child witness to the cutting off of Ada's finger. A possible interpretation of Stewart's attack as a 'castration' of Ada is discarded

by Jones, however without the appendant reference to the cited reviewer. A major reason that the book is so compelling is Jones' engagement with all aspects of the movie, but especially the development and contradictoriness of the characters. This is most obvious in her analysis of the mother-daughter relation. Flora is the second heroine, well aware of her illegitimate existence. Ada and she are the primary lovers as Jones concludes (61).

The last chapter titled "The Three Endings" is a detailed interpretation of the film's closure. Jones discusses the near-drowning of Ada, her domestic happiness in Nelson together with Baines and Flora, as well as the final cut back to the heroine floating attached to her piano at the bottom of the ocean. Again, Jones engages with feminist theory in referring to Stella Bruzzi and interpreting the Ada's rescue as offering a future instead of 'executing' the female protagonist "in the cause of poetic coherence" (69). The image of Ada as a piano teacher in Nelson is but a disappointed happy ending as Jones argues. It is shortly curtailed in Ada being haunted by her vision. Jones summarizes that the return to Ada's vision in the closing is a triumph to show the audience "that all cinema is in the end a phantasm" (72).

Throughout the essay, Gail Jones utilizes a wide range of secondary sources to embed *The Piano* in Campion's filmography, drawing on interviews, referring to literary inspirations and comparing the approach to main themes like sexual fulfilment to her earlier films such as *Wuthering Heights* and *Rebecca*. Her reference to an entry in the production dairy of Claire Corbett, the assistant director, about the male and female crew having to wear a dress as a "masquerade of gender" on costume day is but one delightful example (44). One shortcoming though: despite an extensive bibliography, endnotes are scarce and at times the reader is unable to retrace supporting documents. To make a further suggestion to the series editors, an index would have enabled the readership to find selected information quickly and easily, especially if used as a secondary source in film history. Although Jones' references to Campion's allegiance to European cinema, especially Antonioni and Bertolucci are frequent (10), only in passing does she mention the

popular success of the film which, after all, won the *Palme d'Or* at Cannes and three Academy Awards. (5).

In the end, despite the richness of the poetic reflection upon this cinematographic masterpiece, the reader is left with the question about the "Australianness" of the movie. As represented by the editors, *The Piano* is an Australian Screen Classic. One might muse about the attempt to claim the ownership for Australian national cinema as an act of cultural independence and to constitute one's global success. However, a different, more convincing interpretation is possible. This series offers the unique opportunity of a work-to-art, a possibility to review a film in applying one's one specific style of criticism and thus to remember and evocate the visual experience again. Thus, it is Gail Jones as an Australian novelist confirming the iconic status of the film.

In a personal conversation with Gail Jones in October 2008 in Karlsruhe, Germany, she gave away that *The Piano* was not among her choice of films she would have liked to review, when asked by the editors. However, her illuminating, passionate encounter with the screen art of Jane Campion speaks another language.

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Australia. Australia, 2008. Directed by Baz Luhrmann. Starring Nicole Kidman and Jack Hughes. Also with David Gulpilil and Bryan Brown. **Reviewed by Adi Wimmer,** University of Klagenfurt.

In his famous study *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville observed that a pioneer society like the American could only get excited "about itself." The same might be said about Australians. Can we imagine a German author offering a filmscript with the title "Germany"? Or a Danish writer offering one titled "Denmark"? (Supply your own choice of a European country and snigger derisively.) But in Australia, this film title raised no critical eyebrows. It did create an opportunity for Hugh Jackman at the Academy Award ceremony of February 21 to joke about it: "The whole industry is downsizing" he said, the new film in which I will star is called *New Zealand*.

The film was heavily mauled by the critics, and Baz Luhrmann must be crying all the way to the bank. To date, the film has grossed US$ 206 mio, on a budget that was a spectacular $ 130 mio., the highest production budget in Australian film history. DVD sales have only just begun, so the total earnings from the film seem to be set for another Australian record.

But let us have a closer look at this three-hour Nicole Kidman extravaganza. The time is 1939 and we meet Lady Sarah Ashley on her English estate, going for a morning ride (an important detail; later on her equestrian skills will qualify her to outback hero status.) Testily, she informs her butler she is taking a boat for northern Australia to force her husband to sell his financially troubled cattle station Faraway Downs. In Darwin she is met by a drover (Hugh Jackman); his film name is "Drover": But when they arrive at Faraway Downs, they find that Lady Sarah's husband has been murdered. The murder weapon was a spear, so "King George" (David Gulpilil), a local Aborigine, is suspected.

Childless Lady Sarah is captivated by the 10-year old part-Aboriginal boy Nullah, who tells her that her husband's station manager Fletcher is in cahoots with the evil 'cattle baron' King Carney (Bryan Brown) and has stolen the fattest steers for the latter's benefit. Sarah also guesses who Nullah's father is, and why Nullah's mother, a local Aboriginal servant girl, is so frightened of Fletcher. So she horse-whips and fires him. With Fletcher's help, King Carney has been trying to gain a cattle monopoly in the Northern territories so that he can dictate the price of beef to the Australian army. Resisting the bully Carney, Sarah decides to run Faraway Downs herself.

As a first step, she needs to take a herd of 1.500 heads of cattle to Darwin for sale. (In previous aerial shots we saw nothing but drought-stricken land around her station, but by a cineastic miracle a huge herd of well-fed cattle appear from nowhere.) Carney already has as many heads for sale there, but the Army's chief cattle buyer is hopeful Lady Sarah's cattle will make it to Darwin, thus bringing down the price. Sarah needs the help of good-looking Drover, a model of racial tolerance, who is for this reason shunned by most of his 'mates'. We learn he had been married to an Aboriginal woman (who would have *illegally* married them in the racist conditions of the Thirties?), but she was refused medical treatment at a local hospital and so she died. Reluctantly, Drover leads a team of five other riders including Lady Sarah, his Aboriginal brother-in-law Magarri and Nullah to drive the cattle to Darwin. Carney sends out Fletcher and two henchmen to prevent their reaching Darwin; they make the cattle stampede, and one drover is killed. However, Nullah stops the cattle from stampeding over a cliff, by using magic learned from his grandfather King George. Who then appears out of nowhere; with more magic he helps them get the cattle through the deadly "Never-Never" desert, a four-day trek. Isn't it wonderful how an Aboriginal sorcerer can make the thirst of 1.500 cattle disappear? Then, when at last delivering the cattle in Darwin, the group has to race them onto the ship before Carney's cattle can be loaded. Good has won over Bad, and we could call it a day.

But this would not suffice for an 'epic story'. Two years on, Lady Sarah, Drover and the quasi-adopted Nullah live happily at Faraway Downs. But then the menace re-appears in the form of Fletcher. After marrying King Carney's only daughter Cath he kills Carney, taking over not only his empire but also his dream of eliminating the competition by Faraway Downs. His point of attack against Lady Sarah is Nullah: he blackmails her to have him removed by the NT police. So sure is he of his success that he more or less admits he was her husband's killer. While on 'walkabout' with his grandfather, Nullah is indeed captured by the authorities. King George is thrown into a Darwin jail and Nullah sent to live on 'Mission Island' with a brace of part-Aboriginal children. We are now in 1942 and the Japanese air force attack both the island and Darwin. Lady Sarah fears that Nullah was killed. But her faithful Drover heroically purloins a boat, sails to Mission island, and snatches all the half-cast children from the fangs of the vile Japs, who have (a-historically) occupied this Australian island. His Aboriginal brother-in-law sacrifices his life for the plan to succeed and is felled by a Japanese bullet. A few loose ends need to be tied up: Fletcher has managed to make Sarah sell him her station, is cursed by Nullah, tries to shoot Nullah, his own child, but King George, who was accidentally freed when Japanese bombs fell on his jail, appears in the nick of time to spear Fletcher. All live happily ever after on Faraway Downs. Nullah completes his 'walkabout' initiation with his granddad, who says to Sarah he will show him the country: "our land" as he mutters. Curtain, and rapturous applause.

The story is told by Nullah in a series of VOs. This is a clever move that raises Nullah's status in the story and directs our political gaze onto the discourse of the 'Stolen Generation', to whom the film is dedicated. White attitudes to blacks are consequently used as a litmus test to decide who is good and bad: Drover is good because he chose an Aboriginal girl as his partner. Lady Sarah is also good because she likes Nullah and respects his grandfather. Fletcher of course is evil because he routinely forced station Aborigines to have sex with him, caring little for the offspring of these relationships. In one of the early scenes we see a publican named 'Ivan' (a Russian immigrant) refuse entry first to an Aboriginal drover then to Sarah

(she is a woman); at the end of the film Ivan has dropped his double whammy of sexism and racism. And before the final credits begin to roll, we get a series of educative texts amounting to a potted history of the 'Stolen Generation'. So Baz Luhrmann cleverly positions himself on the side of Reconciliation, which will not harm the film's sales figures. The final sentence refers to Kevin Rudd's famous 'Apology' in February of 2008. You can't get more topical than that.

But this appropriation of the discourse of Reconciliation isn't my only gripe. The film is clichéd beyond belief: in the early stages of the story Lady Sarah is portrayed as a typically spoilt, irritable and fickle British lady. Some fun is got out of a scene in which Drover gets into a fist-fight, accidentally using Lady Sarah's many suitcases that she brought from England as missiles. When Sarah surveys the dusty street that is littered with the all-too feminine contents of her suitcase, she is reduced to British whimpers. Cut to the next scene and she is in a beat-up truck travelling her to her station, fitted out in an absurd tropical helmet and veil – and suddenly, three kangaroos turn up outside, merrily bouncing along, and this reduces her (again) to incoherent babbles and squeals of delight. Why would kangaroos choose the company of a noisy truck? To make my point, one of the truck's fellow travellers fells a roo with a single shot, and that of course produces more incoherent sounds from Lady Sarah. However, in the course of the film she is thoroughly reformed and australianized. In the end she defers to the greater wisdom of Drover on the one hand, and King George on the other. She has even dropped her English accent.

'Drover' meanwhile only communicates in monosyllables. He is the typical outback mate, stoical, independent, laconic and *chaste* (we never see him and Lady Sarah in an intimate scene.) He drinks, but never during droving, and when Lady Sarah (in her British ignorance) refuses to take his advice on Nullah's needs as an indigenous boy, walks out on her! Yip, Aborigines were *that* important to Australian drovers in the 1940s!

The film has been compared to *Gone With the Wind*, a similarly appalling movie. (Baz Luhrmann, according to a German journal

article was trying to create the Australian equivalent to *Gone With the Wind*.) The 'romantic' hero of Margaret Mitchell's novel is called 'Ashley', like the heroine of this film. A coincidence? *Gone with the Wind* is insufferably condescending to the few Blacks in it, while *Australia* veers off in the opposite direction, attempting to erase some of the country's racist past. In 1942, would an Aboriginal warrior accused of murdering a white farmer have survived several months in a Darwin jail after his capture?

The script has borrowed from another US film, the Western *Shane* (1956). This film, set in Wyoming of the 1890s, treats the conflict between a cattle baron and a group of newly arrived farmers. The cattle baron employs a gunslinger named – Fletcher! In the end both are killed. Another coincidence? And finally, there is a parallel to an Australian period film of the 1980s: *We of the Never Never.* Baz Luhrman quotes extensively from this film, particularly the long aerial shots of the seemingly never-ending land, and he borrows "Never-Never" for the name of the desert that Drover and Ashley (and their 1500 cattle) have to cross.

In Charles Chauvel's landmark film *Jedda* (1955) the narrative is punctuated by a series of wild locational changes: In one scene, stockmen are hunting water buffalo in open grassland, in the next we are in the middle of a desert, in the next we find ourselves in a tropical jungle, while the final scene uses King's Canyon for its setting. The same charge can be laid against *Australia.* A major irritation is that Faraway Downs must be located several 100 kms south or east of Darwin, but there is no sandy desert in that region. Also it takes the cattle about a week to get there, but when Carney sends Fletcher out to prevent the herd from reaching its destination, he seems to makes the ride in just one day. Or how about the location where Ashley and Drover plus their herd strike camp for the first time: it is at the edge of the Bungle Bungle range, an iconic location well known in its appearance to friends of Australia – and of course the range lies about 2000 km away, in Central Western Australia. This may appear to be mere nit-picking, but a film which takes such liberties cannot be expected to be taken seriously.

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