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Typesetting & Design: [Dr Stefanie Affeldt](mailto:DrStefanieAffeldt@neopubli.de)

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It discusses a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary aspects relevant to Australia and its society, among them:

- anthropology
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- geography
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These issues are presented in consideration of both current and historical interrelations of European and Australian societies. In this context, studies on Indigenous Australian matters receive special attention.

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Editorial

The present issue of the 'Zeitschrift für Australienstudien' | 'Australian Studies Journal' brings together current contributions that engage with historical, political, cultural, and environmental developments in and around Australia from a range of disciplinary perspectives. What unites all the contributions is an interest in dynamic processes of change – whether in the context of nation building, environmental politics, postcolonial identity negotiations, or artistic boundary-crossings.

Daniel Rothenburg opens the thematic section with an analysis of the entanglements between environmental crises, neoliberal policies, and national identity formation since the late 20th century. Jovean de Mattos Caitano follows with a study of the role of Australian women artists at the renowned Darmstadt Summer Course, offering a transnational perspective on contemporary music and questions of gender.

The reviews provide critical engagements with recently published scholarly works. Topics range from cosmological readings of contemporary literature to post-imperial identity crises, from geopolitical and biopolitical perspectives to the history of migration in Australia. Notable here is the diversity of disciplinary approaches – literary studies, cultural and political analysis, musicology, and environmental history come together in productive dialogue.

This issue is an invitation to further explore the complexities of Australian history and the present within their global entanglements. It offers impulses for researchers, educators, and all those interested in the cultural, social, and political dimensions of Australia.

We hope you find this issue thought-provoking and engaging.

The Managing Editors

Essays

Daniel Rothenburg

Water Wars

Nation Building, Umweltkrisen und der Aufstieg des Neoliberalismus in Australien seit 1968

Abstract: Australien, der ‘trockenste bewohnte Kontinent’, erlebt seit Jahren erbitterte ‘Water Wars’. Deren Zentrum ist das Murray-Darling-Becken (MDB), das Herz der australischen Landwirtschaft. Bundesstaaten, ländliche Gemeinden, Landwirt*innen, Agrarkonzerne, Native-Title-Inhaber*innen und die Umwelt konkurrieren um die knapper werdenden Wasserressourcen in dieser wirtschaftlich und ökologisch wichtigen Großregion. Durch die Auswirkungen des Klimawandels werden diese Kämpfe in Zukunft voraussichtlich noch an Intensität gewinnen. Dieser Beitrag verfolgt die historische Genealogie dieser ‘Konfliktlandschaft’ seit den späten 1960er Jahren, um die gegenwärtige Situation besser zu verstehen. Die hier entwickelte These lautet, dass in der Zeit zwischen 1968 und 1994 die Grundlagen für die heutige Konfliktstruktur gelegt wurden. Während dieser Zeit eskalierte einerseits eine Umweltkrise im MDB, die Versalzung der Böden und des Wassers. Insgesamt verschlechterte sich die Situation durch übermäßigen Wasserverbrauch, sodass das MDB am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts in einem ökologisch katastrophalen Zustand war. Andererseits wurde in dieser Zeit das staatliche Monopol auf die nicht-urbanen Wasserressourcen aufgelöst. Unter dem doppelten Vorzeichen der Durchsetzung der Paradigmen des Neoliberalismus und der Nachhaltigkeit wurde Wasser von einem öffentlichen Gut zu einer Ware. Heute hat Australien den am weitesten entwickelten Wassermarkt der Welt – ein ökologisches und soziales Experiment mit offenem Ausgang, das wir uns auch in Europa genau ansehen sollten.

Nichts Geringeres als ‘Water Wars’ sind es, die nach einer Diagnose des australischen ‘Guardian’ von 2019 auf dem “trockensten bewohnten Kontinent” toben. Sie seien gekennzeichnet von erbitterten Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Bundesstaaten, ländlichen Gemeinden, Landwirt*innen, Agrarkonzernen, Inhaber*innen von Native Titles, den Metropolen an der Küste und den Interessen der Umwelt.¹ Im Juli 2017 berichtete ABC TV, dass Landwirt*innen in New South Wales im großen Stil Wasser gestohlen hatten, das für die Umwelt gedacht gewesen war.² Nichtsdestotrotz verteidigten Vertreter*innen ländlicher Wahlkreise erbittert den Anspruch der Landwirtschaft auf Wasser gegenüber anderen Interessen und beschuldigten die Journalist*innen, Teil einer Kampagne gegen Bewässerungslandwirtschaft insgesamt zu sein.³

Im November 2019 marschierten 2000 Bäuer*innen zum Parlament in Canberra, um ihrem Unmut über die ‘Zerstörung’ ihrer Gemeinden und der Nahrungsmittelversorgung der Nation Ausdruck zu geben (siehe Abb. 1).⁴ Durch den Einfluss des Klimawandels, der aller Voraussicht nach dafür sorgen wird, dass

1 Siehe The Guardian (Australia), 13. Dezember 2010 (Anne Davies: Water Wars).

2 Siehe ABC TV: Pumped; The Guardian (Australia), 25. Juli 2017 (Gabrielle Chan: Water Theft).

3 Siehe Gannawarra Times, 1. August 2017, p. 3 (Ken Jenkins: Basin Water Probe); Gannawarra Times, 28. Juli 2017, p. 5 (Angus Verley: Knee-Jerk Reaction); Gannawarra Times, 1. August 2017, p. 5 (Geoff Adams: Water Theft Allegations).

4 Siehe Anne Davies: Water Wars.



Abb. 1: Der stellvertretende Premierminister Michael McCormack spricht beim 'Convoy to Canberra'-Protest 2019 auf dem Rasen vor dem Parlament.

künftig insgesamt weniger Wasser für alle zur Verfügung stehen wird, dürften diese Konflikte in Zukunft noch an Schärfe gewinnen.⁵

Epizentrum der 'Water Wars' ist das Murray-Darling Becken (MDB) – das Herz der australischen Landwirtschaft. Das Becken ist das Einzugsgebiet der beiden wichtigsten australischen Flüsse, der Murray und der Darling. Es umfasst insgesamt etwa eine Million Quadratkilometer und hat eine Bevölkerung von über zwei Millionen Menschen, darunter mehr als 40 Aboriginal Nationen. Hier wird etwa ein Drittel der in Australien hergestellten Lebensmittel produziert, z. B. Reis, Obst, Milchprodukte, Getreide und Fleisch. Auch dank der intensiven Landwirtschaft in dieser Region ist Australien tatsächlich ein Lebensmittelexporteur. Der Preis dafür ist, dass die Landwirtschaft etwa 95 Prozent des Wassers der Region verbraucht – und 50-60 Prozent des Wassers in Australien insgesamt.⁶ Angesichts der zunehmenden Verknappung dieser Ressource werden die Anfechtungen des durstigen Industriezweigs in Zukunft wohl eher noch zunehmen.

In dieser Situation spielen Märkte für die Verteilung der Wasserressourcen eine entscheidende Rolle: Australien hat heute den am weitesten entwickelten Wassermarkt der Welt, auf dem jährlich 8 000 Gigaliter gehandelt werden – genug für

5 Siehe Bret Walker: Royal Commission Report, p. 35.

6 Siehe Daniel Rothenburg: Salinity, pp. 4, 19.

die gesamte Bevölkerung Frankreichs.⁷ Fast der gesamte Handel betrifft Wasser im MDB. Wasser ist eine Ware, die einen Marktpreis hat und im Prinzip von jed*em gekauft und verkauft werden kann. Sogar die Umwelt selbst wird zum Marktakteur, indem die australische Bundesregierung als deren Agent agiert, Wasserlizenzen hält und kauft, um für die Ökosysteme der Region Wasser zur Verfügung zu stellen. Damit soll sichergestellt werden, dass ausreichend Wasser in den Flüssen bleibt, anstatt für die Produktion oder den menschlichen Konsum verbraucht zu werden. Dass Wasser einen Preis hat, der sich nach Angebot sowie Nachfrage und saisonalen Bedingungen richtet, soll, so das Versprechen, dafür sorgen, dass es gleichzeitig effizient und ökonomisch produktiv eingesetzt wird. So soll die nachhaltige Nutzung und Erhaltung dieser fragilen Region unter den Bedingungen weiterhin bestehender, gravierender Umweltschäden gewährleistet werden.

In diesem Beitrag rekonstruiere ich die historische Genealogie der heutigen Situation, um die aktuellen Konflikte besser verständlich zu machen. Dazu gilt es zunächst, sich die Geschichte der Entwicklung des MDB zu einer Agrarlandschaft zu vergegenwärtigen. Die Wurzeln dieser Entwicklung reichen bis in die Zeit der britischen Kolonisierung zurück, als durch Landnahme und Vertreibung der Aborigines die Grundlagen für die Besiedlung und Aneignung der Region für europäische Siedlung und Landwirtschaft gelegt wurden. Im frühen 20. Jahrhundert wurden die Besiedlung und infrastrukturelle Überformung des Beckens zentraler Bestandteil eines staatlich organisierten 'nation-building'-Projekts. Durch die Mobilisierung von immer mehr Wasser wurde das MDB zu Australiens wichtigster landwirtschaftlicher Region. Die ökologischen Konsequenzen waren allerdings dramatisch. Ihre gesellschaftlichen Folgen erweisen sich in der Rückschau als entscheidend für die heutigen Konflikte.

Im Fokus des Beitrags steht der Zeitraum zwischen 1968 und 1994. In dieser Zeit verschärften sich unter dem Druck des sich immer weiter verschlechternden ökologischen Zustands des MDB die Ressourcenkonflikte um Wasser. Dabei spielte die durch Bewässerungslandwirtschaft hervorgerufene Versalzung der Böden und des Wassers eine herausragende Rolle. Diese ökologische Krise wurde hervorgerufen durch unangemessene landwirtschaftliche Praktiken, mangelhafte Infrastruktur, eine Ideologie der Naturunterwerfung und die staatliche Privilegierung von landwirtschaftlichen Interessen.

Während Versalzung heute als ein eher obskures Thema erscheint, wurde es 1987 von der Regierung des Bundesstaats Victoria als "Victoria's and arguably Australia's greatest environmental threat" bezeichnet.⁸ Die 'langsame Katastrophe' der Versalzung war ein Katalysator für fundamentale Transformationen der Modi der Ressourcenallokation, die seit 1968 zur Durchsetzung der Paradigmen der Nachhaltigkeit und des Neoliberalismus beitrug.⁹ Wasser wurde von einem öffentlichen Gut, das dem 'Gemeinwohl' dienen sollte, zu einer Ware, die marktförmig gehandelt werden konnte. Anhand der wichtigsten Agrarregion des

7 Siehe Peter Waldman et al.: Water Trade.

8 Government of Victoria: Salt Action, p. 5.

9 Siehe Rob Nixon: Slow Violence, p. 2; Fiona Williamson, Chris Courtney: Disasters Fast and Slow.

MDB, der Goulburn-Murray Region (siehe Abb. 2), können diese Entwicklungen und die damit einhergehenden ökosozialen Konflikte anschaulich rekonstruiert werden. Diese Fallstudie ist zugleich instruktiv zum Verständnis der heutigen 'Konfliktlandschaft' unter den Bedingungen einer fortschreitenden ökologischen Krise mit einer langen Geschichte.

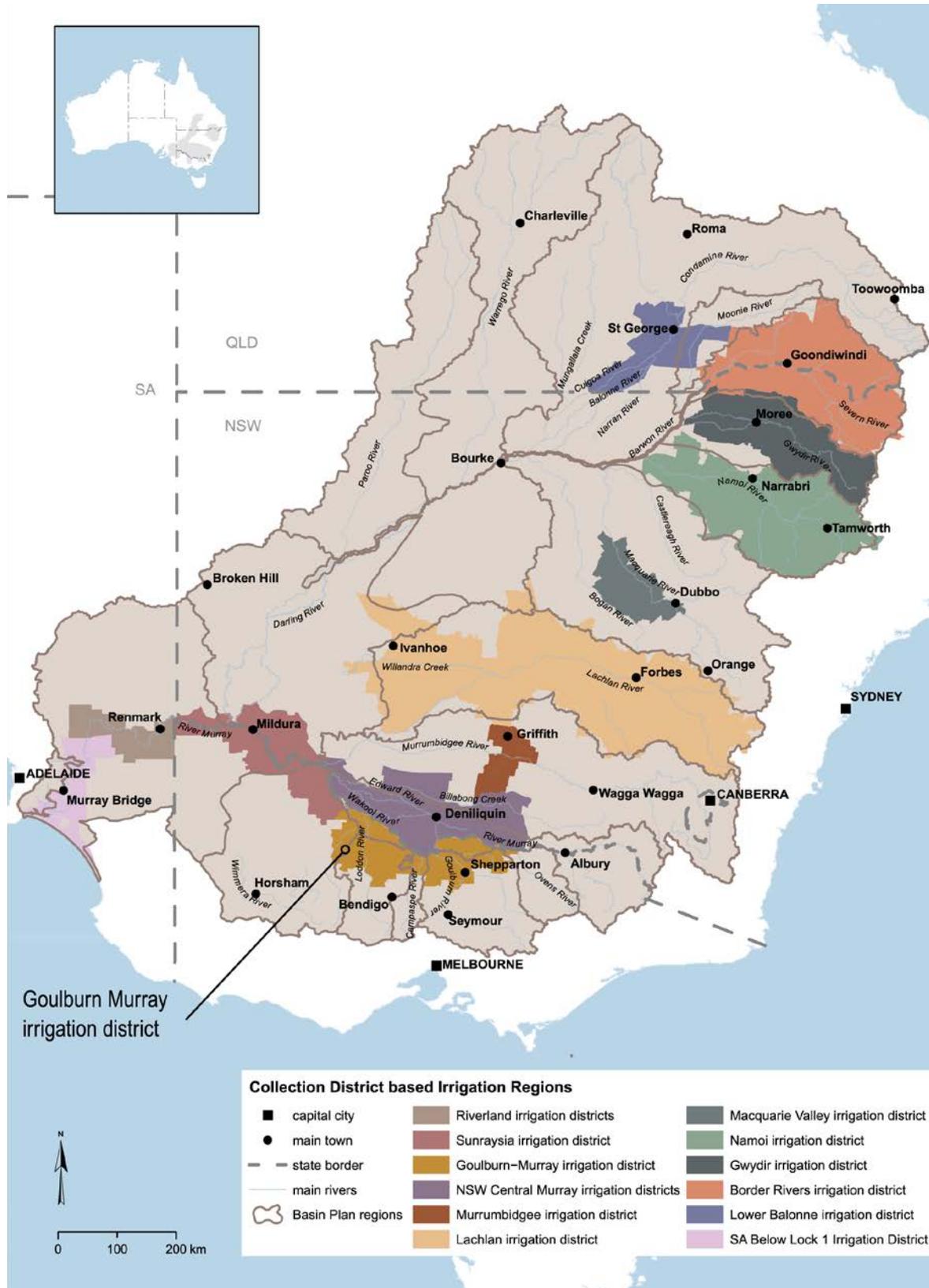


Abb. 2: Karte des Murray-Darling-Beckens mit der Goulburn-Murray-Region.

Wasser, Kolonisierung und Nation Building

Das MDB wurde im 20. Jahrhundert zu einer hochintensiven Agrarlandschaft. Durch den Bau von hydrologischer Infrastruktur wurde es möglich, Wasser in riesigen Mengen zu speichern und an Landwirt*innen zu verteilen. Symbolisch für dieses Unterfangen sind die ikonischen Staudämme, die nahezu weltweit als 'Kathedralen der Moderne' das Versprechen von Wohlstand durch Naturbeherrschung materiell verkörpern.¹⁰ Durch die infrastrukturelle Umgestaltung wurde diese vormals wenig produktive Landschaft mit ihren stark schwankenden klimatischen Verhältnissen zum landwirtschaftlichen Zentrum des Kontinents. Die Hydrologie der Region war schon seit Tausenden von Jahren durch die Aborigines verändert worden, die Flüsse ableiteten und Aquakulturen anlegten.¹¹ Entgegen der Imagination Australiens als 'unberührter Natur' bei Ankunft der Brit*innen besteht der Geograph Joseph M. Powell daher auf der "continuity of human endeavour", manifestiert durch "some significant interpretations and adaptations of the hydrological system which should be filed in the same category of tenacious interventionism that has been ascribed for the European invaders."¹² Der heutige hochmodifizierte Charakter des MDB – vor allem in seinem südlichen Teil – ist jedoch in erster Linie ein Produkt der britischen Kolonisierung und des Expansionsdrangs der Siedlergesellschaft.

Am handgreiflichsten sichtbar werden diese Transformationen am Beispiel des Murray, dem für die Bewässerungslandwirtschaft wichtigsten Fluss: Durch technische Eingriffe hat sich dessen saisonales Verhalten gänzlich umgekehrt – in seinem 'natürlichen' Zustand war der Murray im Sommer oft nur wenig mehr als ein Rinnsal oder eine Reihe verstreuter Tümpel, während er im Winter große Mengen Wasser führte und häufig über die Ufer trat. Heute ist der Fluss dagegen im Sommer voller Wasser, das für die Landwirtschaft gebraucht wird, während er im Winter nur wenig Wasser führt, da in dieser Zeit die Reservoirs wieder aufgefüllt werden.¹³

Wasser spielte im Kolonisierungsprojekt der weißen Siedlergesellschaft eine herausragende Rolle: Die Kontrolle über die Wasserressourcen galt als Patentrezept, um das trockene, wirtschaftlich unproduktive Binnenland des Kontinents für weiße Siedler*innen nutzbar zu machen.¹⁴ "Water Dreaming", wie der Historiker Michael Cathcart es nennt, wurde zur populären Ideologie, in der die Umgestaltung des 'nutzlosen' Landes durch menschlichen Erfindungsgeist propagiert wurde. Der 'braune' Kontinent sollte ergrünen, indem er in produktive, wohlgeordnete Agrargemeinden transformiert wurde. Die Eroberung und Besiedlung des angeblich leeren Binnenlands sollte es der Siedlergesellschaft erlauben, ihren Besitzanspruch auf den Kontinent geltend zu machen. Die rechtliche Fiktion Australiens als 'terra nullius' bedeutete nicht nur, dass die Invasor*innen sich

10 Siehe Klaus Gestwa: Die Stalinschen Großbauten des Kommunismus, p. 251.

11 Siehe Robyn Ballinger: An Inch of Rain, pp. 6f.; Bruce Pascoe: Dark Emu, pp. 53f.

12 Joseph M. Powell: Garden State, p. 22.

13 Siehe Don Garden: Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific, p. 113; Bret Walker: Royal Commission Report, p. 13.

14 Siehe Don Garden: Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific, p. 110.

das Land aneignen durften, sondern es auch in ihrem Sinne wirtschaftlich produktiv nutzen mussten, um ihren Anspruch darauf zu legitimieren.¹⁵

Die Konsequenz war die völlige Missachtung bestehender Besitzansprüche an Land und Wasser und die Enteignung und Vertreibung ihrer Besitzer*innen in der wohl am dichtesten besiedelten Region Australiens. Die Expansion europäischer Landnutzung führte zu einer radikalen Umgestaltung des Landes und verstärkter Konkurrenz um Land und Wasser zwischen Siedler*innen und Einheimischen. Damit sind die schlimmsten Episoden der Gewalt an der kolonialen Grenze verknüpft, die – zusammen mit Krankheiten und Verdrängung – zu einem dramatischen Bevölkerungsrückgang unter den Aborigines führten. Die infrastrukturelle Umgestaltung der Region ist nicht von kolonialer Enteignung und Gewalt zu trennen.¹⁶

Zugleich war die Aneignung der Region durch Infrastrukturbau, Besiedlung und Landwirtschaft für die Siedlergesellschaft im wortwörtlichen Sinne ‘nation building’. Im frühen 20. Jahrhundert wurde dieses Projekt zur Staatsraison erhoben: In Victoria, New South Wales und South Australia wurden Behörden gegründet, deren Aufgabe die Planung, Durchführung und Supervision von Infrastrukturen und Siedlungen war. Mit der Gründung dieser mit weitreichenden Kompetenzen ausgestatteten ‘super agencies’ wurde die ländliche Wasserversorgung staatsmonopolistisch zentralisiert und Wasser zum Gemeingut erklärt, das folglich keiner Privatperson gehören durfte. Wasserrechte wurden von den Staaten zusammen mit dem Land vergeben, Allokationen wurden zentral festgelegt. Der Wasserpreis sowie die Landwirtschaft insgesamt waren hoch subventioniert. Landbesitzer*innen bezahlten nur einen kleinen Teil der anfallenden Kosten, während die öffentlichen Haushalte für alle Investitionen aufkamen.¹⁷

Diese staatsmonopolistische Verteilung der Ressource war Teil eines Gesellschaftsvertrags zwischen Stadt und Land: Die Bevölkerungsmehrheit in den Küstenstädten unterstützte die Landbevölkerung politisch, kulturell und finanziell und erhielt im Gegenzug Nahrungsmittel zu erschwinglichen Preisen. Dieses Arrangement war ein essenzieller Bestandteil des ‘Australian Settlement’ – zusammen mit der ‘White Australia Policy’, einer protektionistischen Schutzzollpolitik, festgelegten Preisen und Subventionen.¹⁸ Faktisch bedeutete dies, so die Kritik des Ökonomen Bruce R. Davidson, dass die Bewässerungslandwirtschaft gegenüber den durstigen Küstenstädten mit einem privilegierten Zugang zu Wasser ausgestattet wurde, obwohl sie nicht profitabel wirtschaftete.¹⁹ Diese wurde als Dienst am Gemeinwohl verstanden und war damit unberührt von Kosten-Nutzen-Analysen.²⁰

15 Siehe Michael Cathcart: *Water Dreamers*, pp. 199, 201, 210 f., 231, 247.

16 Siehe Robyn Ballinger: *Inch of Rain*, pp. 26-29; Lana D. Hartwig, Sue Jackson, Natalie Osborne: *Trends in Aboriginal Water Ownership*, pp. 3, 5.

17 Siehe Joseph M. Powell: *Garden State*, pp. 142-150, 194 ff.; James C. Scott: *Seeing Like a State*, pp. 94f.

18 Siehe Kirsten Henderson: *Dams, Pumps, Pipes and Dreams*, pp. 90f.; Paul Kelly: *The End of Certainty*.

19 Siehe Bruce R. Davidson: *Australia Wet or Dry*, pp. v, 1-4, 98-107, 114-117.

20 Siehe Joseph M. Powell: *Garden State*, pp. 251-255.

Zwischen 1915 und 1974 wurde das MDB durch die konzertierte Arbeit der staatlichen Infrastrukturbehörden mittels Infrastrukturbau, Erschließung neuer Agrarregionen und Ansiedlung tausender Menschen grundlegend umgestaltet. In der Konsequenz wurde der Murray seit den 1950er Jahren nicht mehr als 'natürlich' – und damit erratisch – verstanden, sondern als anthropogenes System. Bei diesem konnte die River Murray Commission (RMC) in Canberra bestimmen, wie viel Wasser sich zu welchem Zeitpunkt im Fluss befinden sollte. In der Folgezeit ging im Bewusstsein der Zeitgenoss*innen auch die Verantwortung für den Murray auf die Ingenieur*innen über. Deren Aufgabe war es, das von ihnen verwaltete System zuverlässig und produktiv zu machen oder, in den Worten der Umwelthistorikerin Emily O'Gorman, "environmental security" für seine Nutzer*innen zu garantieren.²¹

Am intensivsten war diese Umgestaltung in der Goulburn-Murray-Region im Norden Victorias. Diese ist als 'food bowl' Australiens bekannt.²² Heute werden dort auf 68000 Quadratkilometern von 1200 Betrieben 21 Prozent der australischen Milch hergestellt. Auf 400 Quadratkilometern werden landwirtschaftliche Güter wie Weizen, Gerste, Mais, Öl, Obst und Fleisch produziert. Durch die profunde Umgestaltung mittels hydrologischer Infrastruktur ist seit dem späten 19. Jahrhundert eine Landschaft entstanden, die landwirtschaftlichen Zwecken dient. Über ein Netzwerk von mehr als 10000 Kilometer wird Wasser durch natürliche Flussläufe und künstlich angelegte Kanäle im Bewässerungssystem verteilt und Abwasser entsorgt.²³ Die natürlichen Wasserläufe wurden kanalisiert und vertieft, um Wasser effizienter durch das Bewässerungssystem zu verteilen.²⁴

Peter Davies und Susan Lawrence haben argumentiert, dass das gesamte südliche MDB durch menschliche Eingriffe zu einer hybriden Landschaft umgestaltet wurde, in der 'Natur' und 'Gesellschaft' nicht mehr voneinander zu trennen sind. Ihre natürlichen Eigenschaften wurden überformt oder ersetzt; sie wurde zu einem "anthropogenic social-ecological system". Die Goulburn-Murray-Region ist das Herzstück dieser Hybridlandschaft. Das heißt allerdings nicht, dass die Dynamiken der Ökosysteme völlig stillgestellt und beherrschbar wurden. Es gab und gibt immer noch regelmäßige Dürre- und Flutperioden im MDB, die durch die technischen Maßnahmen zwar gemildert, aber nicht aus der Welt geschafft werden können. Die staatlichen Expert*innen versprachen zwar Sicherheit gegenüber den Launen der Natur, aber dieser Anspruch stellte sich schon bald als trügerisch heraus.²⁵

21 Siehe Emily O'Gorman: *Flood Country*, pp. 137f.; Emily O'Gorman: *Unnatural River*, pp. 90-93; Paul Sinclair: *The Murray*, pp. 68f.

22 Siehe Murray-Darling Basin Authority: *Guide to the Proposed Basin Plan*, p. 779.

23 Siehe *ibid.*, pp. 781, 784; *Irrigation Leader Magazine: Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District*.

24 Siehe George E. Hardwick: *Historical Report*, pp. 11, 13 ff.

25 Siehe Peter Davies, Susan Lawrence: *Engineered Landscapes*, pp. 3, 180.

Die Umweltkrise der Versalzung

Am Ende der 1960er Jahren schienen die Bemühungen um eine hochproduktive Agrarlandschaft und wohlgeordnete ländliche Gemeinden mit einer weißen, hart arbeitenden Bevölkerung Realität geworden. In der Goulburn-Murray-Region waren prosperierende und wachsende regionale Zentren entstanden: Kerang im Westen, mit etwa 4000 Einwohner*innen, war das Zentrum einer vor allem auf Weidewirtschaft aufgebauten Agrarregion, in der Fleisch, Wolle, Getreide sowie 2,5 Prozent der australischen Milchprodukte hergestellt wurden. Shepparton im Osten mit einer Bevölkerung von fast 18000 Menschen erzeugte allein 20 Prozent des australischen Obstes und 11 Prozent der Milchprodukte.²⁶ Etwa zu dieser Zeit begann jedoch eine sich lang anbahnende Umweltkrise zu eskalieren, die das Erreichte grundsätzlich in Frage stellte – die Versalzung, deren Zentrum in Victoria die Goulburn-Murray-Region war.

Versalzung bedeutet buchstäblich die Akkumulation von Salz in Böden und Wasser. Zum einen ist das MDB eine natürlicherweise durch Salz geprägte Region mit teilweise stark salzhaltigen Böden sowie Oberflächen- und Grundwasser, die zudem nur sehr geringe Möglichkeiten hat, sich wieder von Salz und Sedimenten zu reinigen. Zum anderen brachte die großflächige Entwaldung kombiniert mit der Einführung von bewässerungsintensiver Landwirtschaft die fragilen, auf Wassermangel eingestellten Ökosysteme aus dem Gleichgewicht. Durch die riesigen Mengen Wasser, die in die Böden gelangten, stiegen die Grundwasserspiegel an und brachten sedimentierte Salze an die Oberfläche. Da das Salz giftig für Nutzpflanzen wie Getreide und Obstbäume war, verursachte die fortschreitende Versalzung zurückgehende Ernten. In den schlimmsten Fällen blieb nur mit einer Salzkruste überzogenes Land zurück, das für landwirtschaftliche Nutzung gänzlich unproduktiv war. Wenn sich bereits an der Erdoberfläche Salz absetzte, war es meist zu spät. Häufiger blieb es bei einer schleichenden, nichtlinearen Degradation, die zwar nicht zu einem Totalausfall führte, aber dennoch das Überleben der Bewässerungslandwirtschaft grundsätzlich in Frage stellte.²⁷

Anthropogene Versalzung war in Victoria bereits 1853 dokumentiert worden.²⁸ Aber seit der Einführung von künstlicher Bewässerung in der Landwirtschaft nahm das Problem in kurzer Zeit stark zu. Schon 1916 stellte eine Royal Commission den Zusammenhang von übermäßigem Wasserverbrauch, steigenden Grundwasserspiegeln und Versalzung fest.²⁹ Aber trotz wiederholter Warnungen vor der sich ausbreitenden Versalzung in den Bewässerungsregionen wurden nur marginale Verbesserungen implementiert. Ineffiziente Bewässerungstechniken sorgten für exzessiven Wasserverbrauch. Es fehlten Drainagesysteme – vor allem in der Region um Kerang, das sich bald zum 'Hotspot' der Versalzung

26 Siehe V.H. Arnold: *Victorian Year Book* 1968, p. 128; State Rivers and Water Supply Commission: *Salinity Control and Drainage*, pp. 23f.; Public Record Office Victoria: Gynlais Oughton Jones, Kerang 13. Juli 1976, pp. 82f.

27 Siehe Daniel Rothenburg: *Irrigation, Salinity, and Rural Communities*, pp. 24f.

28 Siehe Peter Russ: *Salt Traders*, pp. 31f.

29 Siehe J.G. Johnstone et al.: *Final Report from the Royal Commission*, p. 28.

entwickelte.³⁰ Zudem gingen in den späten 1950er Jahren im Bewässerungssystem der State Rivers and Water Supply Commission (SRWSC) des Bundesstaats Victoria jedes Jahr etwa 75 Prozent des Wassers durch leckende Kanäle und Evaporation verloren. Durch graduelle Verbesserungen betrug die tatsächlich für die Landwirtschaft verwendete Menge in der Goulburn-Murray-Region 1963 immerhin 50 Prozent.³¹ Dennoch konnte dies an teilweise langsam, teilweise sprunghaft ansteigenden Grundwasserspiegeln wenig ändern. Die Landwirtschaft verfügte de facto über unbegrenzte Mengen Wasser; der tatsächliche Verbrauch wurde nicht gemessen.³²

Diese sich lang anbahnende Katastrophe erlangte Ende der 1960er Jahre eine neue Prominenz. War Versalzung zuvor ein halbes Jahrhundert lang weitgehend unterhalb des Radars der Regierungen und der Öffentlichkeit geblieben, machte die Dürre von 1967/68 das Problem zum ersten Mal für die Entscheidungsträger*innen in Canberra greifbar. Die RMC musste zugeben, dass sie beträchtliche Mengen Wasser zur Verdünnung des Murray aufwenden musste, um den Salzgehalt leidlich akzeptabel zu halten. In dem wasserarmen Fluss wurden große Mengen salzhaltiges Wasser – sogenannte ‘slugs’ – sichtbar, die flussabwärts erhebliche Schäden in der Landwirtschaft anrichteten.³³ Obstbäuer*innen in Mildura beschwerten sich, dass “the whole economy of irrigated areas and its industries that depend upon them are threatened by increasing salinity”, und beschworen die Bundesregierung, etwas dagegen zu unternehmen.³⁴

Der kleine Barr Creek in der Nähe von Kerang erlangte nationale Berühmtheit, weil er als Hauptquelle salinen Wassers im Murray identifiziert wurde. Dieser kaum 40 Kilometer lange Strom wurde seit den 1920er Jahren als Drainagekanal für die Agrarbetriebe aus der Gegend verwendet. In den 1930er Jahren wurde er verbreitert, um noch mehr Abwasser zu entsorgen. Dadurch gelangte hochsalines Grundwasser in den Fluss.³⁵ Nun wurden die Verantwortlichen in Canberra auf den Bach aufmerksam. Die Bundesregierung stellte Mittel bereit, um für 2 Millionen AUD ein System zu installieren. Mit dessen Hilfe wurde Wasser aus dem Barr Creek gepumpt und in eine Reihe von Seen weitergeleitet, bis es schließlich in Lake Tutchewop – einem Süßwassersee nahe Kerang, der vormals als Naherholungsgebiet genutzt worden war – evaporieren würde.³⁶

Für den Minister für National Development, David Fairbairn, waren die Vorteile offensichtlich: Das Barr-Creek-Tutchewop-Projekt würde signifikante Mengen Wasser sparen, das statt zur Verdünnung des Murray für die Produktion verwendet werden könnte. Zudem würde es die Wasserqualität für Mildura

30 Siehe Gutteridge, Haskins & Davey: Report, pp. 231, 251, 286; Peter Russ: Salt Traders, p. 89.

31 Siehe V.H. Arnold: Victorian Year Book 1965, p. 500; Peter Russ: Salt Traders, pp. 76 f.

32 Siehe Gynlais O. Jones et al.: Fifty Years of Achievement, pp. 8; Gutteridge, Haskins & Davey: Report, p. 229.

33 Siehe Daniel Connell: Water Politics, p. 106; National Archives of Australia: Notes on the River Murray Salinity Reduction Projects in Northern Victoria, p. 1; National Archives of Australia: Chowilla Dam Article, p. 192.

34 National Archives of Australia: River Murray Salinity, p. 198.

35 Siehe Peter Russ: Salt Traders, pp. 90 f.; George E. Hardwick: Historical Report, p. 11.

36 Siehe David Fairbairn: Victoria Grant, p. 993; George E. Hardwick: Historical Report, pp. 11 f.

und Adelaide flussabwärts verbessern.³⁷ Kein schlechtes Argument in einer Zeit, in der die privilegierte Ausstattung der Landwirtschaft mit Wasser unter schwerem Beschuss stand. Während in den Bewässerungsregionen von Victoria riesige Mengen Wasser verbraucht wurden und verloren gingen, musste die Hauptstadt Melbourne fast ein Jahr lang Wasserrestriktionen verhängen. Rasenbewässerung und Swimmingpools wurden verboten und es gab Einschränkungen beim Pflanzengießen und Autowaschen, was die Debatte um die Wasserverteilung zwischen Stadt und Land befeuerte.³⁸ Ein Journalist der Tageszeitung 'The Age' kritisierte, dass eine kleine landwirtschaftliche Region über die Wasserversorgung einer Metropole mit zwei Millionen Einwohner*innen diktieren könne.³⁹ Auf der anderen Seite warnte der L.R. Vincent, Präsident der Goulburn and Waranga Water Users' United League, eines Interessenverbands von Landwirt*innen aus Victoria, seine Mitglieder, dass sie das Opfer von 'Piraterie' an ihrer Wasserversorgung werden könnten.⁴⁰

Diese Konflikte während der Dürre von 1967/68 waren indes nur ein Vorspiel zu den erbitterten Auseinandersetzungen über Wasserversorgung und -qualität der folgenden Jahrzehnte. Zunächst aber beauftragte die Bundesregierung zum ersten Mal eine großangelegte Studie, um das Ausmaß des Problems zu erfassen, die 1970 erschienene Murray Valley Salinity Investigation. Es war der erste umfassende Versuch, die Zusammenhänge von Bewässerung, Drainage und Versalzung zu untersuchen.⁴¹ Die Ingenieure fanden heraus, dass zwei Drittel der Kerang-Region erhöhte Grundwasserspiegel aufwies, was bei weitverbreiteten salinen Böden und Grundwasser ein akutes Risiko der Versalzung bedeutete. Shepparton dagegen hatte zum damaligen Zeitpunkt wegen seiner günstigeren ökologischen Bedingungen und seines Drainagesystems keine Versalzungsprobleme.⁴²

Wenige Jahre später – 1973/74 – sorgte jedoch das umgekehrte Szenario für die Eskalation des Problems: eine Flutsaison. In zwei Phasen traten zunächst im Sommer und Winter 1973 und dann noch einmal im Sommer 1974 praktisch alle Flüsse in Victoria über die Ufer. In Kerang drohte Hochwasser, in Shepparton stieg der Murray während eines einzigen Wochenendes um 1,5 Meter an. Wasser drang in Teile der Innenstadt ein. Zahlreiche Felder standen unter Wasser, Ernten wurden geschädigt und 300 000 Pfirsichbäume zerstört.⁴³

Noch bedeutsamer war allerdings, dass die Grundwasserspiegel durch die Fluten erneut deutlich anstiegen und dadurch das Versalzungsproblem eine neue Qualität erreichte. 1975 wurde festgestellt, dass in 75 Prozent der Kerang-Region

37 Siehe National Archives of Australia: Notes on the River Murray Salinity Reduction Projects in Northern Victoria, p. 3; National Archives of Australia: Salinity Reduction Projects in the River Murray, pp. 1 ff., 6.

38 Siehe Jenny Keating: The Drought Walked Through, pp. 167-185.

39 Siehe The Age, 6. Dezember 1967, p. 5 (Anonymous: A Dry Argument).

40 Siehe The Kerang New Times, 16. Januar 1968, p. 8 (Anonymous: Threat to Irrigation Water).

41 Siehe Connell: Water Politics, p. 106.

42 Siehe Gutteridge, Haskins & Davey: Report, pp. 228 f., 271-276.

43 Siehe State Rivers and Water Supply Commission: 67th Annual Report, pp. 10 f.; State Rivers and Water Supply Commission: 68th Annual Report, pp. 14 f.; The Northern Times, 11. Januar 1974, p. 1 (Anonymous: Record Wet); The Northern Times, 15. Januar 1974, p. 1 (Anonymous: Rain, Rain...).

und 46 Prozent der Shepparton-Region die Grundwasserspiegel so hoch waren, dass Salz an die Oberfläche gelangen konnte. Versalzung war nun ein schnell um sich greifendes Problem, das die gesamte Goulburn-Murray-Region unmittelbar betraf. Diese befand sich nun inmitten einer kombinierten ökologischen und sozioökonomischen Krise.⁴⁴

In Kerang gingen durch die fortschreitende Versalzung Anfang der 1980er Jahre geschätzte 25 Prozent der landwirtschaftlichen Erträge verloren; in Shepparton etwa 7 Prozent. Dies führte zu einem Gesamtverlust von 30 Million AUD jährlich.⁴⁵ Betroffene Bauernfamilien wurden dadurch häufig gezwungen, sich Nebenbeschäftigungen zu suchen oder ihre Höfe ganz aufzugeben. Weite Teile der Region, die ganz auf die Landwirtschaft angewiesen waren, verarmten und erlebten einen Prozess der Depopulation; insbesondere traf dies kleine Orte ohne alternative Einkommensmöglichkeiten. Dort verließen meist junge Leute in großer Zahl die Gegend. Hinzu kamen psychische Belastungen und weiterverbreitete Unsicherheit im Angesicht einer Bedrohung, die sich nichtlinear ausbreitete, die für viele Landbesitzer*innen schwer verständlich war und gegen die es keine einfachen Mittel gab.⁴⁶

Zudem bewirkte die schleichende Versalzung markante Umweltveränderungen: Kerang beispielsweise liegt inmitten einer ausgedehnten Seen-Sumpf-Landschaft, die Heimat vieler Arten von Tieren und Pflanzen wie Wasservögel, Fische und Eukalyptusbäume ist. Im Laufe der Jahrzehnte sickerte salzhaltiges Wasser in diese Lebensräume ein. In den späten 1980er Jahren waren die Salzgehalte an vielen Orten mehr als hundert Mal so hoch wie zu Beginn des Jahrhunderts. Seen mit so sprechenden Namen wie Dry Lake, Duck Lake und North Drainage Lake wurden zu hypersalinen Ökosystemen, die keinen Lebensraum mehr für die bisherigen Bewohner boten, dafür aber eine neue Heimat für salztolerante Spezies wurden. Die gesamte Lebenswelt wurde durch die fortschreitende Umweltkrise in Mitleidenschaft gezogen.⁴⁷

Umwelt und Interessen

Der Druck der ökologischen Krise rief neue politische Akteure auf den Plan, die sich einerseits für die Umwelt als schützenswertes Gut einsetzten, andererseits aber genau dieses Anliegen wirkungsvoll einzusetzen wussten, um ihre Interessen zu wahren. Der Kampf um Prioritäten und öffentliches Geld, um der Versalzung Herr zu werden, mobilisierte Teile der ländlichen Bevölkerung und brachte ihre radikalsten Vertreter*innen an den Rand eines gewalttätigen Konflikts mit

44 Siehe State Rivers and Water Supply Commission: Salinity Control and Drainage, pp. 44-48, 71, 81 f., 177; State Rivers and Water Supply Commission: 68th Annual Report, p. 15.

45 Siehe Salinity Committee: Salt of the Earth, p. xviii.

46 Siehe Public Record Office Victoria: Sharman Nancy Stone, pp. 814; Sharman Nancy Stone: Sociology of Salinity in Northern Victoria, pp. 17-21; ACIL Australia et al.: Salinity, pp. 149-153; State Rivers and Water Supply Commission: Salinity Control and Drainage, p. 25; Cary and Barr: Social Profile, pp. 5, 7 f., 11; Salinity Pilot Program Advisory Council: Draft Plan, pp. 18 f.

47 Siehe Kerang Lakes Area Working Group: Communities in Partnership, p. 44.

der SRWSC. Der erbitterte Streit darum, wer und in welchem Maße das Recht haben sollte, Wasser zu verwenden und zu verschmutzen, brachte schließlich auch die ländlichen Gemeinden gegeneinander auf. Die Krise der 1970er und 1980er Jahre intensivierte bestehende Ressourcenkonflikte und brachte neue hervor.

Zunächst führten die Verwerfungen durch die Versalzung zur Formierung einer ländlichen Umweltbewegung. Frühe derartige Initiativen hatte es bereits im Jahre 1939 gegeben, als der Agrarwissenschaftler Alan Morgan in Zusammenarbeit mit Landwirt*innen begann, Experimente für die Verbesserung von versalztem Land zu machen.⁴⁸ 1954 und 1956 waren in Kerang und Swan Hill Versuchshöfe gegründet worden, die es sich zum Ziel machten, Techniken für die Landwirtschaft unter salinen Bedingungen zu entwickeln.⁴⁹ Aber erst während der verschärften Krise der 1970er Jahre entstanden politische Initiativen – die Salinity Action Committees –, von denen es in Victoria zum Ende des Jahrzehnts mehr als 30 gab. Diese Gruppen bildeten ein Netzwerk und etablierten sich erfolgreich als Lobbyorganisationen mit direktem Zugang zu Minister*innen. Sie verfügten zudem über eine enge Bindung an die lokalen Gemeinden. Charismatische Führungsfiguren wie der Agrarwissenschaftler Gynlais (“Gyn”) O. Jones in Kerang machten diese Gruppen zu einflussreichen Akteuren in der Umgestaltung der Landwirtschaft und Infrastruktur der Region.⁵⁰

Die beiden Gruppen in Kerang und Shepparton – das Kerang Irrigation Region Salinity Action Committee (KIRSAC) und das Goulburn Irrigation Region Drainage Action Committee (GIRDAC) – können als Spielarten des Umweltaktivismus verstanden werden. Sie rezipierten den neuen Diskurs über “nachhaltige Entwicklung”, verwendeten selbst die Sprache der populären “Ökologie” und ihre Mitglieder verstanden sich in der Regel selbst als Umweltbewegte.⁵¹ In den Worten von Gyn Jones:

Conservation of our environment might be something you tend to leave up to a few radical groups – but really every individual should contribute something to ensure that following generations don’t end up trying to eke out an existence in a barren wilderness.⁵²

Für Jones war die Versalzung kein isoliertes, rein technisches Problem, sondern ein Symptom schlechten Umweltmanagements, hervorgerufen durch Ignoranz gegenüber ökologischen Zusammenhängen und unzureichende Erfahrung mit den lokalen Umweltbedingungen. Nötig war eine Kombination aus verbesserten landwirtschaftlichen Methoden, öffentlichen Geldern für technische Verbesserungen in der Landwirtschaft und Drainagen sowie eine neue Ethik der

48 Siehe Gynlais Oughton Jones et al.: *Fifty Years of Achievement*, p. 9; Public Record Office Victoria: *Experimental Plots*; Melbourne Peter Russ: *Salt Traders*, p. 97.

49 Siehe *The Guardian* (Swan Hill), 16. August 1954, p. 3 (Anonymous: *Enthusiastic support for research farm*); *The Age*, 20. April 1956, p. 7 (Anonymous: *Research farm at Kerang*).

50 Siehe *The Northern Times*, 2. März 1976, p. 1 (Anonymous: *Community call*); ACIL Australia et al.: *Salinity*, p. 153; Public Record Office Victoria: Ernest M. Jackson to Minister of Water Supply; Public Record Office Victoria: Note for file; Public Record Office Victoria: re: Press tour.

51 Ernest M. Jackson: *Replenish the Earth*, pp. 2, 4, 6, 15.

52 *The Northern Times*, 1. Februar 1984, p. 12 (Gynlais O. Jones: *Ruin of Evolution*).

Verantwortung:⁵³ Gyn Jones mahnte: "Our rich countryside is a heritage. We have inherited it and should pass it on to future generations".⁵⁴

Die Salinity Action Committees müssen indes in gleichem Maße als Erweiterung des öffentlichen Sektors in die Gesellschaft verstanden werden. Sie waren eng mit den Infrastrukturbehörden verbunden, verfolgten aber gleichzeitig ihre eigenen Interessen: So kam z. B. Gyn Jones, als Leiter des Department of Agriculture in Kerang selbst aus dem öffentlichen Dienst – genau wie ein Großteil der führenden Mitglieder von KIRSAC und GIRDAC.⁵⁵ Beide Gruppen hatten enge Verbindungen zur lokalen Agrarindustrie, deren Interesse in erster Linie dem Wohlergehen ihrer jeweiligen Region und ihren kommerziellen Aktivitäten galt. Es überrascht daher nicht, dass die Aktivist*innen bei allem Einsatz für die gemeinsame Umwelt, die es zu schützen galt, immer auch als Akteure in Ressourcenkonflikten auftraten. Sie waren auch Repräsentant*innen privilegierter Interessen von Landbesitzern sowie Agrar- und Verarbeitungsbetrieben, die von der öffentlich finanzierten Infrastruktur und dem hochsubventionierten Wasser profitierten. Die Erhaltung der Umwelt war ihnen ein aufrichtiges Anliegen, aber auch ein Argument zur Durchsetzung eigener Interessen und für den Erhalt ihres Zugangs zu knappen Wasserressourcen.⁵⁶

Das wird besonders bei den Konflikten der Aktivist*innen untereinander deutlich: Gegenüber den Behörden sprachen KIRSAC und GIRDAC keineswegs immer mit einer Stimme. Sie konkurrierten miteinander um öffentliche Mittel, um ihre jeweiligen Agrarindustrien und Bewässerungssysteme zu verbessern. Dabei fanden sich die Vertreter*innen Kerangs regelmäßig in der schwächeren Position wieder – nicht nur, weil ihre Region ökonomisch eine weitaus geringere Produktivität und damit Priorität hatte, sondern auch, weil Kerang flussabwärts von Shepparton gelegen war und dementsprechend unter dem verschmutzten Wasser seiner Nachbarregion zu leiden hatte.⁵⁷ Im Gegensatz zu Kerang besaß Shepparton nämlich ein bis Mitte der 1960er Jahre weit ausgebautes Drainagesystem.⁵⁸ Gyn Jones' Kritik an Shepparton war daher, dass Kerang die Leidtragende der Umweltschäden flussaufwärts war: "Our already poorly drained area cannot tolerate the long-term effects of being a major sink for salt from other areas".⁵⁹

Vertreter*innen aus Shepparton antworteten auf solche Vorwürfe, dass die Kerang-Region der eigentliche Verschmutzer war: Das wirkliche Problem sei nicht, dass in Sheppartons höchst produktivem landwirtschaftlichem Sektor eine überschaubare Menge saline Abfälle entstünden, sondern dass eine ökonomisch marginale Region mit schlechten Böden – die zudem, wie auch das Grundwasser auch noch hoch salzhaltig waren – billiges Wasser aus öffentlichen Mitteln erhalte.⁶⁰ In den Worten des GIRDAC-Sprechers Leon Heath: "I do not think that

53 Siehe *The Northern Times*, 27. Juni 1986, p. 11 (Gynlais O. Jones: Salinity Spread).

54 *The Northern Times*, 28. Januar 1981, p. 12 (Gynlais O. Jones: Don't Miss on Water).

55 Siehe *Salt Force News* 21 (Mai-Juni 1991), p. 13 (R. Brindal: Irrigation guru retires).

56 Siehe Public Record Office Victoria: George Ernest Hardwick, p. 474; Public Record Office Victoria: Eric Merrigan, p. 139.

57 Siehe Public Record Office Victoria: Gynlais Oughton Jones, pp. 80, 87.

58 Siehe Gutteridge, Haskins & Davey: Report, p. 286.

59 Public Record Office Victoria: Gynlais Oughton Jones, p. 87.

60 Siehe Public Record Office Victoria: Leon G. Heath, pp. 1057 ff., 1066-1069.

irrigation water should be supplied to people who abuse it and cause problems to other people, and the community, and perhaps the nation".⁶¹

Anders gesagt: Kerangs Weidewirtschaft, die aufs Ganze gesehen wirtschaftlich vernachlässigbar war, schien weder die immensen Umweltschäden noch das öffentliche Wasser wert. Und tatsächlich hatte die SRWSC festgestellt, dass der Barr Creek, der in der Kerang-Region lag, allein jedes Jahr 150 000 bis 200 000 Tonnen Salz in den Murray leitete. Dagegen war der Anteil von Sheppartons Drainagesystem mit etwa 650 Tonnen pro Jahr geradezu unerheblich. In Zeiten knapper, umkämpfter und prekärer Wasserressourcen war das Argument des Umweltschutzes auch eine Waffe im Kampf um deren Verteilung.⁶²

Vereint waren beide Salinity Action Committees dagegen in ihrem Standpunkt, dass die Landwirtschaft unbedingte Priorität haben sollte, auch gegenüber den Interessen der Küstenstädte. Sie beriefen sich auf den Auftrag der SRWSC, durch die Bereitstellung sicherer Wasserversorgung für die Landwirtschaft zum 'Gemeinwohl' beizutragen. Damit verbunden war die Forderung, dass der Staat, der durch die SRWSC die Kontrolle über die Wasserressourcen und die Umwelt übernommen hatte, nun seiner Verantwortung gerecht werden und das Problem lösen sollte.⁶³

Zugleich wehrten sich gut organisierte Einwohner*innen der Goulburn-Murray-Region auch gegen diejenigen Maßnahmen der SRWSC, die ihren Interessen widersprachen. Als Antwort auf die um sich greifende Versalzung legte die Behörde 1975 ein umfangreiches Paket zur Anpassung der Infrastruktur und der Landwirtschaft an die neuen Bedingungen vor. Es war ein umfassender Plan, um das Bewässerungssystem Victorias mittels eines großangelegten 'technological fix' zukunftssicher zu machen. Die Kosten dafür beliefen sich in heutiger Kaufkraft auf mehr als 1 Milliarde AUD.⁶⁴ Das Herzstück war ein Vorhaben, mit dem das Barr-Creek-Problem endlich gelöst werden sollte: eine Erweiterung des 1968 gebauten Barr-Creek-Tutchewop-Projektes. Die SRWSC fasste den Plan, Lake Tyrrell (einen Salzsee in der Nähe von Swan Hill) in das System einzubeziehen, um noch mehr Abwasser aus der Bewässerungslandwirtschaft entsorgen zu können. Damit sollten 24 Prozent des Wassers aus dem Barr Creek abgeleitet und dadurch die Wasserqualität akzeptabel gehalten werden sowie das Problem final gelöst werden.⁶⁵

Dieser Plan traf allerdings auf den erbitterten Widerstand der Landwirt*innen und Aktivist*innen aus der Kerang-Region. Diese fürchteten, dass an das System angrenzendes Land durch einsickerndes hoch salzhaltiges Wasser zerstört werden würde. Die Speerspitze bildeten diesmal Bäuer*innen aus dem Mallee um Rex McCann und sein Inland Salinity Action Committee (ISAC) sowie Ray Jewson und Keith Anderson von der Ultima and District Dryland Farmers Protection League. Sie argumentierten, dass das Unternehmen nur dazu diene, dass

61 Ibid., p. 1069.

62 Siehe State Rivers and Water Supply Commission: Salinity Control and Drainage, p. 91 f.

63 Siehe Public Record Office Victoria: Ivan Roland Routley, p. 280A.

64 Siehe Northern Times, 1. August 1975, p. 5 (Anonymous: Spend \$40m. or suffer). Wert in heutiger Kaufkraft berechnet mit Diane Hutchinson, Florian Ploeckl: Five ways to compute the relative value of Australian amounts.

65 Siehe H. W. Caffrey: Progress Report No. 4, pp. 5 f., 10, 16.

die Shepparton-Region weiterhin im großen Stil verschmutztes Abwasser in den Murray leiten könne und die Stadtbewohner*innen in Adelaide zufriedengestellt würden. Im gleichen Zuge würde die Kerang-Region zur Senkgrube für saline Abfälle. ISAC versuchte zunächst, das Unternehmen durch eine Intervention bei Dick Hamer, dem Premierminister von Victoria, zu stoppen. McCann argumentierte, dass das Projekt unzureichend war, um das Versalzungsproblem zu lösen und einen Großteil des Landes in Mystic Park, Tresco und Lake Boga ruinieren würde. Seiner Ansicht nach war der eigentliche Sinn, die Wassernutzer*innen flussabwärts zu befrieden. Dennoch begann der Bau im Mai 1981.⁶⁶ Die Landwirt*innen aus Shepparton befürworteten das Projekt.⁶⁷

Bürger*innen aus der Region machten sich in mehreren hitzigen Aufeinander-treffen mit Vertretern der Behörden Luft. Bei einer öffentlichen Versammlung mit etwa 100 Anwesenden in Kerang am 9. Juli 1981 kam es zum öffentlichen Schlagabtausch zwischen der SRWSC und den Gegner*innen des Projekts. Die anwesenden Vertreter der Behörde versuchten vergeblich, die Anwesenden zu überzeugen, dass die Gefahren für ihr Land minimal seien und sie selbst eine Verantwortung gegenüber dem Rest des MDB hätten.⁶⁸ Im Oktober desselben Jahres verlangten 400 anwesende Bäuer*innen in einem Ultimatum von der Kommission, den Bau zu stoppen. Sie weigerten sich, salines Abwasser aus anderen Regionen aufzunehmen, und behaupteten, dass dies die Ausbreitung von "liquid cancer" nur beschleunigen würde. McCann gab den "Melbourne academics" die Schuld dafür, dass große Teile von Northern Victoria nun zu Abwasserkanälen für Sheppartons Landwirtschaft gemacht werden sollten.⁶⁹

In einem verzweifelten Versuch, den Bau des Projekts noch zu verhindern, drohte eine Gruppe von Aktivist*innen damit, vor Ort "direkte Aktionen" durchzuführen, wobei McCann sich weigerte, klarzustellen, ob diese gewaltsam sein würden oder nicht. Diese Drohungen wurden allerdings nicht konkretisiert.⁷⁰ Letztlich wurde der Konflikt befriedet, indem er auf die Ebene der Justiz verlagert wurde: Am 10. Dezember 1981 reichten Jewson und Anderson über ihre Anwälte eine Klage beim Obersten Gerichtshof ein, um das Projekt zu stoppen. Diese war die erste Sammelklage in Australien überhaupt.⁷¹

Als das Unternehmen fünf Jahre später, am 19. März 1986, als rechtmäßig erklärt wurde, war es bereits eine "lame duck". Richter O'Bryan stellte in seiner Urteilsbegründung gar den Nutzen grundsätzlich infrage: "The advantages are minimal, weighted against the interests of the rural community represented by the plaintiffs".⁷² Im Dezember desselben Jahres wurde das Lake Tyrrell-Projekt auf unbestimmte Zeit verschoben. Joan Kirner, die neue Ministerin für "Conservation, Forests and Lands" hatte sich bei einer Reise durch Northern Victoria, bei

66 Siehe The Northern Times, 18. November 1980, p. 1 (Anonymous: Ruin!); The Northern Times, 13. Januar 1981, p. 1 (Anonymous: Basin Plan 'Band Aid').

67 Siehe Peter Russ: Salt Traders, p. 165.

68 Siehe The Northern Times, 10. Juli 1981, p. 1 (Anonymous: Halt Basins Plea Again).

69 Siehe The Northern Times, 20. Oktober 1981, p. 1 (Anonymous: Stop the Basins).

70 Siehe The Northern Times, 23. Oktober 1981, p. 1 (Anonymous: Farmers' 'Action' Threat).

71 Siehe The Age, 7. November 1985, p. 16 (Anonymous: Farmers Unite in Legal Fight); Thomas Brison Green: A Country Legal Practice, p. 44; Peter Russ: Salt Traders, p. 171; The Northern Times, 4. April 1986, p. 1 (Anonymous: Salt Basins Appeal Lodged).

72 The Northern Times, 21. März 1986, p. 1 (Anonymous: Salt Basins Doubts).

der sie mit Vertreter*innen ländlicher Gemeinden und Aktivist*innen gesprochen hatte, überzeugen lassen, dass das Projekt nicht weiter verfolgt werden sollte. Zu groß war der Widerstand, zu hoch die Kosten, zu gering der voraussichtliche Nutzen.⁷³

Der Konflikt um die Frage, wie die Versalzungsprobleme zu lösen waren, war festgefahren, mögliche Lösungen blockiert zwischen den unvereinbaren Interessen der Bewohner*innen der Regionen an ihrem Land und ihrem Wasser wie auch der Insistenz aller Parteien, weiter wie bisher zu Bewässern und zu Verschmutzen. Währenddessen breitete sich die Versalzung weiter aus: 1984 wurde geschätzt, dass sich der Gesamtverlust an Erträgen in der Goulburn-Murray-Region auf etwa 30 Millionen AUD pro Jahr belief und sich innerhalb von 30 Jahren verdreifachen würde. In Kerang waren etwa die Hälfte der für Bewässerung genutzten Fläche von Versalzung betroffen und die Einkommen der stark betroffenen Bäuer*innen bis zu 50 Prozent niedriger als bei solchen, die nicht betroffen waren.⁷⁴ Gyn Jones' pessimistische Einschätzung im Jahre 1986 lautete: "[G]iven the husbandry we've had in the past, the northern plains have 50-70 years of life before they become complete saline deserts."⁷⁵

Neoliberalismus und Nachhaltigkeit

In dieser Pattsituation erfolgte eine 'Reform von oben', welche die Parameter der Ressourcenallokation im MDB grundlegend änderte. Unter den Auspizien des Neoliberalismus und des Nachhaltigkeitsdenkens wurde der öffentliche Wassersektor umgestaltet. Die mächtigen staatlichen Infrastrukturbehörden, die fast 75 Jahre lang den landwirtschaftlichen Sektor im MDB geprägt hatten, wurden in öffentliche Unternehmen verwandelt, deren Aufgabe es nun war, Gewinne zu erzielen. Der Wasserpreis stieg graduell auf ein kostendeckendes Niveau. Wasser wurde von einem Gemeingut zu einer Ware, die effizient, produktiv und nachhaltig eingesetzt werden sollte.⁷⁶

Den Hintergrund dieser Entwicklung bildet der Niedergang des Keynesianischen Wirtschaftsmodells in Australien in den 1980er Jahren. Nach den beiden Ölkrisen befand sich die Wirtschaft in einer 'Stagflation' – stagnierendes Wachstum kombiniert mit hoher Inflation –, die Auslandsschulden stiegen rasant, ebenso wie die Arbeitslosigkeit. Zwischen 1983 und 1996 initiierte die Labor-Bundesregierung unter Bob Hawke ein umfassendes wirtschaftliches Reformprogramm. Dieses umfasste unter anderem den Abbau von Schutzzöllen, die Deregulierung des Bankensektors sowie – an dieser Stelle entscheidend – die Privatisierung öffentlicher Versorgungsbetriebe und die Schaffung von Märkten für Energie und Wasser. Das 'Australian Settlement' begann, sich aufzulösen.⁷⁷

73 Siehe Peter Russ: *Salt Traders*, pp. 203 ff.

74 Siehe Salinity Committee: *Salt of the Earth*, pp. xviii; 70 ff., 85 f.

75 *The Northern Times*, 27. Juni 1986, p. 11 (Gynlais O. Jones: *Salinity Spread*).

76 Siehe Neill Barr: *The House on the Hill*, p. 112.

77 Siehe Kirsten Henderson: *Dams, Pumps, Pipes and Dreams*, pp. 90 f.; James Walter: *Growth Resumed*, p. 166.

In dieser Entwicklung spiegelt sich die Durchsetzung der Ideologie des 'economic rationalism', der australischen Spielart des Neoliberalismus.⁷⁸ Dieser politische Kampfbegriff kann hier analytisch sinnvoll zum Verständnis eines politischen Projekts verstanden werden, das im Kern darauf zielt, neue Möglichkeiten der Kapitalakkumulation zu eröffnen, indem Bereiche, die bislang dem Markt entzogen waren, marktförmig organisiert werden. Hierbei besteht die Rolle des Staates darin, einen institutionellen Rahmen zu schaffen, innerhalb dessen Individuen unternehmerisch handeln und Märkte effizient operieren können. In diesem Sinne müssen bereits existierende Märkte dereguliert werden.⁷⁹ "[I]f markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary".⁸⁰ Innerhalb dieser Rationalität sind private Eigentumsrechte der beste Weg, um Ressourcen effizient zu nutzen. Öffentliches Eigentum soll also in Privateigentum umgewandelt werden.⁸¹ Hawkes Regierung begann in diesem Sinne – nach dem Vorbild von Ronald Reagan und Margaret Thatcher – mit der systematischen Ausweitung der Rolle von Märkten in der australischen Wirtschaft.⁸²

Zur gleichen Zeit änderte die Regierung von Victoria ihre Herangehensweise an das Versalzungsproblem. Unter dem Eindruck von zehn Jahren Konflikt um die Strategie der SRWSC gab die neue Labor-Regierung das Projekt eines umfassenden 'technological fix' für die Drainageprobleme auf. Sie richtete ihre Aufmerksamkeit stattdessen auf inkrementelle, lokale Lösungen, die von der Regierung, Expert*innen und den Gemeinden zusammen entwickelt werden sollten. Diese neue Strategie – genannt "Salt Action: Joint Action" genannt – gab den Bürger*innen einerseits Mitspracherechte und Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten, verlagerte jedoch andererseits die Verantwortung für das Problem zum Teil weg von den Behörden, indem es die Betroffenen selbst mitverantwortlich machte.⁸³

Für diese grundsätzlichen Reformen im Wassersektor spielte eine entscheidende Rolle, dass Versalzung, einst ein kaum bekanntes Thema, nun in Australien eines der prominentesten Umweltprobleme überhaupt war. Phillip Toyne, Direktor der Australian Conservation Foundation, erklärte Bodendegradation in Gestalt von Erosion und Versalzung 1988 zu "Australia's greatest environmental challenge".⁸⁴ Die Konzepte 'Nachhaltigkeit' bzw. 'nachhaltige Entwicklung' erlangten mit der Rezeption des Berichts der Brundtland-Kommission, 'Our Common Future', und der 'World Conservation Strategy' in Australien eine hohe Prominenz. In einer Kombination beider Philosophien – Neoliberalismus und

78 Siehe Barrie Dyster, David Meredith: *Australia in the Global Economy*, p. 267; James Walter: *Growth Resumed*, pp. 164 f.

79 Siehe David Harvey: *Neoliberalism*, pp. 1 f.; Henderson: *Dams, Pumps, Pipes and Dreams*, p. 90.

80 David Harvey: *Neoliberalism*, p. 2.

81 Siehe *Ibid.*, pp. 1 f., 26.

82 Siehe James Walter: *Growth Resumed*, p. 166.

83 Siehe Daniel Rothenburg: *Salinity*, pp. 226 ff., 231 ff.; Salinity Committee: *Salt of the Earth*, pp. 157, 164, 174, 199; *Salt Force News* 9 (Juni-Juli 1988), p. 1 (Anonymous: *Launch of Salt Action*).

84 *The Age*, 9. Dezember 1988, p. 13 (Phillip Toyne: *Putting our House in Order*).

Nachhaltigkeit – konnte Wasser nicht länger als öffentliches Gut und unter protektionistischen Prinzipien verteilt werden.⁸⁵

In den Augen der Reformer*innen hatte die schleichende Katastrophe der Versalzung mit der Zerstörung von Land, Gewässern und Gemeinden überdeutlich gezeigt, dass gerade das Verständnis von Wasser als unbegrenzter, billiger Ressource zu seinem Missbrauch führte. Dieser hatte nicht nur riesige Umweltschäden angerichtet, sondern war auch wirtschaftlich ineffizient, weil mit einer knappen, wertvollen Ressource Güter von teils geringem kommerziellem Wert produziert wurden. Die Landwirt*innen hatten sich offenkundig als unfähig erwiesen, Wasser nachhaltig und produktiv einzusetzen. Mit anderen Worten: Unter dem Deckmantel des 'Gemeinwohls' war Wasser jahrzehntelang an eine privilegierte Minderheit abgegeben worden, die es verschwendet und damit immense Schäden angerichtet hatte.⁸⁶ Versalzung war dabei nur das prominenteste Problem: Am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts befanden sich der Murray und das MDB, mit den Worten Don Gardens, "in a state of ecological disaster".⁸⁷ Es wurde zu viel Wasser aus dem Fluss entnommen und er litt unter Schlamm sowie Dünger- und Pestizidbelastung.⁸⁸

Als wertvolles, schützenswertes Gut brauchte Wasser in dieser Logik einen Marktpreis. Zu eben diesem Ergebnis kam eine Untersuchung des Public Bodies Review Committee 1984. Dieses attestierte der Bewässerungslandwirtschaft in Victoria niedrige Effizienz und Produktivität sowie "a serious and growing environmental problem". Das Komitee empfahl die Abschaffung von Quersubventionen zwischen landwirtschaftlichen Betrieben und die Implementierung eines Marktes, auf dem Wasser gehandelt werden konnte.⁸⁹

Ein Untersuchungsausschuss des Parlaments von Victoria kam im selben Jahr zum gleichen Ergebnis: Basierend auf Studien wurde erwartet, dass ein Markt für Wasser die Effizienz des Bewässerungssystems verbessern, Kosten sparen und sich zudem positiv auf das Versalzungsproblem auswirken würde. Dies warf allerdings zugleich die Frage auf, ob es Betrieben in Regionen mit hohen Grundwasserspiegeln verboten sein sollte, weitere Wasserrechte zu kaufen. Genau dies war das Schreckensszenario, das Kerang vorgeführt worden war, als Vertreter*innen aus Shepparton den Anspruch der Region auf Wasser in Zweifel gezogen hatten.⁹⁰

Diese Diagnosen fanden schließlich Eingang in Victorias 1987 beschlossene 'Conservation Strategy': Das Bewässerungssystem könne weiteren Forderungen nach mehr Wasser nicht entsprechen, die Konstruktion neuer Staudämme sei unwahrscheinlich und die unkluge Verwendung von Wasser habe zu Versalzungsproblemen beigetragen. Während die Bewässerungslandwirtschaft 80 Prozent des Wassers in Victoria reklamieren, wachse Melbournes Wasserbedarf jedes

85 Siehe John J. Pigram: *Australia's Water Resources*, pp. 89f.

86 Siehe Neill Barr: *House on The Hill*, pp. 112ff.

87 Don Garden: *Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific*, p. 113.

88 Siehe Daniel Rothenburg: *Salinity*, p. 254.

89 Siehe Public Bodies Review Committee: *Twelfth Report to Parliament*, pp. xv ff., 175 f.

90 Siehe Salinity Committee: *Water Allocations*, pp. xv, 58, 60-64.

Jahr um 3 Prozent. Der Wasserpreis, so die Schlussfolgerung, müsse daher den wahren Kosten für dessen Bereitstellung entsprechen.⁹¹

Der Start von "Salt Action" wurde von Landwirt*innen und Aktivist*innen zum Teil mit Enthusiasmus begrüßt.⁹² Das Programm brachte die führenden Vertreter*innen der Aktivist*innen aus Kerang und Shepparton, wie GIRDACs Vorsitzenden John Dainton, Gyn Jones und Rex McCann, in Schlüsselpositionen.⁹³ Die Ankündigung marktbasierter Wasserpreise sorgte indes für Entsetzen und wütende Proteste. Manche Landbesitzer*innen drohten sogar mit militanten Aktionen.⁹⁴ Noch einmal wurden die Errungenschaften der 'heroischen' Phase der Bewässerungslandwirtschaft beschworen, die prosperierende ländliche Städte und Dörfer geschaffen und die Nation mit Nahrung versorgt hatte.⁹⁵ Vertreter*innen der 'Salinity Action Groups' argumentierten vergeblich, dass das Versalzungsproblem sehr viel komplexer war, als dass es nur durch den Wasserpreis gelöst werden konnte. KIRSAC warnte: "Care needs to be exercised that 'economic efficiency' does not become a sacred cow that stands in the way of progress".⁹⁶

Aber diese Proteste im Namen des 'Water Dreaming' konnten die graduelle Etablierung von Wassermärkten nicht verhindern. 1994 billigte der Council of Australian Governments eine Vereinbarung, welche die Bundesstaaten und Territorien dazu verpflichtete, effektivere Wassermanagementpolitik umzusetzen. Darunter verstand man die Zuweisung von Wasser an die Umwelt, die Schaffung einer Balance zwischen ökologischen und ökonomischen Prioritäten und einen kostendeckenden Wasserpreis, den Abbau von Quersubventionen und die Etablierung eines Wassermarkts. Australien war, in den Worten von John Pigram, "firmly engaged in a wide-ranging process of water reform directed towards promoting economic efficiency in water in a competitive environment within the context of ecologically sustainable management of the resource".⁹⁷

In dieser Zeit grundlegender Reformen verschwand schließlich auch Victorias 'super agency', die State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. Sie wurde 1984 von der Rural Water Commission ersetzt, die aber nicht mehr die gleichen umfassenden Kompetenzen besaß.⁹⁸

Am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts hatten sich die Parameter für die Verteilung von Wasser im MDB grundlegend gewandelt: Wasser war von einem günstigen, praktisch unbegrenzt verfügbaren öffentlichen Gut zu einer knappen und teuren Ware auf einem graduell liberalisierten Markt geworden, der ihre effiziente, produktive und nachhaltige Verwendung garantieren sollte. Die Landwirtschaft war auf dem Weg von einem 'nation-building'-Unternehmen zu einem gewöhnlichen

91 Siehe Government of Victoria: Conservation Strategy, pp. 57, 62.

92 Siehe The Northern Times, 13. September 1988, p. 3 (Anonymous: Centre Part of Salinity Fight).

93 Siehe Daniel Rothenburg: Salinity, pp. 229 ff.

94 Siehe The Northern Times, 27. März 1984, p. 1 (Anonymous: Water Users Angry).

95 Siehe The Northern Times, 14. März 1984, p. 8 (Anonymous: Irrigators' Chance for Solidarity); The Northern Times, 23. März 1982, p. 15 (Dudley J. Walters: Irrigation Problems 'Man-Made' Neglect); The Northern Times, 9. März 1984, p. 2 (I. A. MacDonald: Academic Bias).

96 The Northern Times, 30. März 1984, p. 2 (Cliff L. Spowart: Irrigation Flows for Progress).

97 John J. Pigram: Australia's Water Resources, pp. 64 f.

98 Siehe Joseph M. Powell: Garden State, pp. 288 f.

Geschäft. Aber geblieben war die ideologische Überhöhung der Landwirtschaft und des Landlebens wie auch der Konflikt um knappe und zunehmend härter umkämpfte Wasserressourcen.

Wassermärkte und Klimawandel

Die krisenreiche Zeit zwischen 1968 und 1994 hat retrospektiv die Grundlagen für die gegenwärtigen Ressourcenkonflikte um Wasser in Australien geschaffen. Indes gilt Versalzung im MDB heute als 'Problem von gestern'. Die Versalzungskrise beendet haben aber weder die Arbeit der Infrastrukturbehörden, noch die der Umweltaktivist*innen, noch die Wassermärkte. Stattdessen war die 'Millennium Drought' von 1996 bis 2010 entscheidend. Diese sorgte dafür, dass die Grundwasserspiegel in der ganzen Region drastisch sanken. In einer bitter-ironischen und überaus australischen Wende hat die Dürre das Problem der um sich greifenden Versalzung zumindest temporär gelöst; wobei auch die technischen Verbesserungen im Murray-Darling-System zur Reduzierung des Salzgehalts in den Flüssen zu der neuen Situation beigetragen haben.⁹⁹

Märkte sind heute ein zentrales Instrument für die Verteilung von Wasser an die vielen Nutzer*innen des Murray-Darling-Systems: Landwirt*innen, ländliche Gemeinden, Küstenstädte, Traditional Owners und natürlich die Umwelt. Die australische Bundesregierung stellte 2007 im Namen der Nachhaltigkeit 3,2 Milliarden AUD zur Verfügung, um Wasserlizenzen von Landbesitzern zurückzukaufen, damit künftig mehr Wasser in den Flüssen bleiben soll, um die Gesundheit der Ökosysteme zu gewährleisten. Bis 2018 wurden dadurch 2 100 Gigaliter zurückgekauft.¹⁰⁰

Es fällt nicht leicht, einzuschätzen, ob die Wassermärkte ihr Versprechen eingelöst haben. Der Politikwissenschaftler Daniel Connell argumentierte 2015, dass die Etablierung eines Wassermarkts zumindest kurzfristig Verbesserungen für die Umwelt bedeutet habe, weil der Preis effizientere Bewässerung und innovative landwirtschaftliche Güter begünstige. Zudem liefere der Wassermarkt Anreize, Wasser effizient einzusetzen, mit der Folge, dass Versalzung durch die Bewässerungslandwirtschaft reduziert wurde. Andererseits habe der höhere Wasserpreis dazu geführt, dass Wasserlizenzen, die früher ungenutzt waren, reaktiviert wurden.¹⁰¹

Kritiker*innen des Wassermarkts verweisen auch auf Nebenfolgen wie zunehmende Spekulation, die zu einem steigenden Wasserpreis beitrage.¹⁰² Die Australian Competition & Consumer Commission kam 2020 zu dem Ergebnis, dass mindestens 16 Prozent der temporären Käufe und 20 Prozent des gehandelten

99 Siehe Australian State of the Environment Committee: State of the Environment 2016. Land, p. 73; Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council: Basin Salinity Management Strategy 2030, pp. 3 f.; Murray-Darling Basin Authority: Basin Salinity Management 2030, p. 2.

100 Siehe Daniel Connell: Irrigation, Water Markets, Sustainability, p. 136; Tim Goesch, Manannan Donoghoe, Neal Hughes: Snapshot of Australian Water Markets, p. 5.

101 Siehe Daniel Connell: Irrigation, Water Markets, Sustainability, pp. 138 f.

102 Siehe Angus Robertson, Benjamin Habib: Polanyian Perspective, p. 34.

Wassers auf Investor*innen zurückgehen.¹⁰³ Ein Team von Journalist*innen von Bloomberg schrieb in einer Reportage über die sozialen Auswirkungen der Wassermärkte vom Dezember 2023 sogar davon, dass der Markt eine 'Bonanza' für Finanzinstitutionen und Agrobusiness sei. Der vermeintliche Erfolg sei ein rein ökonomischer, während ländlichen Gemeinden das Wasser entzogen, ihre Umwelt zerstört und ihre Wirtschaft geschädigt würde. Der Markt sei weitgehend unreguliert und offen für Missbrauch. Zudem verstärke er bestehende strukturelle Ungleichheiten: So sind 9 Prozent der Einwohner*innen des MDB Aborigines, diese besitzen aber nur 0,2 Prozent der Wasserrechte.¹⁰⁴

Diese Zahlen verweisen auf einen größeren Problemkomplex, der wiederum eng mit dem historischen Zusammenhang zwischen Kolonisierung, Infrastrukturerstellung und Umweltzerstörung verbunden ist. Die koloniale Enteignung der Aborigines wurde auch in die Welt des Wassermarkts fortgeschrieben. Weil diese vormals systematisch von Landbesitz ausgeschlossen waren, an den die Wasserrechte gebunden waren, besitzen sie auch heute nur einen verschwindend geringen Anteil an den Wasserlizenzen. Anstatt dass die Besitzrechte am Ende der Ära des Staatsmonopols neu verteilt wurden, wurden bestehende Wasserlizenzen in das neue System überführt. Diese Besitzstandswahrung führte dazu, dass tiefsitzende strukturelle Ungleichheiten in Australien weiter bestehen und indigene Australier*innen zumeist nicht am Marktgeschehen teilnehmen können.¹⁰⁵

Die Rechtswissenschaftlerin und Anwältin Virginia Marshall parallelisiert gar das Konzept der 'terra nullius' mit einem persistenten Mythos eines 'aqua nullius'. Sie fordert, dass "Aboriginal water rights today should be regarded in a similar manner as Aboriginal land rights where they were legally recognised by the High Court 'Mabo' decision which formally acknowledged that Aboriginal title survived".¹⁰⁶ Dabei geht es nicht nur um einen Ressourcenkonflikt. Vertreter*innen von Aboriginal Nations im MDB und deren Interessenvertreter*innen betonen vielmehr die zentrale Bedeutung von Land und Wasser für ihre Kultur, Identität und Spiritualität.¹⁰⁷ So formulierte die Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority im Jahr 2019: "The flow of water forms part of the interconnectedness of Ngarrindjeri to our country and the failure of water to flow into our country impacts upon our exercise of rights and our fulfilment of responsibilities as custodians of the land, water and sky".¹⁰⁸

Die Ökonomin Sarah Ann Wheeler hingegen erklärte die Vorwürfe an die Wassermärkte schlicht zu 'Mythen' und argumentierte, dass deren Defizite auf unzureichende Regulierung zurückzuführen seien, aber nicht auf das Instrument per se. Sie empfahl, die öffentlichen Institutionen zu stärken und das Monitoring zu verbessern, um Spekulation und "unvollkommenen" Wettbewerb zu verhindern. Es sei nur eine Frage des "smart design".¹⁰⁹

103 Siehe Australian Competition & Consumer Commission: Water Markets Inquiry, p. 19.

104 Siehe Peter Waldman et al: Water Trade.

105 Siehe Hartwig, Jackson and Osborne, pp. 7, 10.

106 Virginia Marshall: Overturning Aqua Nullius, p. 13.

107 Siehe Monica Morgan, Lisa Strelein, Jessica Weir: Indigenous Rights to Water, pp. 17 f.

108 Zitiert in Bret Walker: Royal Commission Report, p. 471.

109 Sarah Ann Wheeler: Debunking Water Trade Myths, pp. 813-816.

Klar scheint indes, dass der Markt zu einer Konzentration in der Landwirtschaft beigetragen hat. Vor allem für die Produktion wasserintensiver, hochwertiger Güter wie Baumwolle, Obst und Nüsse sind große agroindustrielle Komplexe entstanden. Das wurde möglich, weil Landbesitzer*innen aus Bezirken mit wenig profitabler Landwirtschaft – Weidewirtschaft oder Reis – ihre Wasserlizenzen verkaufen können.¹¹⁰ In der Folge entwickeln Teile der Goulburn-Murray-Region wieder eine regenbasierte Landwirtschaft, ganz wie vor dem Bau eines Bewässerungssystems seit 1886. Die ländlichen Gemeinden befinden sich jedoch in einem strukturellen Alterungsprozess und die Anzahl der Höfe schrumpft.¹¹¹ Gleichzeitig wird die Landwirtschaft in der Öffentlichkeit noch immer als in sich wertvolle Aktivität und damit mehr als ein reines Geschäft angesehen.¹¹² Australien befindet sich mitten in einem ökologischen und sozialen Experiment, dessen Ausgang unklar ist.

Unabhängig von den jeweiligen ideologischen Positionen in Bezug auf den Sinn und Unsinn von Wassermärkten kann es kaum Zweifel geben, dass der ökologische Zustand des MDB Anlass zu größter Sorge gibt. Royal Commissioner Bret Walker stellte 2019 zur Veröffentlichung seines Berichts unzweideutig fest:

[T]he Basin is in danger of being run down. [...] The threat of its degradation being irreversible is greater than ever. Climate change, alone, has that clear potential. Our exploitation of its water resources magnifies that threat.

Der Commissioner bemängelte, dass die Auswirkungen des Klimawandels auf das MDB immer noch nicht ausreichend berücksichtigt würden. CSIRO schätzte, dass die verfügbare Wassermenge in Victoria in den trockensten Jahren bis 2030 um 35-50 Prozent fallen könnte.¹¹³ Damit sind nicht nur die Bewohner*innen des MDB gefährdet, sondern natürlich auch die Menschen in den Großstädten: deren Lebensmittel- und Wasserversorgung. Die menschlichen und nicht-menschlichen Bewohner*innen des MDB und Australiens insgesamt werden sich so aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach auf intensiviertere Konflikte um Wasserressourcen einstellen müssen – möglicherweise auch auf weitere ‘Water Wars’.

In Europa sollten wir uns das australische ‘Experiment’ genau ansehen. Durch die Auswirkungen des Klimawandels könnte Wasserknappheit in Zukunft auch dort auftreten, wo es heute noch scheinbar im Überfluss vorhanden ist. Weltweit steigt der Wasserverbrauch jährlich um 1 Prozent, während gleichzeitig die Grundwasserspiegel zurückgehen. Aus diesem Anlass beriefen die Vereinten Nationen im Jahr 2023 erstmals seit 1977 eine Wasserkonferenz ein.¹¹⁴ Auch in Deutschland ist sauberes Wasser in ausreichender Menge nicht mehr selbstverständlich, auch wenn von einer allgemeinen Wasserknappheit noch keine Rede sein kann. Neun der letzten zehn Jahre gelten im langjährigen Vergleich als zu

110 Siehe Waldman, et al: Water Trade; Tim Goesch, Manannan Donoghoe, Neal Hughes: Snapshot, p. 5.

111 Siehe Murray-Darling Basin Authority: Guide, pp. 780f., 786, 802, 805f.; Murray-Darling Basin Authority: Basin Plan Evaluation 2017, p. 21.

112 Siehe Angus Robertson, Benjamin Habib: Polanyian Perspective, pp. 21-25.

113 Bret Walker: Royal Commission Report, pp. 35, 255; Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation: Water Availability, p. 5.

114 Siehe Die tageszeitung, 22. März 2024 (Anonym: Wasserknappheit nimmt zu); Süddeutsche Zeitung, 22. März 2024 (Anonym: Der Menschheitskampf ums Wasser).

trocken. Neben vertrockneten Feldern und Flüssen mit Niedrigwasser gehen durch Dürren Waldflächen verloren. Zeitweise musste der Schiffsgüterverkehr auf dem Rhein eingeschränkt werden. Im Sommer 2021 stellte Umweltministerin Svenja Schulze daher eine Nationale Wasserstrategie vor, um in Deutschland eine ausreichende Versorgung mit Trinkwasser sicherzustellen. Andere europäische Staaten wie Frankreich, Italien und Spanien gehen dazu über, im Sommer die Wassernutzung für Bürger*innen und Industrie einzuschränken. Die Debatte über geeignete Strategien für die künftige Aufrechterhaltung der Wassersicherheit ist auch in Europa in vollem Gange.¹¹⁵

Dabei könnten auch die marktbasierenden Instrumente eine Rolle spielen, die heute in Australien schon Realität sind. Die Global Commission on the Economics of Water stellte in ihrem Bericht für die UN-Konferenz fest: "It requires a sea change in how we value, manage and use water".¹¹⁶ Die Expert*innen mahnten, dass es nötig sei, den globalen Wasserkreislauf als "global common good" zu betrachten, der im Interesse aller kollektiv zu schützen sei. Dafür sei es nötig, möglichst viele Interessenvertreter*innen, öffentliche wie private, die Zivilgesellschaft und die lokalen Gemeinschaften, miteinzubeziehen. Besondere Priorität sollten dabei Gleichberechtigung der Geschlechter sowie die gerechte Verteilung von Entscheidungsbefugnissen, u. a. für Bäuer*innen, Frauen, Jugendliche und Indigene, spielen. Zugleich empfiehlt die Gruppe, die Investitionen in Wasserinfrastruktur durch neue Formen der Public Private Partnership zu erhöhen und systematisch gegen zu niedrige Preise für Wasser vorzugehen. Wasser sei heute in vielen Ländern entweder kostenlos oder hoch subventioniert, was typischerweise aber Wohlhabende und große kommerzielle Interessen begünstige. Angemessene Preise dagegen seien ein Instrument, um Wasser effizienter und nachhaltiger zu nutzen und gerechter zu verteilen. Zudem trügen sie zu Innovationen bei, die dabei helfen, Wasser zu sparen. Allerdings müssten diese Maßnahmen von zielgerichteten Subventionen für arme und vulnerable Gemeinden begleitet sein. Die Allokationsmechanismen sollten sicherstellen, dass alle Zugang zu Wasser haben, unbeschadet der Eigentumsverhältnisse.¹¹⁷

Während die Expert*innen also nachdrücklich darauf hinweisen, dass eine rein marktförmige Verteilung auf der Basis von Privateigentum nicht zielgerichtet ist, empfehlen sie dennoch im Kern viele Mechanismen, die heute im MDB schon erprobt werden. Vor dem Hintergrund der sich anbahnenden Wasserunsicherheit könnten wir auch in Europa bald über Wassermärkte diskutieren und in der Kombination mit zunehmender Wasserknappheit ähnliche Verteilungskonflikte erleben, wie es sie Australien seit Langem gibt.

Für eine geisteswissenschaftliche Forschung, die gleichzeitig gegenwartsrelevant sein und mit historischer Tiefenschärfe argumentieren sollte, bedeutet dies auch, dass Geschichten von Umweltveränderung und -zerstörung konsequent mit Fragen nach gesellschaftlicher Macht sowie sozialer und ökologischer Ungleichheit verknüpft werden müssen. Was häufig als 'Umweltproblem'

115 Siehe Deutschlandfunk: Warum das Wasser in Deutschland knapp wird; Anna Corsten-Neidig: Wasserressourcen als umkämpftes Gut, p. 589.

116 Global Commission on the Economics of Water: Turning the Tide, p. 4.

117 Siehe *ibid.*, pp. 7, 21 f.

apostrophiert wird, ist – das zeigen die Auseinandersetzungen im MDB – nie von gesellschaftlichen Auseinandersetzungen zu trennen. “[H]uman interactions with water”, so brachte es Corey Ross jüngst auf den Punkt, “are intimately bound up with questions of hierarchy, inequality and power”.¹¹⁸ Die Geschichte der Versalzung zeigt, dass falsches Management von natürlichen Ressourcen wie Boden und Wasser gesellschaftliche Konflikte befeuern kann, in denen es wiederum um Verteilung, Zugangsrechte und Eigentum geht. Die Rekonstruktion der historischen Genealogie heutiger Auseinandersetzungen um knappe und zunehmend bedrohte Ressourcen wie Wasser kann damit auch zum Verständnis dieser Konflikte beitragen.

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118 Corey Ross: Liquid Empire, p. 10.

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Abb. 1: Der stellvertretende Premierminister Michael McCormack spricht beim 'Convoy to Canberra'-Protest 2019 auf dem Rasen vor dem Parlament.

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Abb. 2: Karte des Murray-Darling-Beckens mit der Goulburn-Murray-Region.

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Joevan de Mattos Caitano

Breaking Boundaries

Australian Women in Contemporary Music at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse

Abstract: This article explores the significant contributions of Australian women composers and instrumentalists – such as Jennifer Fowler, Moya Henderson, Sarah Hopkins, Julia Ryder, Cathy Milliken, Vanessa Tomlinson, Liza Lim, Madeline Roycroft, and Jaslyn Robertson – to the Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik in Darmstadt. It highlights the historical connection between Darmstadt and Australia, emphasizing how these artists have shaped contemporary music. The research is based on interviews with selected composers, specialized literature on Australian contemporary music, Neue Musik, and gender, as well as materials from the archive at the Internationales Musikinstitut Darmstadt.

The participation of Australian composers and performers in the International Summer Courses for New Music in Darmstadt provides a critical lens through which to examine the intersection of gender, feminism, and contemporary music. Since the courses' inception in 1946, the representation of female musicians has been uneven, with male composers and performers often receiving most of the recognition and performance opportunities.¹ However, from the 1960s onward, Australian women began to make significant inroads into the musical community of Darmstadt. Their participation not only contributed to the diversification of the course's programming but also helped to challenge existing gender biases within the contemporary music scene.

The early decades of the Darmstadt Summer Courses saw a rapid decline in the presence of women, despite an initial balance among participants. This trend mirrored broader cultural patterns of gender exclusion in the arts, where the contributions of women were frequently overlooked or marginalized. During this period, Australian women were absent from the roster of performers and composers featured at the festival. The lack of female representation reflected the entrenched gender hierarchies that structured both the new music scene and the wider cultural sphere, where men dominated the creation and curation of avant-garde music.

The situation began to change in the 1960s, as Australian female musicians such as Norma Tyer, Ann Kirsten Carr-Boyd, and Jennifer Fowler emerged as important figures at Darmstadt. Their increasing participation coincided with broader shifts in the social and cultural landscape, influenced by the second-wave feminist movement, which advocated for greater gender equality in all areas of life, including the arts. The presence of these pioneering Australian women at Darmstadt not only highlighted their individual achievements but also signalled a growing recognition of female contributions to contemporary music. This

1 See Inge Kovács: *Frauen in Darmstadt*, pp. 94-99; Wilhelm Schlüter: *Vier Jahrzehnte Darmstadt*, pp. 33-50; Antonio Trudu: *La "Scuola" di Darmstadt*.

recognition continued to expand in the ensuing decades, as more Australian women, including Moya Henderson, Sarah Hopkins, Cathy Milliken, and Liza Lim, gained visibility at the festival.²

Examining the contributions of Australian women at Darmstadt provides insight into how gender dynamics have evolved within the realm of the so-called 'Neue Musik' (New Music). The presence of these women at the festival reflected more significant cultural shifts toward gender inclusivity, while their artistic output often engaged with themes of identity, culture, and feminism. Their works brought distinctively Australian perspectives to the international avant-garde, challenging traditional aesthetic boundaries, and introducing new sonic and conceptual approaches.³ For instance, Liza Lim's compositions frequently draw upon themes of cultural hybridity and ecological consciousness, while Sarah Hopkins integrates elements of spirituality and Indigenous Australian culture into her music, expanding the festival's aesthetic discourse.

Recent scholarly work on gender and contemporary music, including contributions by researchers such as Vera Grund, Nina Noeske, Antje Tumat, Kirsten Reese, Christa Brüstle, Rebecca Grotjahn, and Sabine Vogt, has underscored the importance of addressing historical gender imbalances in the documentation and interpretation of New Music.⁴ In the context of Darmstadt, efforts to examine gender relations have been propelled by initiatives like Ashley Fure's 'hstorage' commission and the establishment of the 'Gender Relations in Darmstadt' (GRID) Blog, which critically engages with the festival's archives to reveal patterns of inclusion and exclusion. Fure's work emphasizes the significance of investigating not only what is present in the archives but also what is absent – namely, the stories and perspectives of marginalized groups, including women.⁵

These scholarly initiatives have prompted a re-examination of the festival's history, recognizing the need to account for the contributions of female artists whose work has not been fully acknowledged in previous narratives. The involvement of Australian women at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse – from early trailblazers in the 1960s to more recent figures such as Samantha Wolf, Elizabeth Jigalin, Madeline Roycroft, and Jaslyn Robertson – demonstrates a sustained effort to question and reshape the traditional hierarchies of New Music. This ongoing challenge is visible in several ways: through the inclusion of diverse artistic practices that resist stylistic conformity, through works that engage critically with gender and identity, and through public interventions – such as panels, performances, and publications – that advocate for greater representation. Their presence at Darmstadt reflects a broader shift within contemporary music culture toward equity, inclusivity, and the diversification of creative voices.

As this paper will explore, the evolving role of Australian female musicians at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse reveals significant developments in the ongoing

2 See Rosalind Appleby: *Women of note*.

3 See Dorottya Fabian, John Napier: *Diversity in Australia's Music*.

4 See Kirsten Reese: *Der hörende Blick ins Archiv*, pp. 43-67; Antje Tumat: *Die Anfänge der Internationalen Ferienkurse für Neue Musik aus Gender-Perspektive*; Christa Brüstle: *Das 20. und 21. Jahrhundert*, pp. 98-108; Rebecca Grotjahn, Sabine Vogt (ed.): *Musik und Gender*; Nina Noeske, Susanne Rode-Breymann, Melanie Unseld: *Gender Studies*, pp. 239-251.

5 See Ashley Fure: *GRID*.

dialogue between gender and contemporary music. The participation of these artists over several decades offers a valuable case study of how gender, cultural exchange, and avant-garde music intersect, shaping both the history of the festival and the broader field of 'Neue Musik'. This study draws upon a combination of archival materials housed at the Internationales Musikinstitut Darmstadt (IMD), personal correspondence, and relevant literature on gender in contemporary music.

The women discussed in this paper – ranging from pioneering figures of the 1960s to recent voices such as Samantha Wolf, Elizabeth Jigalin, Madeline Roycroft, and Jaslyn Robertson – were selected based on documented participation at the Ferienkurse and the availability of archival or first-hand materials. In e-mail correspondence, a consistent set of questions was posed to each participant to ensure a degree of comparability across individual accounts. These questions focused on their artistic background, experiences at the Ferienkurse, perceptions of the festival's institutional culture, and reflections on gender and representation in the context of New Music.

The following sections will provide: (1) a historical overview of Australian women at the Ferienkurse; (2) individual case studies based on interviews and archival records; (3) an analysis of recurring themes, including inclusion, resistance, and institutional critique; and (4) a concluding reflection on how these artists contribute to rethinking the gendered history of New Music in an international context.

Jennifer Fowler: A Significant Australian Female Composer at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse 1968

In 1967, Perth became home to the Institute of Musicology, and the University of Western Australia launched 'Studies in Music' and the 'Australian Journal of Music Education', both edited by Frank Callaway (1919-2003). Recognizing the talent of Jennifer Fowler (b. 1939), he proposed a scholarship for her, who applied to attend the Darmstädter Ferienkurse in 1968. He also wrote a letter of reference to the IMD on behalf of the University of Western Australia's Department of Music.⁶

Among the earliest Australian women to engage with the Darmstädter Ferienkurse was composer Jennifer Fowler, who attended the 23rd edition of the courses in 1968. That year's event, directed by Ernst Thomas, featured a prominent compositional studio led by Karlheinz Stockhausen – one of the most influential and

6 See Empfehlungsschreiben von Callaway, Frank an [IMD], 21 March 1968. Callaway served as the head and later professor of the newly established music department at the University of Western Australia during a transformative period in its history. Jennifer Fowler joined the department in 1957, marking the first year that the music department welcomed students pursuing an Arts degree. Frank was an influential figure in the broader music education community. He served on the board of the International Society of Music Education and held the presidency of the music council of UNESCO. His contributions to the field were recognized with a knighthood, earning him the title Sir Frank Callaway. This was reported by Jennifer Fowler in an e-mail to the author, 23 January 2024.

controversial figures in postwar European music. Stockhausen, known for his pioneering work in electronic music, spatialisation, and serialism, was a central figure at Darmstadt throughout the 1950s and 1960s, often shaping the aesthetic direction of the festival.⁷ During the 1968 Ferienkurse, he oversaw the project 'Musik für ein Haus', a large-scale collective composition developed during a preparatory course (Vorkurs) held from 9 to 25 August.⁸ Fowler's presence in this context highlights not only the international reach of Australian composers during this period but also the challenges faced by women navigating a male-dominated avant-garde environment. Her engagement with the festival at a time when Stockhausen's influence was particularly strong offers insight into the gendered dynamics of the institution and the stylistic pressures exerted on emerging composers. Fowler's subsequent compositional trajectory, which often resisted prevailing modernist orthodoxies, can be seen in part as a response to these formative but constraining experiences.

Jennifer Fowler's attendance at Darmstadt was made possible by her European travels. At that time, she was preparing to enrol in a course on electronic music led by Gottfried Michael Koenig in Utrecht, the Netherlands, where she received a scholarship from the Dutch government. Arriving a few months early to explore Europe for the first time, she was excited to receive the scholarship for her stay in Darmstadt and to participate in the courses offered there.

For Fowler, the experience of meeting other composers was exhilarating. She noted that Western Australia had a small population and was one of the most isolated cities in the world. While she was fortunate to begin her studies at a newly opened music department, the opportunities for composing were limited, making her encounters with other composers all the more significant. Sharing a hotel room with American composer Kathleen St. John, who was enrolled in a postgraduate course at the Juilliard School, Fowler found it enlightening to compare their experiences. Kathleen St. John expressed her dissatisfaction with the competitive atmosphere at Juilliard, prompting Jennifer to reflect on her gratitude for the opportunities she had in Perth, where collaboration was encouraged among musicians.⁹

Fowler also met another Australian composer, David Ahern, who was selected to assist Stockhausen with his setup. Recognizing Ahern's potential, Fowler warned him about the intensity of Stockhausen's influence, although he did not heed her caution.

One of Fowler's lasting memories from Darmstadt involved attending a concert by the Frankfurt Symphony Orchestra, where she noticed that the entire orchestra was comprised of men. This experience highlighted the gender

7 See Stockhausen-Stiftung f. Musik: Karlheinz Stockhausen bei den Internationalen Ferienkurse für Neue Musik in Darmstadt 1951-1996.

8 See Antonio Trudu: *La "Scuola" di Darmstadt*, pp. 199; see also Dörte Schmidt, Susanne Heiter: *Ereignis und Geschichte: Die Internationalen Ferienkurse für Neue Musik, Darmstadt 1962-1994*.

9 Details on her experience at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse in 1968 were conveyed on 5 November 2022 by Fowler in an e-mail to the author.

disparities prevalent in European orchestras at that time, a reality she later observed in London as well.¹⁰

Following Darmstadt, Fowler continued her studies at the Gaudeamus annual event in Holland, where she made lifelong friends and established meaningful connections. Eventually, she settled in London, drawn by its vibrant music scene and opportunities to collaborate with talented musicians. Throughout her career as a freelance composer, Fowler remained engaged with the global music community while maintaining ties to Australia.

Jennifer Fowler also noted the geographical isolation of Western Australia, stating that most significant musical events took place in Sydney and Melbourne.¹¹ In this context, she developed a relationship with composer James Penberthy, introduced to her through James Murdoch, head of the Australian Music Centre. While Penberthy was a rigorous critic of contemporary music, he held Fowler's compositions in high regard. Additionally, she corresponded with German composers Felix Werder and George Dreyfus, who lived in Australia as refugees. Werder's touring group performed several of Fowler's pieces, while Dreyfus provided guidance as she prepared for her travels.

Reflecting on her time at Darmstadt, Fowler emphasized the lasting friendships she formed, including one with Brian Ferneyhough, who would later become well-known for his connections to Darmstadt. In 1968, he faced challenges in securing performances and financial stability, which was a sentiment Fowler could empathize with, having navigated similar struggles early in her career.

Moya Henderson and the Didgeridoo at Darmstadt: A Pioneering Journey (1974-1976)

In her application for the Darmstädter Ferienkurse in 1974, Moya Henderson (b. 1941) provided a detailed account of her academic and professional background to the IMD. Henderson, a distinguished graduate of the University of Queensland, Australia, had completed her Bachelor of Music degree in 1972, graduating with First Class Honours. Following her academic achievements, she secured an apprenticeship as a resident composer with the Australian Opera Company, where she worked from August to December 1973. During her tenure, Henderson's compositions were performed in a dedicated concert held on 1 December 1973, at the prestigious Sydney Opera House. This landmark event was recorded and archived under the label 'HA'. This experience marked a significant milestone in her early compositional career.¹²

10 See Frederique Reibell: The fight for gender equality in orchestras.

11 See *ibid.*

12 See Moya Henderson's registration for the 1974 Darmstädter Ferienkurse. By the time of her application to the Darmstädter Ferienkurse, Moya Henderson had already garnered international recognition as a DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst) Scholarship recipient, which allowed her to study with two of the most influential figures in avant-garde music: Mauricio Kagel and Karlheinz Stockhausen. These studies positioned her at the cutting edge of contemporary music practices, further cementing her reputation within

In 1974, Moya Henderson became the second female recipient of one of the five prestigious Kranichstein Music Prizes, awarded for her musical theatre work 'Clearing the Air'. This piece featured improvisational performances by Henderson herself on the didgeridoo, Davide Mosconi on the 'Arabic oboe', Christina Kubisch on flute, Rolf Gehlhaar on clarinet, and Fernando Grillo on double bass. The performance was distinctive, with Henderson designing four speaker boxes specifically for the work and guiding the musicians, particularly Grillo, in their improvisations.

It is likely that Moya Henderson was the first to introduce the didgeridoo to the Darmstädter Ferienkurse—a moment of considerable historical and symbolic import within the context of the institution's evolving engagement with non-Western instruments and performance practices. Reflecting on her experience, Henderson recounted that she brought the didgeridoo with her to Darmstadt in 1974, shortly after her arrival. During her time there, she composed a music-theatre work entitled *Clearing the Air*, which featured the distinguished double bassist Fernando Grillo alongside four wind players. Henderson herself performed as one of the instrumentalists, playing the didgeridoo. For her contributions, she was awarded the prestigious Kranichsteiner Musikpreis.¹³

In her 1976 application for a scholarship to the Darmstädter Ferienkurse, Moya Henderson outlined her previous studies and professional experience as follows:

- Bachelor of Music, Queensland University (1973)
- Resident Composer, Sydney Opera House (1973)
- Composition Studies, Cologne Musikhochschule (1974-1976)
New Music Theatre Class under Mauricio Kagel
Composition Class under Karlheinz Stockhausen
- Awards: First Kranichsteiner Prize, Darmstadt (1974)
- Concert Performances: Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Darmstadt, Cologne, Braunschweig¹⁴

Shortly before departing for Darmstadt, Moya Henderson had her first introductory session with Mauricio Kagel.¹⁵

He was eager for her to attend the courses but was cautious about assigning her any specific tasks, such as composing a new piece. Instead, he advised her to observe the various sessions. It is unlikely that she brought her music-theatre piece from the 1973 Opera House concert to this initial meeting. That work, 'Marxisms', was written specifically for the Australian cellist Nathan Waks, who was

the global music community. See Moya Henderson: Represented Artist, Australian Music Centre.

13 See Moya Henderson in correspondence with the author, 27 June 2022.

14 See Moya Henderson's registration for the 1976 Summer Courses.

15 See Mauricio Raúl Kagel (1929-2008) was an Argentine-German composer, conductor, librettist, and director, whose diverse output includes instrumental music, music theatre, radio plays, and films. A key figure in postwar experimental music, Kagel made significant contributions to the aesthetic and conceptual expansion of *Neue Musik* in the second half of the 20th century. From 1960 onwards, he was regularly active as a lecturer at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse. In 1968, he collaborated with visual artist Wolf Vostell and others to found *Labor e. V.*, an initiative for the investigation of acoustic and visual events, which led to performances such as '5-Tage-Rennen' in Cologne. In 1969, Kagel succeeded Karlheinz Stockhausen as director of the Cologne Courses for New Music, and in 1974 was appointed Professor of Music Theatre at the Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln. See Björn Heile: Mauricio Kagel bei den Internationalen Ferienkursen für Neue Musik in Darmstadt.

young, energetic, and bore a striking resemblance to the Marx Brothers. Inspired by this, she composed a piece for him and his cello that incorporated playful references to Groucho, Harpo, and Chico in a humorous and exaggerated manner.¹⁶

Upon arriving in Darmstadt in 1974 and 1976, Henderson became acquainted with a lively group of Italians. Among them, Davide Mosconi spoke fluent English, which provided her with a sense of comfort. The standout performer of this group was Fernando Grillo, who, despite not speaking English, captivated audiences with his delicate harmonic work on a small double bass. He and his instrument seemed inseparable. Without actively seeking a new project, Henderson soon conceived a striking new work, 'Clearing the Air'. The piece took shape quickly, leading her to spend much of her time constructing four large loudspeaker boxes. Alongside Davide, Rolf Gehlhaar, and Christina Kubisch, she remained motionless inside the boxes, appearing as passive elements of the performance space. However, they were, in fact, waiting for the right moment to act. The hidden performers gradually executed their plan as Grillo became ever more absorbed in his harmonic playing. While still producing various horn-like sounds in response to Grillo's high notes, they methodically cut through the fabric of the loudspeaker boxes. Then, in a sudden and dramatic climax, they emerged from their hiding places and overwhelmed the unsuspecting double bassist from behind. In the final blackout, they symbolically brought him down.

Moya Henderson's 'Stubble (Dramatic Music)' (1976) is a striking vocal work exploring texture, breath, and the limits of phonetic expression. It was composed for and premiered by soprano Beth Griffith on 16 March 1976 at the Aula of the Musikhochschule in Cologne, Germany. This performance marked Henderson's engagement with the European avant-garde while foregrounding a uniquely Australian sonic sensibility.¹⁷ Kagel seemed to believe that the time had come for her to create a new music-theatre piece. The production was aided by the Musikhochschule's caretaker, Mr. Vondran, who provided an essential stage prop: a Schminktisch (makeup table). Henderson contributed a 'soft' prop, while Vondran supplied a 'hard' one - a specially adapted table with a front panel that could be manipulated by foot pedals operated by the soprano Beth Griffith. This mechanism allowed the table's 'mouth' to open and close, revealing a set of teeth and giving the impression that the table itself was speaking. The voice of the table was performed by the French-Canadian composer Michel Gonneville, whose deep, French-accented speech delivered fragments of recipes embedded in the piece's text.

For 'Stubble', Henderson also devised an unusual performance element involving a modified undergarment. Inspired by the concept of 'prepared' pianos, she adapted a bra - formerly her own - for theatrical use. Given the peculiar nature of the piece, she sought Kagel's approval before its final presentation at the Musikhochschule. With his encouragement, the work proceeded.¹⁸

16 On 8 January 2025 Moya Henderson sent the author an extensive e-mail providing feedback on her experience in Darmstadt in 1974 and 1976.

17 Moya Henderson: Stubble (dramatic music).

18 E-mail from Moya Henderson to the author, 8 January 2025.

Beth Griffith embraced the eccentricity of the piece with confidence. Her slender physique allowed her to execute the work's striking visual effect: pulling endless strands of black cotton thread from her costume's pseudo-breasts, stretching them to arm's length, and then cutting them free. Simultaneously, she operated the foot pedal that animated the talking table. The audience's focus was drawn to the surreal elements of the performance, particularly the moment when she unzipped her elegant dress to engage in the symbolic act of removing 'stubble.' The 'prepared' bra functioned as a silent instrument within the piece. Henderson carefully constructed the illusion that the garment was an extension of the performer's own body. The effect was achieved by winding long strands of black cotton thread onto tiny bobbins, which were discreetly positioned at the back of the bra. These threads were channelled through small plastic tubes towards the front, emerging at the strategically placed artificial nipples. This meticulous preparation created the unsettling visual of perpetual hair growth that Griffith, in character, sought to remove.

Even decades later, Henderson continued to reflect on her fascination with and horror at what she had created in 'Stubble'. The intensity of the work remained vivid in her memory.

On 21 July 1976, 'Stubble' for soprano and bass voice was performed at the Ferienkurse, highlighting the theatrical dimension of Henderson's compositional approach. The work was dedicated to "all those women emancipated during the Year of Women, 1975", underscoring her engagement with social issues and her evolving creative vision.¹⁹

During her time in Cologne, with Kagel and Stockhausen as mentors, Henderson focused heavily on musical theatre, a genre that would define her early career. However, after returning to Sydney in 1976, she shifted away from theatre compositions, as Australian audiences were more interested in chamber music and orchestral works during the late 1970s and 1980s. Despite her desire to continue working in musical theatre and opera, Henderson's bold and unconventional ideas were often seen as too avant-garde.

While Kagel significantly influenced Henderson's development, she clarified that she did not wish to replicate his European aesthetic, noting the differences between European and Australian cultures. Her return to Australia was driven by a desire to create work deeply connected to her cultural roots:

It was important for me to come back to Australia because I was particularly interested in theatre work and because this is my culture, which I've known since I was a child. I think if you know a culture well, you can have confidence in yourself and what you have to say about it. That was what made me return, even though there were many things I would have liked to have stayed in Germany for. But I've been exploring the differences and beauty of the country ever since, and trying to realize that what I have to say as a European-Australian is different from what Europeans have to say in America itself.²⁰

Inspired by John Cage's ethos of creative freedom, Henderson's artistic approach has always emphasized experimentation and the rejection of stylistic labels. She

19 Kirsten Reese: *Der hörende Blick ins Archiv*, p. 53; see Moya Henderson: *Stubble*.

20 Catherine Milliken: *Herausfinden, wer man ist*, p. 35.

believes in preserving artistic freedom and resisting external pressures, particularly from academia, to conform to predetermined styles or expectations. "I refuse to have a style",²¹ she asserted, arguing that a composer's individuality should come through in their work, unencumbered by imposed frameworks. Sound sources and craftsmanship have always been central to Henderson's creative process. She insists that composers must convey their emotional experience while maintaining a coherent flow in their musical ideas. This technical mastery, honed under the guidance of Kagel, is evident in her meticulously crafted scores, which reflect her deep attention to detail and commitment to artistic expression.²²

Sarah Hopkins: A Cellist and Composer at the 1980 Darmstädter Ferienkurse

Sarah Hopkins, born in 1958, is an Australian composer and cellist known for her engagement with holistic music and a distinct creative style shaped by her deep connection to the Australian landscape and her exploration of unconventional sounds, such as the didgeridoo. Her classical music training and innovative approach to cello playing have made her a prominent figure in contemporary music, and since the 1980s, she has represented Australia at numerous international festivals.

Before attending the Darmstädter Ferienkurse in 1980, she had an impressive academic and professional background, as documented in the IMD archive. She studied at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) in Melbourne, earning a Diploma of Arts in music (solo cello performance) in 1977 and another in experimental composition and contemporary cello music in 1979. Her collaborations with trombonist and composer James Fulkerson, who was a visiting composer-in-residence at the VCA, were instrumental in shaping her career. Together, they formed a contemporary duo and toured extensively, performing and recording in Belgium, the Netherlands, England, and Norway.²³

Hopkins was awarded an international fellowship by the Music Board of the Australia Council in 1979, which allowed her to pursue advanced studies of performance and composition in Europe. Fulkerson, who encouraged her to apply to Darmstadt, also introduced her to the Gaudeamus Interpreters Competition, both of which became key experiences in her European journey.²⁴

Regarding her participation at Darmstadt, Hopkins reflected on the intellectually rigorous and heavily academic atmosphere of the festival, which was dominated by the modernist school of German new music. When she performed her composition 'Seasons II' (1978) for cello and tape delay, she found that it stood in stark contrast to the prevailing aesthetics at Darmstadt. The piece, characterized by its organic structure, harmonic overlays, and evolving textural sounds, elicited a deeply emotional response from the audience, earning her a standing ovation. However, the course's instructors, steeped in modernist traditions, dismissed her

21 Ibid.

22 See *ibid.*, pp. 35 ff.

23 See Sarah Hopkins: Registration for Darmstädter Ferienkurse.

24 Sarah Hopkins in an e-mail correspondence with the author, 17 November 2023.

music as “women’s music”,²⁵ a classification that allowed them to maintain their allegiance to academic modernism.

Hopkins also recounted more informal and collaborative experiences at Darmstadt, such as her impromptu improvisational sessions between 21 July and 4 August 1980 with Italian saxophonist Mario Sanco. Despite language barriers, the two musicians connected through their instruments, forming an improvising duo that later expanded into a quartet with Steffan Wunderlich (composer and pianist from Munich) and Louise Ingebos (composer and pianist from Belgium). This ensemble performed several times at Darmstadt and later reconvened in Munich and London for additional performances. Hopkins and Sanco also recorded an album of their cello and saxophone improvisations, solidifying the creative bonds formed during the Ferienkurse.²⁶



Sarah Hopkins in Werner Taube’s course at the 1980 summer courses.
© IMD Archiv (IMD-B3001924), Photographer: Manfred Melzer.

Hopkins’ experience at Darmstadt, marked by both creative success and the challenge of navigating the modernist-dominated environment, highlights her distinctive artistic voice. While her work did not align with the prevailing trends of the course, her holistic and organic approach to composition and performance left a lasting impact, both on those who heard her work and on her creative trajectory. Upon returning to Australia in 1981, she continued to explore and expand

25 Ibid.

26 See *ibid.*

her unique musical language while remaining a key figure in the promotion of Australian contemporary music on the international stage.

Julia Ryder: The cellist and her performances at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse (1986-1992)

Julia Ryder is one of Australia's most distinguished cellists, renowned for her chamber music and Beethoven interpretations. Between 1986 and 1992, she was highly active at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse, where her performances influenced generations of composers and garnered acclaim, including the prestigious Kranichsteiner Musikpreis in 1986. Her participation in these courses showcased her versatility, performing a wide range of works by composers such as Brian Ferneyhough, Rodney Sharman, Kaija Saariaho, and others, each time leaving a strong artistic imprint.

In 21 May 1986, while residing in Sydney, Ryder applied to the Ferienkurse and distinguished herself with performances of contemporary compositions, including James Erber's 'Make or Break' for seven instrumentalists and Suzanne Giraud's 'L'offrande à Vénus'. The recognition she received that year affirmed her exceptional talent and granted her a scholarship. Her repertoire at this event demonstrated her ability to navigate complex and diverse modern works, a trait that would define her subsequent appearances at Darmstadt.

By 1988, Ryder had further solidified her reputation, delivering compelling interpretations of pieces such as Rodney Sharman's 'Dark Glasses' and Sergio Lanza's 'Ricerca di mutamento'. Her selection of works highlighted her commitment to expanding the contemporary cello repertoire while engaging with innovative compositional techniques. In 1990, Ryder continued to push boundaries, performing challenging pieces such as Brian Ferneyhough's 'La chute d'Icare' for clarinet and ensemble and Kaija Saariaho's 'Lichtbogen', which incorporated live electronics. These performances not only showcased her technical prowess but also her capacity for artistic expression in avant-garde music.

Her final documented appearance at the Ferienkurse occurred on 27 July 1992, by which time she was based in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK. She performed a variety of compositions, including Steve Ingham's 'Deuce' and Clarence Barlow's 'Im Januar am Nil', reaffirming her position as a versatile interpreter of contemporary music.²⁷

Throughout her career, Julia Ryder's participation in the Ferienkurse profoundly impacted the New Music scene, fostering collaborations with leading composers like Messiaen, Xenakis, and Finnissy. Her high-energy performances inspired numerous works written for her and led to extensive tours and recordings, both as a soloist and with ensembles across Australia, Europe, and Asia.

27 Audio recordings of the 13 works performed by Julia Ryder at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse are preserved in the IMD archive. These recordings are accessible by appointment only. For more information, visit [Julia Ryder's audios](#).

Now based in the mountains near Melbourne, Ryder continues to contribute to the arts through teaching, performing, and nurturing her passion for gardening. Her legacy at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse remains a testament to her dedication to contemporary music and her influence on the international stage.

Vanessa Tomlinson: A Percussionist at the Ferienkurse 1994

Composer and percussionist Vanessa Tomlinson is known for her transdisciplinary sound explorations and has emerged as a significant representative of Australian music in the twenty-first century. Her extensive engagement with experimental music has led her to perform works by numerous composers at festivals across various countries, including her participation in the Darmstädter Ferienkurse in 1994.²⁸

Tomlinson was introduced to the IMD by composer Brian Ferneyhough and her percussion professor, Steven Schick.²⁹ In 1993-1994, she attended the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) as a guest student, where she was joined by fellow students such as Elizabeth McNutt, Andrew May, Mark Osborne, and Erik Ulman. Encouraged by her peers, she decided to attend the Darmstadt courses in 1994. Coincidentally, she travelled to Darmstadt the same year that clarinetist, singer, and conductor Carl Rosman (b. 1971) also participated. Both were members of the Libra Ensemble, based in Melbourne.³⁰

During her time at the Ferienkurse, Tomlinson performed David Harris's '643 Pieces for a Percussionist'. She returned to Darmstadt in 1995 to perform a large-scale outdoor work for 15 musicians, also composed by Harris, although this performance was not affiliated with the IMD. Tomlinson's percussion training included studying under Bernhard Wolfe at the Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg from 1994 to 1995. Subsequently, she returned full-time to UCSD from 1995 to 1998 and moved to Melbourne in 1999. Notably, she was also associated with Ensemble Modern in Frankfurt and performed at the Adelaide Festival, likely in 1996.

Vanessa Tomlinson's decision to attend the Darmstädter Ferienkurse was shaped by a sense that participation in the festival was a requisite step for any leading instrumentalist engaged with contemporary music. However, she later reflected that, even at the time, her aesthetic orientation diverged significantly from the dominant paradigms associated with Darmstadt. Her musical influences were rooted in the experimental traditions of Morton Feldman – particularly his extended work 'For Philip Guston', which she was studying at the time – and John Cage. She recalled a particularly striking moment during a Darmstadt

28 Vanessa Tomlinson's Official [Website](#).

29 Steven Schick (b. 1954) is a distinguished American contemporary percussionist and an influential figure in the field of music education. Schick's scholarly contributions to the field include his acclaimed publication, 'The Percussionist's Art: Same Bed, Different Dreams', along with numerous recordings of contemporary percussion music. For further information, please refer to his [faculty profile](#).

30 In an interview, Vanessa Tomlinson discusses her life and career. See Percussion Perspectives ep. 18: Vanessa Tomlinson (Percussionist, Artistic Director, Researcher) on [YouTube](#).

concert, where she sat beside Christian Wolff and was surprised to hear his 'Exercises' performed within such a context, underscoring the disconnect between her artistic values and the festival's programming tendencies.³¹

Tomlinson's artistic sensibilities had been shaped not only by American experimentalism but also by her involvement in a radical music scene in Adelaide that emphasized duration, extremes, and indeterminacy. Her subsequent studies with George Lewis had further deepened her engagement with free improvisation, an area she felt was discouraged or marginalised within the Darmstadt environment. She also cited the influence of Vinko Globokar's music theatre, often curating performances that referenced his aesthetic approach – for instance, by incorporating readings of Kurt Schwitters's 'Ursonate'. While these experimental practices were not foregrounded at Darmstadt during her time there, Tomlinson ultimately presented a duo concert with Elizabeth Jigalin that foregrounded their shared musical interests and drew notable attention. Despite her aesthetic distance from some of the dominant figures at the festival, Tomlinson expressed deep respect for Brian Ferneyhough's work and found his presence in the Darmstadt milieu intellectually stimulating.³²

Tomlinson forged many friendships during her time as a percussionist, notably with Eduardo Leandro, Tatiana Koleva, and Kuniko Kato, with whom she remains in close contact. She also appreciated the guidance of Steve Schick and James Wood, both of whom played significant roles in her development as a percussionist.

Having always questioned the composer/performer dichotomy, Tomlinson found her experience at Darmstadt challenging. She desired to engage in discussions, perform, and socialize with all participants and composers, resisting the urge to conform to predefined roles. Describing herself as someone who was never simply "on duty" as an instrumentalist, she was described as obstinate, full of ideas, and eager to delve into the material.³³

Recalling the atmosphere at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse, Vanessa Tomlinson reflected on the intensity of audience reactions, noting that she had witnessed people booing and walking out during performances – experiences that were unfamiliar to her at the time. Such responses, she observed, revealed the depth of audience engagement and their willingness to publicly reject artistic offerings. She recalled a performance by Bang on a Can, possibly in either 1994 or 1996, which provoked a notably vocal response from the audience. This incident highlighted what she perceived as a pervasive anti-minimalist sentiment at the festival. Tomlinson interpreted these reactions as symptomatic of an underlying hierarchy of musical value, one that appeared to privilege male composers, despite the presence of female faculty members such as Chaya Czernowin.³⁴

While she acknowledged the challenges of participating in such an ideologically charged environment, Tomlinson expressed a sense of gratitude for the opportunity to engage with the festival. Though she did not feel compelled to

31 Sarah Tomlinson expressed this in an e-mail to the author, 15 November 2023.

32 See *ibid.*

33 *Ibid.*

34 See *ibid.*

return in subsequent years, she maintained contact with those musicians she found to be intellectually generous and open to diverse perspectives. In retrospect, she viewed the Ferienkurse as one among many international platforms for the exchange of innovative ideas. At the time, however, she regarded it as a vital and galvanizing force within the landscape of contemporary music – an experience that she found formative and of enduring value.³⁵

Crossing Boundaries:

Liza Lim's Impact and Presence at the Ferienkurse from 1998

Liza Lim, an Australian composer of Chinese descent, participated in the prestigious Darmstädter Ferienkurse in 1998, contributing to a panel discussion on the globalization of new music and European independence. Born in 1966 in Perth to Chinese parents, Lim has built an illustrious career marked by her deep engagement with multidisciplinary art forms and her exploration of non-Western musical traditions. Her works span musical theatre, concert compositions, installation, and video projects, all of which reflect her interest in Asian ritual culture, Indigenous Australian aesthetics, and diverse global performance practices.³⁶

Lim's educational journey laid a strong foundation for her compositional development. She earned a Bachelor of Arts from the Victorian College of the Arts (1986), a Master of Music from the University of Melbourne (1996), and a PhD from the University of Queensland. She also pursued advanced studies in composition with Ton de Leeuw in Amsterdam and Richard David Hames in Melbourne. Hames had a profound influence on Lim, particularly through his access to the Faculty of Arts library, which exposed her to a wealth of scores and recordings. Her compositional voice began to crystallize in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as she explored the physicality of sound production and performers' interactions with their instruments. Her work shared affinities with Helmut Lachenmann's focus on sound as a physical reality, yet Lim approached this from a different perspective, integrating cultural and artistic dimensions.³⁷

Throughout the 1990s, Lim's compositions bridged cultural boundaries, integrating non-Western instruments such as the Turkish lute and the koto with classical ensembles. Her collaboration with the Australian contemporary music group 'ELISION' during this period was particularly fruitful, fostering a unique performance style that became central to her creative output. Lim's work also

35 See *ibid.*

36 Rosalind Appleby: *Women of Note*.

37 Richard Toop argues that Liza Lim's work is imbued with ritualistic concepts, though she interprets "ritual" in diverse ways. He notes that Brian Ferneyhough's music initially inspired Lim, and that her early compositions were influenced by British composers. In 1986, Lim completed her master's dissertation at the University of Melbourne, which focused on her analysis of Ferneyhough's early String Quartet Sonatas. She also references his composition *Funérailles* in her dissertation, examining the ritualistic themes present behind a figurative curtain. During the early stages of her career, Lim expressed considerable fascination with the compositions of *Funérailles* (See Richard Toop: *Klangwelten für verlorene Wörter*; Richard Toop, Liza Lim: Grove Music Online).

drew inspiration from a variety of intellectual sources, including John Cage's 'Silence', Riccardo Formosa's approach to craftsmanship, and the labyrinthine structures of Italo Calvino's writings, which influenced her approach to composition as a non-linear, improvisatory process. She also found inspiration in Roland Barthes' 'Mythologies' and Marcel Duchamp's ideas about the multiplicity of meaning, which aligned with her tendency to eschew predetermined structures in favour of more organic, intuitive development.³⁸



Wolfgang Lessing, Thomas Löffler, and Liza Lim performing with Ensemble Phorminx at the Darmstadt Summer Courses in 1998. © IMD Archive (IMD-B3010040). Photo by Siegfried Meckle.

At the Ferienkurse 1998, Lim was a featured lecturer, and her compositions were performed by prominent ensembles such as Ensemble Phorminx, the Kairos Quartet, and soloists like Kurt Widmer and Mircea Ardeleanu. The works presented included 'Hell' (for string quartet), 'Change-O' (for baritone and percussion), and 'Inguz'.

In the panel discussion, Lim joined composers Julio Estrada, Toshio Hosokawa, Manfred Stahnke, and Chaya Czernowin in reflecting on the question, "Where are the peripheries?" As each composer navigated their centre of focus, Lim highlighted the cultural periphery she occupied by centring her work on Indigenous Australian culture, thus positioning Darmstadt itself as a peripheral context with her artistic priorities.³⁹

38 See Tim Rutherford-Johnson: *The Music of Liza Lim*; *Liza Lim: Rifts in Time*; Walsh, Craig, Shaun Gladwell, TV Moore, Daniel Crooks, Daryl Buckley, Lisa Lim, Michael Riley: *Wave Front - Australian Contemporary Art Scene*.

39 Cf. the audio recordings available at the IMD archive: *Roundtable Discussion: The Abdication of Europe? The Globalization of New Music (1)*. For further details, refer to *Roundtable*

The 1990s saw a flourishing of diverse musical voices within Australian New Music music, with composers like Liza Lim and Adam Yee contributing to a growing cross-cultural dialogue. This period also marked the rise of international composer residencies and the global recognition of Australian music, in part through festivals such as Sydney Spring, which showcased both Australian and international compositions. Outstanding chamber ensembles such as the Sydney Alpha Ensemble, Perihelion Ensemble, and ELISION championed these new works, rehearsing and performing pieces by young composers like Lim, helping to establish Australia's place on the world stage of contemporary music.⁴⁰

Lim's continued involvement with the Ferienkurse into the twenty-first century underscores her ongoing influence and dedication to expanding the boundaries of musical and cultural expression.

The oboist and composer Cathy Milliken: Between Brisbane, Berlin and Darmstadt

The Darmstädter Ferienkurse für Neue Musik, known for its significant role in shaping the contemporary music landscape, has long been a meeting ground for composers, instrumentalists, and theorists worldwide. Among its many international participants is Australian oboist, composer, and educator Cathy Milliken, whose career has seen her traverse the boundaries between traditional performance and experimental music-making.

Cathy Milliken's musical journey began in her hometown of Brisbane, where she initially took up the oboe. Her growing interest in contemporary music, coupled with a curiosity for composition, set the stage for a career that would soon extend beyond Australia. Milliken recalls Brisbane's contemporary music scene in the 1970s and early 1980s as vibrant yet isolated, with few avenues for young musicians interested in avant-garde music. It was a community nonetheless characterized by passionate teachers and mentors who fostered her burgeoning interest in contemporary techniques.

Brisbane's isolation from Europe's experimental music scene prompted Milliken to seek opportunities abroad. Influenced by the work of Australian and European musicians, she decided to move to Germany, a pivotal step that provided exposure to a wider network of artists and composers. Her early years in Germany involved intensive studies with established oboists and encounters with avant-garde composers.

Cathy Milliken's first documented appearance at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse occurred in 1984, marking a significant step in her career. She performed a piece for oboe by Bruno Maderna with the Ensemble Modern, a group she would collaborate with throughout her career. This particular performance took place on

Discussion: The Abdication of Europe? The Globalization of New Music (2).

40 Richard Toop: *Ein Puzzle von Individualitäten*, pp. 37; Catherine Milliken: *Auf assoziativen Wegen*, pp. 39 f.; Brenton Broadstock: *Sound ideas*; Dugal McKinnon: *Australien/Neuseeland/Ozeanien*, pp. 192 ff.

16 March 1984, as part of a special concert commemorating the 10th anniversary of Maderna's death. Under the direction of Swiss conductor Matthias Bamert, Milliken and the ensemble presented a program that was both a tribute and an exploration of Maderna's music.⁴¹

Reflecting on the concert, Milliken emphasizes the intensity and depth of the rehearsals, which included collaboration with fellow musicians who shared a commitment to precision and expression. The environment of the Ferienkurse, characterized by a mix of established figures and emerging talents, provided Milliken with valuable insights into ensemble performance and the interpretative demands of contemporary music.

Two years later, in 1986, Milliken returned to the Ferienkurse, where her artistic focus expanded. Notably, she collaborated with oboist Christopher Redgate in a performance of 'Sotto Presse' by Wolfgang Motz, a piece for two oboes and quadraphonic tape. This performance was part of a guest concert by the London-based Gruppe 'Exposé', marking their debut in Germany with support from the British Council. The collaboration exemplified the Ferienkurse's commitment to fostering international exchange and cross-cultural partnerships in experimental music.⁴² Milliken's participation extended to the Ensemble Modern's performances during the same course, including works by composers like Dario Maggi ('Olimpia') and Richard Barrett ('Anatomy'), conducted by Bernhard Kontarsky. These concerts, often a result of workshops with composers, allowed performers to directly engage with the creative processes of contemporary composition, offering a unique educational experience.

The 1986 course left a lasting impression on Milliken. She observed a distinct openness to experimentation in Darmstadt, with discussions ranging from aesthetics to politics within the context of music. The interaction with composers, performers, and theorists provided her with insights that influenced her subsequent work as both an oboist and a composer.

After an extended break from Darmstadt, Milliken returned in 2004, a visit marked by significant achievements. Her piece 'En Secret', for countertenor, oboe d'amore, and guitar, was performed alongside collaborators Christopher Brandt and countertenor Daniel Gloger. Additionally, her work 'Jet', for clarinet and tape, was featured, performed by clarinetist Carol Robinson, and produced by Hessischer Rundfunk. Milliken also took part in Hermann Kretzschmar's 'schlichte Gedichte', contributing as an instrumentalist. A major highlight of the 2004 Ferienkurse was Milliken receiving the prestigious Kranichsteiner Musikpreis, a recognition of her contributions to the field of contemporary music.⁴³ This accolade marked a turning point in her career, affirming her role as a significant voice in contemporary music. The award, along with her collaborations

41 For details on Catherine Milliken's participation as an oboist at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse in 1984, refer to the search results for 'Catherine+Milliken+1984' in the IMD archive.

42 For information regarding Catherine Milliken's participation as an oboist at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse in 1986, see the search results for 'Catherine+Milliken+1986' in the IMD archive.

43 For details on Catherine Milliken's participation as a composer and performer at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse in 2004, see the search results for 'Catherine+Milliken+2004' in the IMD archive.

at the Ferienkurse, contributed to the growth of her reputation in Germany and internationally.

Milliken's latest documented appearance at the Ferienkurse took place in 2018, where she presented a lecture titled 'Are democratic processes in musical practice realistic? Successes and pitfalls from the field'. This talk delved into the challenges and possibilities of collaborative and participatory approaches in music-making, a topic that has informed much of her recent work. The lecture addressed questions about authority, authorship, and the dynamics of ensemble performance, drawing from her extensive experience in various collaborative projects. Regarding Milliken's reflections on her four-decade association with the Darmstädter Ferienkurse, she has observed shifts in the aesthetic focus and organizational approaches under different leaderships, from the 1980s era of Friedrich Hommel to the present-day directorship of Solf Schaefer and Thomas Schäfer.

Cathy Milliken's career demonstrates a bridge between Australian and European contemporary music practices. Her involvement with the Darmstädter Ferienkurse is not only a testament to her achievements but also part of a broader narrative of Australian musicians engaging with Germany's avant-garde music scene. Despite the geographical distance from Australia, Milliken has remained connected to the country's contemporary music scene, advocating for Australian composers in Germany and participating in initiatives promoting contemporary music from her homeland. Her experience exemplifies the rich cultural exchange facilitated by institutions like the IMD.

Cathy Milliken's multifaceted experiences at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse reflect a continuous engagement with contemporary music's evolving practices and philosophies. From her performances and collaborations in the 1980s to her recognition with the Kranichsteiner Musikpreis in 2004 and her thought-provoking lecture in 2018, Milliken's career has been significantly shaped by her association with Darmstadt.⁴⁴ Her journey serves as an example of how Australian artists can contribute to, and be shaped by international contemporary music traditions.⁴⁵

44 For information on Catherine Milliken's role as a lecturer at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse in 2018, refer to the audio recording IMD archive: Past practices, present traumas, possible futures.

45 In an interview conducted via Zoom on 7 October 2024, Cathy Milliken clarified her invitation to the Darmstädter Ferienkurse in 2018, where she served as an oboe instructor for composition students. This opportunity arose as part of an initiative led by the festival director, Thomas Schäfer, who encouraged her to propose new projects. During that year in Darmstadt, she delivered two lectures within a program characterized by collaborative compositions, which aligned with Christian Dierstein's percussion project. Milliken highlighted that from 1982 to 1994, the festival's director, Friedrich Hommel, adopted a bold and experimental approach to leading the Ferienkurse. Subsequently, Solf Schäfer's tenure from 1995 to 2008 saw the introduction of composer groups who facilitated discussions on themes including contemporary music, interculturality, and dialogues with other arts. Under Thomas Schäfer's leadership, beginning in 2010, the Ferienkurse further evolved into a more collaborative space. Milliken also participated in performances of works by other Australian composers, including Liza Lim, and emphasized the collaboration between the Ensemble Modern and the Australian-based Ensemble Elision. In 1996, the Ensemble Modern performed a composition by Brian Ferneyhough at the Adelaide Festival of Arts, further solidifying its connections to Australia. Milliken maintained strong ties with her homeland, particularly with the Queensland Conservatorium of Music in Brisbane, which she described as "a fantastic place". She noted that her Australian roots and heritage enriched her compositional work in Germany.

The ongoing dialogue between Australian and German contemporary music, as represented by Milliken and others, suggests a dynamic and evolving relationship that continues to inspire new generations of musicians.

Exploring Multidimensional Composition: Jaslyn Robertson's Experiences at the Ferienkurse (2021 & 2023) and her Evolving Musical Practice

Jaslyn Robertson, a composer based in Melbourne, is known for her multidisciplinary approach to music, incorporating electronic processing, experimental notation, and alternate tuning systems. Her career is characterized by a dedication to pushing musical boundaries, driven by a curiosity for new sounds and textures.

Born in Brisbane, Robertson began her formal music education at Monash University, where she studied composition with David Chisholm, Mary Finsterer, and Myles Mumford.⁴⁶ Her early work demonstrated a keen interest in contemporary music and electronic soundscapes, elements that would continue to influence her practice. She has composed for ensembles and soloists of international acclaim, such as the Swiss ensemble Vortex, Tristram Williams of ELISION, and the Landesjugendensemble Neue Musik Berlin, with performances taking place in prestigious venues like the Deutsche Oper in Berlin.

In Australia, Robertson's compositions have been featured in festivals including the Bendigo International Festival of Exploratory Music and MONA FOMA. She is also actively engaged in writing about the local music scene, contributing reviews and articles to publications such as RealTime Arts and CutCommon. Currently, she is pursuing a PhD at Monash University, focusing on the theme of queering concepts of censorship, a project that underscores her interest in music's potential to engage with complex social issues.

Darmstädter Ferienkurse 2021:

Navigating New Landscapes in a Virtual Format

Robertson's first experience with the Darmstädter Ferienkurse came in 2021, amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Originally scheduled to attend in 2020, she participated virtually due to ongoing travel restrictions. Although the online format lacked the spontaneity and social interaction characteristic of in-person events, Robertson found value in the experience, particularly through workshops and lessons with notable figures such as Jennifer Walshe, Cathy Milliken, David Helbich, Sebastian Berweck, and Du Yun.

A highlight of the 2021 course was Robertson's involvement in the Minimoog Project, led by Sebastian Berweck. Here, she explored the nuances of composing

46 As of now, publicly available sources do not provide information regarding Jaslyn Robertson's date of birth. Details about her birthdate have not been disclosed in the accessible literature.

for the Minimoog, a synthesizer not traditionally used in notated compositions. This experience deepened her understanding of notation as a communicative tool, prompting her to create scores that are visually expressive and unique, akin to a 'gift' for the performer. For the Minimoog piece, she handwrote the score using colored pencils as a tribute to early electronic music pioneers like Eliane Radigue, adding a personal touch to her experimental practice.

Darmstädter Ferienkurse 2023:

Expanding Horizons through Site-Specific and Collaborative Work

In 2023, Robertson returned to Darmstadt, this time participating in person, which provided a much more immersive experience. The highlight was the intensive workshop 'Local Music', led by Sarah Saviet and Arne Gieshoff. This site-specific project took place at the New Artists' Colony in Matildenhöhe, an artistically significant space surrounded by gardens. Working closely with a group of composer-performers, Robertson explored the sonic possibilities of the site, which inspired the creation of 'Rosenhöhe', a piece for trombone and violin. This composition engaged with the architectural features of the gallery space, incorporating elements of control and motion-tracking to blend live performance with field recordings.

The 2023 course also afforded Robertson opportunities for one-on-one lessons with esteemed composers such as Du Yun, Brigitta Muntendorf, and Matthew Schlomowitz, as well as classes with Helmut Lachenmann and Clara Iannotta. These encounters deepened her understanding of musical form and dramaturgy, crucial for her ongoing work on a chamber opera – a significant undertaking that will be her largest work to date.

Robertson's experiences at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse were not confined to a learning environment; they represented an opportunity to situate her practice within a global context. Her exchange to the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg in 2023 further expanded her compositional approach, allowing her to study multimedia composition under Alexander Schubert and engage with innovative technologies such as virtual reality and Ambisonic sound. This exposure to cutting-edge techniques enriched her artistic vocabulary, influencing her work on projects like the RMIT commission for a 24.2 multichannel 3D speaker system in Melbourne.

Back in Australia, Robertson continued to contribute to the local contemporary music scene by collaborating with prominent ensembles such as Speak Percussion, exploring new methods of sound spatialization and composition. Her dual presence in both international and local spheres underscores a commitment to integrating diverse influences, demonstrating how global experiences can invigorate a local practice.

Robertson's artistic research is inextricably linked to social and political themes. In her PhD project on queering the concept of censorship, she uses composition as a means to question and subvert structures of power. This thematic

focus is evident in her development of a chamber opera that explores creative expression within restricted social environments. The work reflects her broader interest in multisensory performance, often involving unconventional tunings, modular synthesis, and experimental forms of notation that challenge normative listening experiences.

Her music has been described as “theatrical and demanding” (Limelight) and evocative of “anxiety, a kind of otherness, and yet a joy” (The Sound Barrier),⁴⁷ indicating a complex aesthetic that draws listeners into critical engagement. By collaborating with artists, writers, and improvisers, Robertson’s compositions transcend traditional concert settings, extending into multimedia art forms that invite audiences to contemplate broader societal issues.

Jaslyn Robertson’s participation in the Darmstädter Ferienkurse in 2021 and 2023 has played a pivotal role in shaping her compositional practice. Through workshops, site-specific projects, and collaborative performances, she has expanded her artistic scope and refined her approach to music-making. By bridging international influences with local initiatives, Robertson’s career exemplifies the dynamic interplay between global experiences and regional identity in contemporary composition. As she continues to challenge conventional boundaries through her artistic research and creative endeavours, her work will likely resonate as a significant contribution to the evolving landscape of new music.

From Melbourne to Montréal:

Madeline Roycroft’s Musical Pathways and the Influence of Darmstadt

Madeline Roycroft’s journey from Melbourne to Darmstadt and beyond encapsulates a vibrant career shaped by a commitment to musicology and a passion for writing about contemporary music. Her experiences reflect the intersection of music performance, academic pursuit, and cultural exchange, navigating diverse settings and grappling with issues such as gender, nationality, and ecoanxiety.

Roycroft’s first encounter with the Darmstädter Ferienkurse began in 2016, when she learned about its Words on Music course, which was dedicated to exploring the complexities of music criticism. She had a background as an oboist and an emerging musicologist, driven by an early desire to write about music for newspapers and magazines. At that time, she viewed Darmstadt primarily as a historic festival, with a reputation as a site of radical modernist music. The subsequent research and ongoing reflections on the course gradually solidified her interest, inspiring her to consider participation in the future.⁴⁸

An important precursor to her Darmstadt experience was the Bendigo International Festival of Exploratory Music (BIFEM) between 2 and 4 September 2016, which held music criticism workshops organized by David Chisholm in Australia.

47 Ibid.

48 Madeline Roycroft provided feedback about her experiences at Darmstadt on 13 and 14 October 2024, in response to questions posed by the author. These thoughts (also through the following quotes) were shared in a private conversation on Facebook.

Although BIFEM is no longer running, Roycroft recalls hearing it referred to as “a small Australian answer to the Darmstadt program”. This comparison further fuelled her curiosity, framing Darmstadt as a site for engaging with new music in a manner resonant with her evolving interests as a scholar and critic.

Roycroft’s eventual participation in the Words on Music course at the first post-pandemic edition of the Ferienkurse in 2022 marked the realization of a long-standing ambition. Yet, her two-week stay was not without its challenges. While the course provided an immersive and stimulating environment, the uneven gender distribution – three women, one gender-diverse participant, and eight men – shaped her experience. She found the discussions occasionally dominated by louder voices, reflecting broader patterns of gendered communication dynamics within the field of music criticism. Despite these frustrations, she found meaningful opportunities to contribute, such as in a podcast discussion with composer Chaya Czernowin, where her questioning brought forward the topic of women’s choice regarding motherhood – a conversation she felt would not have arisen without her perspective.

Regarding this experience, Roycroft stated:

On gender, I was very aware of my gender throughout the two weeks in the words on music course because we were not evenly split (there were three women, one gender diverse person and eight men). Much of our time in the course was devoted to discussion, and of course everyone in the group was intelligent, passionate and had strong opinions, so from my perspective it was often a case of ‘whoever talks the loudest will be heard the most’. I found these discussions frustrating because I’m a softly spoken person and I was interrupted a few times when I did manage to speak for a bit, so I was never able to contribute my thoughts in a way that I was content with. But thankfully this was not the case for the small groups we formed to create the daily podcast. On one of the episodes we actually did an interview with Chaya Czernowin, and I received really nice feedback about the conversation we had with her about women’s choice to enter into motherhood or not. As my fellow podcasters were men I don’t think the conversation would have gotten to this place without my line of questioning, so I was proud of that. And kudos to the boys for sitting back and listening in that moment.⁴⁹

In addition to gender dynamics, the discourse on nationality proved to be a significant theme in Roycroft’s experience at Darmstadt. Her feelings of being ‘out of place’ stemmed from discussions that often centred on the absence of participants from the ‘global south’. She found this term problematic, viewing it as Eurocentric, as it implies a dichotomy between economically ‘developed’ and ‘underdeveloped’ regions while ostensibly neutralizing the geopolitical and economic undertones. For Roycroft, this discourse was particularly challenging as an Australian, given that Australia occupies the southern hemisphere geographically but does not fit the ‘global south’ categorization due to its economic status.

Moreover, ecoanxiety surfaced as a prevalent topic in the discussions, with some participants suggesting that events like Darmstadt should limit long-distance travel to reduce the carbon footprint. As an Australian, Roycroft found these remarks particularly exclusionary, as her participation necessarily involved air travel. While some colleagues acknowledged the geographical realities faced by

49 Ibid.

participants from outside Europe, the discussions often underscored a subtle but persistent Eurocentric bias in the assumptions about who the festival was for.

A high point of Roycroft's time at Darmstadt was her meeting with Matthew Shlomowitz, an Australian composer based in the UK. This encounter offered a comforting connection to home amidst the international and sometimes intense environment of the course. Shlomowitz's familiarity and shared humour resonated with Roycroft, providing a sense of belonging that contrasted with the cultural and intellectual tensions of the program. The significance of this meeting also reflects the broader value of cultural exchanges at events like Darmstadt, where connections between artists, scholars, and performers often transcend national boundaries, fostering a shared sense of purpose in the world of contemporary music.

Following her time at Darmstadt, Roycroft's career took another turn, with a move to Montréal for a full-time research fellowship.⁵⁰ The opportunity to work on French music presented a promising continuation of her research career, addressing a major challenge faced by musicologists in Australia: the limited funding for academic positions. While she enjoyed life in Melbourne and was deeply connected to its music scene, the need for stable, full-time research support necessitated the transition. In Montréal, she has faced the dual task of adapting to a new cultural environment while managing familiar feelings of imposter syndrome, a sentiment often exacerbated by Australia's 'tall poppy syndrome' – the cultural inclination to critique those who achieve notable success.

The move has also brought new experiences, such as learning to navigate a 'real' winter and integrating into the local academic community. Roycroft finds that her background as an Australian-speaking French often surprises her colleagues, creating opportunities for cultural exchange that extend beyond her work in musicology.⁵¹

Madeline Roycroft's career embodies the spirit of global academic and musical exchange, with her trajectory spanning three distinct cultural landscapes: Australia, Germany, and Canada. Her experiences highlight the personal and professional challenges of navigating different musical and academic communities, while also reflecting broader issues of gender, nationality, and the role of the non-European participant in the global discourse on contemporary music. Her reflections on the Ferienkurse illustrate the complexities of engaging in a space traditionally dominated by European perspectives, and her journey continues to unfold as she seeks to further her scholarly contributions in Montréal.

Roycroft's story offers a compelling perspective on the diverse pathways that shape contemporary musicology, challenging traditional narratives and advocating for more inclusive approaches in international music festivals. Her experiences underscore the ongoing relevance of critical reflections on gender and nationality in shaping the future of music scholarship and festival participation.

50 See *ibid.*

51 See *ibid.*

Conclusion

This article aims at extending the discussion by recognizing the evolving role of Australian women in Neue Musik through the lens of their participation in the Darmstädter Ferienkurse. While initial decades after the founding of the courses in 1946 saw minimal representation of female composers, the eventual involvement of Australians like Norma Tyer, Ann Carr-Boyd, Moya Henderson, Cathy Milliken, Sarah Hopkins, Julia Ryder, Vanessa Tomlinson, Liza Lim, Samantha Wolf, Elizabeth Jigalin, Madeline Roycroft, and Jaslyn Robertson illustrates a gradual broadening of opportunities for women within contemporary music.

The study identifies key moments in which Australian women took part in challenging the traditional male-dominated landscape at Darmstadt, with their performances and compositions gaining recognition and contributing to the diversification of the repertoire. The article highlights how later participants, including Samantha Wolf and Julia Ryder, built upon these foundations, integrating distinct perspectives and expanding the influence of Australian contemporary music in an international context.

Drawing from interviews, archival research at the IMD, and an examination of the literature on gender and music, this article emphasizes that while gender disparities have historically shaped the participation of women in contemporary music, the incremental progress seen at Darmstadt reflects broader changes within the field. The ongoing development of the Darmstadt-Australia connection provides a platform for rethinking the narratives of contemporary music and redefining what it means to contribute to the global stage of Neue Musik.

In advocating for increased visibility of these contributions, the article also calls for further investigation into overlooked works and experiences, encouraging future research to continue unravelling the histories of women in contemporary music. The stories of these pioneering Australian artists inspire a deeper understanding of how musical culture can evolve towards greater inclusivity and diversity, pushing the boundaries of what is considered normative within avant-garde music practices.

The stories of the Australian women who participated in the Darmstädter Ferienkurse reveal both striking commonalities and illuminating differences, shedding light on the broader narrative of women in contemporary music and Australia's evolving relationship with this crucial hub of avant-garde music.

A clear throughline across their experiences is a shared sense of boundary-breaking – whether musical, geographical, or cultural. Many of these artists arrived in Darmstadt as outsiders to the central European avant-garde scene, yet they engaged critically and creatively with its dominant currents. For example, Jennifer Fowler and Moya Henderson, who attended in earlier decades, often found themselves navigating a patriarchal musical culture while asserting their compositional identities. Their pioneering roles helped open doors for future generations.

In contrast, younger composers like Liza Lim or performers like Vanessa Tomlinson and Jaslyn Robertson entered the Ferienkurse in a later, more pluralistic

era. Yet, they still grappled with the enduring expectations of 'Neue Musik' aesthetics while bringing in new perspectives – drawing on postcolonial theory, intercultural practice, and feminist thought.

Sarah Hopkins's and Julia Ryder's experiences stand out for their embodied and performance-based approaches, offering an alternative to the cerebral, structurally-driven music that dominated Darmstadt in earlier years. Hopkins's holistic and spiritual orientation, for example, posed a deliberate contrast to the Modernist emphasis on abstraction and complexity.

Cathy Milliken, who transitioned from performer to composer and cultural leader, embodies a model of artistic evolution deeply connected to her time in Germany. Her work reflects both deep integration with European traditions and an ongoing commitment to collaborative and cross-disciplinary practice.

As for the order of presentation in this article, it follows a roughly chronological and generational structure – beginning with early trailblazers like Fowler and Henderson, and moving toward more recent participants. This structure not only traces the historical development of Australian women's presence at Darmstadt but also subtly maps the shifting aesthetic and institutional landscapes of the Ferienkurse over the decades.

By highlighting these women's voices, this article reveals how Australian artists have not only contributed to but also redefined the contours of contemporary music at Darmstadt. The diversity of their pathways – some driven by compositional innovation, others by performance, collaboration, or pedagogy – challenges any singular narrative about gender, nationality, or style. What unites them, ultimately, is a commitment to experimentation, to making space for new sounds, and to reshaping the institutions in which those sounds are heard.

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Reviews

Liza Brachtendorf

Kathrin Bartha-Mitchell: *Cosmological Readings of Contemporary Australian Literature. Unsettling the Anthropocene*

London: Routledge 2023. 197 pp. ISBN 978-1-032-31962-9, EUR 168,35

The 'Anthropocene' has emerged recently in academic discourse in reference to a conceptual and critical lens through which scholars reflect on humanity's lasting effects on the planet. As a concept, it weaves together ecological degradation with cultural, historical, and political dimensions, yet establishes human/nature and mind/body binaries. Kathrin Bartha-Mitchell, Postdoctoral Researcher and DFG Benjamin Walter Fellow at the Goethe University in Frankfurt, questions such binaries and the dominant discourse of decline in the Anthropocene by combining it with the concept of 'cosmos'.

In 'Cosmological Readings', Bartha-Mitchell examines how cosmos in contemporary Australian literature challenges the narrative of decline and the destructive separation between human and environment in the Anthropocene, as "cosmos" sits at the "intersection of human construction and material eternity" (2). At the intersection of ecocriticism, cosmology, and postcolonial studies, the author interrogates how contemporary Australian literature responds to the ongoing ecological crisis while it confronts settler-colonial narratives that dominate the continent's discourse. 'Cosmological Readings' provides a critical lens through which to rethink the Anthropocene beyond its Eurocentric framing by foregrounding Indigenous cosmologies and non-human agencies.

In analysing six cases of contemporary Australian literature through the concept of cosmos, Bartha-Mitchell (re-)imagines cosmological relationships beyond the Anthropocene and proposes 'cosmological readings' as an alternative concept to the Anthropocene. Her selection of published works represents an intriguing blend of genres, themes, and authors, which range from science fiction to realism, technology to agriculture, and includes Indigenous, migrant, and settler authors. Bartha-Mitchell's interdisciplinary approach builds on extant scholarship, notably by Environmental Humanities scholar Rob Nixon, ecofeminist Donna Haraway and Australian Ethnographer Deborah Bird Rose. In so doing, she presents a distinct perspective on how Australian literature engages with local and global ecological, historical, and political concerns such as pollution and technology. Her work also moves beyond mere criticism of the Anthropocene to a broader rethinking of human/non-human relations.

The core chapters of 'Cosmological Readings' analyse a specific piece of literature challenging the Anthropocene. The introductory and first chapter provide a 'mise-en-scène', with helpful definitions of the Anthropocene and cosmos as a method in literary studies. Bartha-Mitchell engages with scholarship from

a broad palette of disciplines, which includes literary, postcolonial, historical, anthropological and environmental studies, to develop the theoretical framework of a “cosmological reading lens” (2). By applying this framework to her contemporary Australian texts, Bartha-Mitchell highlights the role of literature and the Humanities in “finding ways out of the Anthropocene” (4).

In addition, Bartha-Mitchell draws on and applies an Indigenous concept of Country to identify a gap in the recent scholarly turn to materialism.¹ She does so by demonstrating that scholarship, to date, neglects Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies. Although Indigenous thought is not homogenous and varies extensively from place to place, Bartha-Mitchell characterises Country by its collective agency that “designates a complex whole, [...] encompassing environment and social relations” (5, 47). As the “oldest continuing cosmology on earth”, she holds that Country is a useful concept through which to unpack the notion of cosmology (5).

Subsequent chapters comprise four parts, with each consisting of two literary pieces that Bartha-Mitchell analyses to unravel elements of the Anthropocene. Each pairing includes a non-Indigenous and Indigenous piece of writing, which leads to an almost-formulaic, yet well-structured, outline.

Chapters three and four shift the reader’s attention to the importance of language. Bartha-Mitchell applies her ‘cosmological reading lens’ to Carrie Tiffany’s ‘Everyman’s Rules for Scientific Living’ and Tara June Winch’s ‘The Yield’ to uncover the “co-dependent meaning-making between ‘humans’ and their socio-cultural [and] material ‘environment’” (63). Next, the author places primacy on Rob Nixon’s concept of slow violence to demonstrate that environmental degradation, such as soil degradation in ‘Everyman’s Rules’, is a form of violence. Here, Bartha-Mitchell argues that the main characters’ agrarian failures “can be read as resulting out of the oppression of certain kinds of people and knowledges and dualistic human/nature constructions” (75). ‘The Yield’ picks up these themes of land-use, commercialisation and language in its construction of a tin mine on Wiradjuri Country. Bartha-Mitchell contends that the novel presents an “alternative to [a] reductionist colonial order by reconstructing cosmological understandings of the world” (88). She supports this by contrasting the settler-colonial understanding of land as a commercial good with the Wiradjuri worldview of land as beginning of all life. This worldview is represented by the Wiradjuri word *manhang*. Literally translated as ‘soil’ or ‘earth’, it holds the cosmic worldview of “earth as an alive organism” (90).

The next two chapters shed important light on a discourse analysis of “narrating the Anthropocene” through climate change. Bartha-Mitchell contrasts two speculative fiction texts – Briohny Doyle’s novel ‘The Island Will Sink’ and Ellen van Neerven’s novella ‘Water’ – to explore how different forms of storytelling, such as dystopian, humorous or romantic, shape human capacities to interpret and find ways out of “this socio-environmental crisis” (107). Bartha-Mitchell holds that one can understand ‘The Island Will Sink’ as a “negative cosmology”

1 Like Bartha-Mitchell, I capitalize ‘Country’ here as it denotes the lands, waterways, and seas that Indigenous people connect to ontologically. See Aileen Moreton-Robinson: *The White Possessive*, pp. 3-8.

that foregrounds a technology / human and nature binary, thereby adding a new strand to her 'cosmological reading lens' (123). In 'Water', the protagonists do not enjoy the "privileged complacency of doomsday-thinking" and break through the dualisms of "either/or", rather advocating for "both/and" (138, 140). This is also evident in the novella's main character, Kaden, who identifies as queer. Literally "queering" Social Darwinist, colonial policies, Bartha-Mitchell praises van Neerven's more positive discourse on the environmental crisis that emphasises complexities of the more-than-human world and people's limited understandings of it.

In the last part of her book, Bartha-Mitchell expands upon the theme of the more-than-human cosmos and refers to the initial theme of Country. Bartha-Mitchell begins with an examination of Indigenous Sovereignty and custodianship through the more-than-human agency of cosmos, primarily through Behrouz Boochani's 'No Friend but the Mountains' and Melisa Lucashenko's 'Too Much Lip'. Bartha-Mitchell's inclusion of 'No Friend' demonstrates her transcultural and transnational perspective on Australian literature, as this text differs from the others in authorship (not by an Australian citizen), setting (not in Australia), and category (transcends genre). Boochani writes about his experiences in the Australian-run prison camp on Manus, Papua New Guinea, and introduces 'Kyriarchy' to describe the artificial, oppressive system behind the prison. Bartha-Mitchell contrasts Kyriarchy with cosmos, which is "implicitly portrayed [by Boochani] as a given eco-systemic order, and an essential element [...] that gives perspective and distance beyond the Kyriarchy" (159). His engagement with cosmos, Bartha-Mitchell notes, actually characterises it as an external order in which everything has its place and instils a feeling of belonging. In line with this understanding of the cosmos, Bartha-Mitchell foregrounds cosmos as a form of resistance and belonging that is not exclusive to one place, but to several so-called "cosmopolitics" (167).

In a similar fashion, Bartha-Mitchell expands upon scholarship by Nicole Watson and Larissa Behrendt on sovereignty in her close textual reading of 'Too Much Lip'. The focus for her here is on an inherent beauty and goodness in the cosmos, and the agency and "epistemic privilege of marginalised voices" without romanticising oppression (184).² In the novel, the Salter family fights for their custodianship of a river that is sacred to the family. Bartha-Mitchell identifies the protagonists' success in (re)gaining custodianship as lying in the agency of Country and the "magnetic pull of the river and its ability to 'move' protagonists" (173).

This success also implies a concept of sovereignty that goes beyond the legal definition of Native Title and custodianship. "Sovereign cosmopolitics", in actuality, characterize the family's custodianship as a mixture of various manifestations of the workings of the cosmos, political action, personal development, and

2 Bartha-Mitchell builds her understanding of this "epistemic privilege of the marginalised" on W. E. B. DuBois' 'double consciousness,' a term he uses to describe the development of several social identities by individuals experiencing oppression, aiding them to develop a "double vision, [which] enables an understanding of the consequences of policies", (p. 167). See also W. E. B. Du Bois: *The Souls of Black Folk*.

collective healing (184). Bartha-Mitchell concludes with an analysis of Lucashenko's work to reconsider key concepts such as Country, capitalism, nature and belonging, that she explored previously. In so doing, Bartha-Mitchell invites the reader to revisit and rethink the previous chapters with all the facets of Cosmos that she introduced in 'Cosmological Readings'.

A useful addition to the book's opening chapters might be a fuller exploration of Country and Indigenous Cosmologies as theoretical concepts vis-à-vis W.E.H. Stanner's characterisation of the Dreaming as 'everywhen'.³ The Dreaming is what constitutes Country, and embraces time past, present and future, "it was, and is, everywhen".⁴ Bartha-Mitchell uses this characterisation of time as non-linear in her analysis across all chapters, and Stanner's neologism might help make visible the relationality between time and place.

This omission notwithstanding, Bartha-Mitchell's inclusion of Indigenous worldviews is the key contribution of 'Cosmological Readings' and keeps what the book promises the reader: to unsettle – the rather Eurocentric concept of – the Anthropocene. Though her focus is on Australia and the Environmental Humanities, her concept of a 'cosmological reading lens' has broad application in different disciplines. Herein lies both the strength and challenge of this book, since weaving together the different elements of 'Cosmological Readings' might be demanding for readers outside of the academy or the disciplines to which the book corresponds. As a scholar in Indigenous studies and a curious researcher, though acknowledging Literary Studies as this research's primary discipline, one might remark on the many other forms of (Australian) Indigenous storytelling, which have a rich oral and performance tradition.

It raises the question whether elements of oral storytelling, yarning or performances might enable a deeper engagement with Indigenous worldviews, either by way of inclusion in the analysis beyond the text as medium, or as primary sources to strengthen the analysis.⁵ In a similar vein, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of English translations of Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies, which oftentimes fail to adequately capture the actual meaning or invoked feeling of the original word.

Regardless of these minor points, it is easy to appreciate the novelty of Bartha-Mitchell's research, even from a non-literary studies background. Through 'Cosmological Readings', she makes visible humanity's entanglements with nature and foregrounds the distinct and oft-overlooked Indigenous perspectives that literature offers on the material world and the environment. 'Cosmological Readings' presents, successfully, a timely and deeply thought-provoking contribution that is a welcome addition to Australian literary studies. In all, 'Cosmological Readings' is an essential reading for scholars of Environmental Humanities, (Australian) literature, and anyone with an interest in the intersections of decolonization, climate justice, language and power.

3 W.E.H. Stanner: *The Dreaming*, pp. 269-272.

4 *Ibid.*

5 On the importance of performance and storytelling as well as the text as a medium in Anthropology and Indigenous Studies, see for instance Julie Cruikshank: *The Social Life of Stories*.

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Vijaya Chamundeswari

René Dietrich, Kerstin Knopf: *Biopolitics, Geopolitics, Life. Settler States and Indigenous Presence*

Oxford [et al.]: Duke University Press 2023. 296 pp. ISBN 978-1-4780-2434-7. USD 27,95

'Biopolitics, Geopolitics, Life' is an insightful compilation of different articles, each describing the relation between biopolitics and biogeopolitics with various core themes. The book is both resourceful and knowledgeable for scholars researching settler colonialism and Indigenous peoples. It covers a wider area ranging from North America to the Global South, i.e. Australia. The most interesting feature of this book does not lie in its compilation of a wide range of articles but it lies in the way that no two articles or chapters have a common object of discussion.

In the following paragraphs, I will deal with this in detail. Each section of this work helps us understand the two concepts of biopolitics and biogeopolitics. It goes beyond the traditional understandings of linkages between biopolitics and biopower, and biopolitics and biogeopolitics. I want to highlight here that some of the articles begin with sharp and focused statements, which are both inquisitive and intriguing. In the following, I will bring out the interesting areas of research in different articles, including the foreword.

In the 'Foreword', with the help of the film 'Blood Quantum', the author focuses on settler colonialism in Quebec. The film deals with the insatiable settler colonizers, violence against Indigenous people in the form of the doing away with of Aboriginal treaty rights, and the biopolitical and geopolitical entanglement between Indigenous presence and settler colonial occupation. Indigenous relations are grounded in necropolitics, and tribal sovereign immunity is nonetheless central to Indigenous sovereignty. This tribal sovereign immunity is articulated and contested against the colonial powers and their institutions. This film reflects the long history of colonial bio-warfare against Indigenous people. Through this film, we can understand that settler colonialism is not only limited to conventional warfare or subjugation of Indigenous people but also manifests in the politics of life which goes beyond the traditional conventions of power.

This volume emphasizes the unconventional practices by the settlers to manifest their politics of violence by capturing the pivotal political, social, and economic structures. In contestation to this onslaught, questions of how the struggle for decolonization was conceived and carried forward by Indigenous people and what changes it brought to the Indigenous ecosystem form the larger part of this research.

The introductory part by Rene Dietrich questions the normativities of biopolitics and geopolitics of settler colonialism. It goes into lengthy detail on the points

raised by different contributions from this compilation regarding the different kinds of onslaught on the part of the colonizers. Broadly, this section meticulously discusses details like the penetration by colonial power into the biopolitics of Indigenous people, which is thus entangled with geopolitics. Various ideas related to biopolitics, geopolitics, and life like Michel Foucault's idea of biopower and biopolitics (5), Giorgio Agamben's concept of 'bare life' (6), and Mark Rifkin's concept of 'bare habitance' (6) are discussed. Lastly, settler colonial powers are engaged in altering the structures (thought, politics, and traditions) of Indigenous people, while having contributed to the establishment and strengthening of colonial and post-colonial structures. This work manifests the view that post-colonial structures propagated liberal traditions which they have never practised in the context of the Indigenous people.

Mishuana Goeman's 'You tell me your stories and I will tell you mine: Witnessing and Combating Native Women's Extirpation in American Indian Literature' focuses on the deconstruction of colonial statecraft and its failure to reduce resource exploitation and the "epidemic of sexual assault on American Indian Reservations" (45). These cruelties are archived as part of the oral traditions of Indigenous communities, contemporary fiction, and poetry, which stand testimony to the trials of the violence unleashed by different arms of the settlers.

Sandy Grande's 'The Biopolitics of Aging: Indigenous Elders as Elsewhere' highlights the factor of ageing in the real terms of biopolitics, i.e. how ageing can be defined in terms of power and life. This addresses the precarious approach of the settler administration towards the aged, both in the early stages of settler colonialism and the contemporary times where it is linked with the economy. This is manifested in the tactics of the settler state which seem decisively eliminative. The role of neoliberal institutions is highlighted in this article, which actually act as the executors of their policies distinct by the notion of "precarity as a social condition marked by economic insecurity" (66) towards aged Indigenous people.

Robert Nichols' 'The Colonialism of Incarceration' deals with the incarceration of Indigenous people. The tougher attitude towards the Indigenous youth and the correctional homes reflects the reality of the increasing number of prisons and carceral power by the settler states. This reminds me of Jeremy Bentham's concept of the 'Panopticon' where the state's power would be visible but unverifiable. Different forms of surveillance are part of this agenda. These coercive and vindictive policies towards Indigenous people have further isolated them and increased the politics of identity and assimilation.

David Uahikeaikalei'ohu Maile's 'Are Hawaiians Indians?' discusses the nefarious necropolitics of the settlers in encouraging divisive politics among Indigenous communities. This can undermine the rights of self-determination and sovereignty of the Indigenous groups. The author terms it 'colonial governmentality', where inclusive and exclusive policies by settler governments vary among Indigenous communities. The paradox among the settler states and neoliberal institutions' norms and practices is evident in racialization and discrimination of their attitudes towards Indigenous people. This is reminiscent of the Chinese government's divisive and assimilationist policies towards the Muslim communities of Hui and Uyghurs.

Shona N. Jackson's 'Postcolonial Biopolitics and the Hieroglyphs of Democracy' is a strong critique, which highlights the contradiction between policy and practice. The Amerindian Act 2006, which deals with the collective rights and self-determination of the Amerindian villages and communities, diversifies the colonial narratives and discourses regarding the rights of Indigenous communities. The post-colonial apparatus has adopted new tactics to control the lands and people thus moving to different levels of biopolitics. As the author highlights, that is, for example, the role of democratic institutions and traditions in increasing ties with Indigenous people. This cultural reification, rather than cultural obliteration, is quite questionable as this increases cultural assimilation and can serve the divisive politics of the postcolonial biopolitics of the settler states.

Mark Rifkin's 'Fictions of Land and Flesh: Blackness, Indigeneity, Speculation' deals with narratives and discourses of Indigenous people and how they are linked with biopolitics. This article emphasises the role of Black freedom struggles, Indigenous people's self-determination movements, and how their orientations and narratives are both intellectually and politically undermined. The mapping of contemporary life and conditions will have a profound influence on social life. This depends on the construction of the realities and their impact on the society. The narratives and discourses of the post-colonial states are quite contrary where they attribute indigenous communities for independence to Indigenous reactionism and aggression.

Sabine N. Meyer's "'I was Nothing but a Bare Skeleton Walking the Path": Biopolitics, Geopolitics, and Life in Diane Glancy's *Pushing the Bear*' deals with the critical understanding of the book titled 'Pushing the Bear' by Diane Glancy. Here, the author emphatically agrees with Glancy's view that American policy has to be re-examined and retold in the context of existing Indigenous historiography and the rewriting of official narratives. Meyer calls for a revisiting of Euro-centred visions of "bare life and biopolitics" (178). The major project underlying colonial biopolitics is to eliminate the national memory of Indigenous people in order to erase their linkages with their land. The decimation of the collective memories of Indigenous people amounts to a great deal of success for the colonizers.

Michael R. Griffiths' 'Unseen Wonder: Decolonizing Magical Realism in Kim Scott's *Benang* and Witi Ihimaera's *Maata*' focuses on the hierarchical structures of knowledge systems. The concept of 'magic realism' is construed here with the downplaying of Indigenous knowledge systems in contrast to Western empiricism and orientation. This was made part of the centre-periphery distinctions and became a factor in the biopolitical and geopolitical war. In this article, the misconception of the concept of magic realism, i.e. the genre of literature that treats the real world as an undercurrent of magic or fantasy, is highlighted. It defies and deconstructs the narratives of well-established authors from Indigenous communities. The technological domination of the settler states is overpowering the Indigenous knowledge systems. The author points out the interlinkages between colonial modernity and Indigenous modernity.

'Agency and Art: Survivance with Camera and Crayon' by Jacqueline Fear-Segal focuses on the colonial domination over the minds of Indigenous people in the

field of drawing and photography. These colonial tactics are represented as a sense or moment of pride for the Indigenous people who were part of these projects. The intricate idea is how the moment of pride leads to the misconception that Indigenous people are equal to the settlers. The false sense of equality is based on them being part of these monumental projects of colonization.

Kerstin Knopf's 'Land through the Camera: Post/Colonial Space and Indigenous Struggles in Birdwatchers (Terra Vermelha)' can be associated with the post-colonial territorialisation of biopolitics and how it is depicted in various media. It explains the vast uneven changes in the social and natural spaces through which Indigenous people are becoming landless and are being robbed of their nature. The author beautifully engages the reader with the help of the film 'Birdwatchers'.

To conclude, this work is a rich compilation of contemporary debates on the politics of Indigenous life within the biopolitics and necropolitics of settler colonial institutions and powers. It is not limited to an understanding of the concept of 'biopower' but moves beyond this by dealing with points like land, labour, and racialization. The criticality lies in contesting issues like the colonial divisions of humanity, and questioning the colonial practices of racialization of Indigenous relations with their land and kin. Here, it is essential to understand how settler colonizers fostered the establishment of capitalist and liberal practices as part of their institutions.

Primarily, the compilation's argument is that settler colonialism is part of a wider project of interlinked biopolitics and geopolitics to initiate and perpetuate institutional and incremental changes to the occupied land. This serves its own purposes; it is discussed, for example, how the constitutions of these settler states are instrumentalized to complete their Colonization projects.

Even though 'Right to Life' is construed as a fundamental right and a basic human right in these liberal colonial states; why was there state violence and vilification of Indigenous people fighting for their kin and land? The normativities of the definitions of biopower and biopolitics are questioned and challenged by the contributors.

The introductory part helps the reader to understand the central questions addressed in this book, for instance: How do biopolitical and geopolitical techniques help in producing normativities; relatedly, how do colonial powers manipulate these gaps and try to sustain the logics of manifestation of power, discourses and narratives? This work further helps us to understand minute details of how biopower is wielded to extricate a well-established set of geopolitical practices. Briefly, it is the question of the suppression of Indigenous people by Settlers by employing biopolitics. How the settlers employed their biopolitics to suppress the biopolitics of the Indigenous people is also an important question here. In different articles in this work, the respective authors tried to showcase governmental techniques applied by the settlers against Indigenous people. This reminds me of the post-colonized or liberated states' policies towards Indigenous and minority communities. They also became part of the monumental post-colonial liberal structures and are extremely focused on optimizing benefits for themselves.

After critical analysis of René Dietrich and Kerstin Knopf's 'Biopolitics, Geopolitics, Life', it is found that this book is one of the significant works for cultural and literary studies. Both scholars and students of cultural and literary studies can refer to this book as it stands as an exemplary work on settler colonialism.

Oliver Haag

Sebastian Koch: Identitätskrisen nach dem Ende des Britischen Empire. Zur kulturellen Neu-Verortung in Kanada, Australien und Aotearoa Neuseeland

Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2023. 509 pp. ISBN 978-3-161-61480-4, EUR 89,00

“Now, this is something uniquely Australian!”, so die leicht ironischen Worte meiner einstigen Gastgeberin in Adelaide zu Beginn meines Aufenthaltes Anfang der 2000er. Gemeint waren die selbst gestrichenen Vegemite-Brötchen, die sie mir als kulinarische Begleitung zu einer Einführung in die australische Kultur darreichte. Jener für mich geschmacklich äußerst gewöhnungsbedürftige Hefeextrakt erinnerte mich frappierend an Marmite, die britischen und neuseeländischen Geschwister von Vegemite – wie ich entgegnete. “Gee, a wee bit similar, but very, very different!”, so ihre ironische Entgegnung. Diese Anekdote vom scheinbar Trivialen kam mir beim Lesen von Sebastian Kochs publizierter Dissertationsschrift in den Sinn, gefolgt von der Frage: Wie lassen sich Identitäten – nationale und kulturelle –, die einen zumindest ähnlichen Anfangspunkt aufweisen, deren Zusammenhänge jedoch brüchig und teils sehr different scheinen, in ihrer gemeinsamen historischen Entwicklung verstehen? Oder, um nochmals aufs Triviale zu kommen, wieviel von Marmite steckt in Vegemite und vice versa? Wie viel an australischer Identität steckt in einem Produkt, das zum kulturellen Narrativ wurde, das jedoch zumindest auch fragmentiert in neuseeländischen, britischen oder kanadischen Narrativen enthalten ist? Diese Frage ist also bei Weitem keine rein trivial-kulinarische, sondern lässt sich auf vielschichtige Ebenen übertragen: Wie können transnationale Versatzstücke von Kultur und Geschichte einer Nation verstanden, wie können sie in ihrer Genese greifbar und schlüssig analysiert werden? Wie können sie letztlich in ihren Folgen – Herrschaft sowie Ausschlüsse von Zugehörigkeit und Partizipation – dekonstruiert werden?

Kochs Studie stellt dafür ein überzeugendes Beispiel dar. Transnational angelegt, zeichnet sie die Neu-Formierung nationaler Identitäten in Kanada, Australien und Aotearoa-Neuseeland in den 1960er Jahren nach. In drei Hauptkapitel gegliedert, wird zunächst eine profunde theoretische Auseinandersetzung mit den gegenständlichen Konzepten wie Nation, Postkolonialismus und Identität geboten. Der Autor versteht dabei die Identitäten aller drei ehemaligen Siedlerkolonien in ihrer Entstehung als zunächst ‘imperial’ geprägt: britisch und weiß, von Familienwerten zusammengehalten. Die Triade ‘Britishness-Whiteness-family values’ – wobei letzteres etwas untertheoretisiert bleibt – wurde als tragendes gesellschaftliches Element nicht unmittelbar nach Auflösung des

Britischen Weltreichs brüchig, so der Autor, sondern verfestigte sich sogar im Zuge eines überbordenden Zugehörigkeitsgefühls zu einem überhöhten Kern ehemals britischer Herrschaftsgebiete. Zutiefst und 'besser' britisch blieben die Identitätsverortungen in allen drei Staaten – obgleich formal längst unabhängig. Dieses Identitätskonzept, so kann der Autor schlüssig nachzeichnen, erodierte zunehmend in den 1960er Jahren und löste in der Folge eine Identitätskrise aus. Als Ursachen identifiziert der Autor die britische Hinwendung an den Europäischen Wirtschaftsraum, zugleich die empfundene Abkehr von seinen einstigen Siedlergesellschaften, also den Verlust eines globalen und kolonieübergreifenden Britishseins; sowie die weltweiten Entwicklungen von Dekolonisation und Bürgerrechtsbewegungen (unter anderem von Koch erwähnt die Indigenen-Bewegungen, Freedom Rider, die Maori-Renaissance, die Frauen- sowie Lesben- und Schwulenbewegung). Diese brachten zunehmend die rassistischen Konnotationen weißen Britishseins, auf das sich Kolonialismus gegründet hatte, zu Tage. Vormals exklusive Identitätskonzepte erschienen mehr und mehr unhaltbar.

Im zweiten Kapitel diskutiert Koch ausführlich die Identitätskrisen mit dem Konzept des 'cultural cringe', das, zunächst australisch in seinen Wurzeln, dennoch in allen drei Fällen zu einem ähnlichen Phänomen von als inferior empfundenen nationalen Identitäten führte. Dem erodierenden Britishsein hatten weder Australien, Aotearoa-Neuseeland noch Kanada bis dahin etwas genuin Autochthones entgegenzusetzen, das nicht kolonial oder britisch geprägt gewesen wäre. Der Autor stützt sich dabei auf eine breit angelegte und repräsentative Auswahl an Quellen, die nicht nur eine elitäre Debatte beleuchten, sondern auch Diskussionen gewöhnlicher Akteur*innen mit einschließen.

Das dritte Kapitel schließlich eruiert die Neu-Formierungen von Identitätskonstruktionen im Zuge wiederum des 'cultural cringe'-Phänomens in den 1960er Jahren. Dabei fokussiert der Autor besonders auf breit geführte Debatten zu damals neu etablierten nationalen Symbolen, wie die jeweiligen Flaggen und Hymnen, aber auch auf nationale Feiern und internationale Ereignisse wie die Expo 1967 in Montreal. Zentrale These dieses Kapitels ist, dass die Quasi-Ontogenese der jeweiligen Siedlerkolonien historisch neu interpretiert bzw. uminterpretiert wurde. Aus weißer britischer Siedlungsgeschichte wurde allmählich eine *inklusive* Geschichte, an deren Beginn indigene Präsenz gestellt wurde. Multikulturalismus – oder besser gesagt Ideen des vermeintlich Multikulturellen – wurden zu Versatzstücken eines New Nationalism, der besonders mit folkloristischer Vielfalt eine nationale Einheit zu erstreben versuchte. Dass diese 'Integration' von Vielfalt nicht mit tatsächlicher gesellschaftlicher Gleichheit sowie ohne Infragestellung historischer und rezenter Formen von Diskriminierung einherging, erhellt der Autor dankenswerterweise an vielen Stellen. Denn es geht seiner Studie nicht darum, nationale Identitätsmythen fortzuschreiben, sondern zu entzaubern und einer historischen bzw. kulturellen Realität entgegenzustellen.

Nationale Konstrukte, so die sehr behutsam und differenziert argumentierende Studie, waren und sind weder homogen noch linear. Von vielfältigen Akteurinnen und Akteuren getragen, fußte die vermeintlich errungene Einheit

auf sehr antagonistischen, inkohärenten und teils auch rückwärtsgewandten Strategien. Wie Koch argumentiert, sind die Korrosionen von Britishsein an keiner absoluten zeitlichen Ruptur festzumachen, sondern sollten als Zusammenspiel von Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten zugleich verstanden werden. Zweifel, ein Hin, ein Zurück – in einem Wort, Widersprüche – zeichneten die Debatten nationaler Identitätsfindung aus. Auch waren trotz aller transnationaler Ähnlichkeit in Genese und Formierung die neuen Identitätsformierungen nicht homogen, sondern, wie der Autor herausarbeitet, flexibel auf die jeweiligen kulturellen Spezifika und eigenen Geschichten der drei Länder ausgerichtet. So funktionierte die Etablierung eines auf Multikulturalismus ausgerichteten neuen Nationalismus in Kanada und Aotearoa-Neuseeland weitaus einfacher, da in beiden vorbezeichneten Kontexten leichter als in Australien auf bereits existierende Konzepte des Biculturalismus rekurriert werden konnte (Franko-Kanada und im Falle Aotearoa-Neuseelands weitergehende Integration inklusive Naturalisierung der indigenen Bevölkerung im Zuge des Waitangi-Vertrags von 1840). Die symbolische Nutzung indigenen Kulturguts und Folklore gelang in Australien mithin disruptiver, stieß teils auf Ablehnung, blieb allerdings auch in Kanada und Aotearoa-Neuseeland nicht von heftiger Kritik verschont.

Die Neu-Formierung nationaler Identitäten als Folge einer Identitätskrise geschah, wie der Autor schlüssig darlegt, zum einen auf großer Ebene – von Geschichtsschreibung, über Politik im engeren Sinn bis hin zur breiten Masse –, zum anderen wurde sie von diversen Bürgerrechtsbewegungen beeinflusst, in deren Zuge 'alte', als patriarchal, rassistisch und allgemein exklusiv erscheinende Identitäten als fragwürdig, wenn nicht destabilisierend perzipiert wurden. Ein 'neues' Konzept musste also her, soweit überzeugend; allerdings fokussiert die Studie etwas einseitig auf historiographische Debatten, was bis hin zum etwas überspitzten Argument führt, dass Geschichtsschreibung in allen drei Fällen "ausschließlich in den Dienst der Identitätssuche bzw. Identitätsdefinition gestellt" (214) wurde. Auch wenn im Kontext zuvor implizit leicht abmildernd von nationalen Geschichten die Rede ist, wäre eine eingehendere Diskussion der Rolle von 'subalternen' Geschichten erkenntnisreich gewesen: War tatsächlich die gesamte Historiographie in Dienst der jeweils nationalen Aufgaben gestellt worden? Gab es nicht auch Gegenentwürfe, und wie verhielt es sich mit indigener, feministischer oder queerer Geschichte? Diese Lücke korrespondiert mit der zwar logisch schlüssigen Annahme, diverse Bürgerrechtsbewegungen hätten sowohl auf den 'cultural cringe' als auch die Neu-Formierung von Identitäten eingewirkt – genannt sind unter anderem die Frauenrechts- sowie die Lesben- und Schwulenbewegung (69). Allerdings verharret die benannte Vielfalt in bloß beiläufiger Erwähnung und wurde keiner empirischen Untersuchung unterzogen: Waren anderweitig neue Konzepte der Vielfalt – die nicht nur auf Migration und Indigenität zurückgriffen – auch relevante Größen in den neuen Identitätsformationen? Gerade die weltweit sehr frühe Etablierung des Frauenwahlrechtes in Aotearoa-Neuseeland und in Australien wurde zur Stabilisierung damaliger Herrschaft gebraucht und musste meines Erachtens zwangsläufig an der

Formation nationaler Identitäten beteiligt gewesen sein.¹ Ebenso wäre eine stärkere Fokussierung nicht nur auf historiografische Debatten, sondern auch auf eingehendere Analysen nationaler Identitätsentwürfe in bildender Kunst und schöngestiger Literatur informativ gewesen. Zudem fallen öfters Redundanzen und somit ein gestörter Lesefluss bei sonst gut fließendem Sprachgebrauch auf, die durch genauere redaktionelle Arbeit hätten vermieden werden können. Zuhäuf werden die zentralen Thesen wiederholt, was zwar im Falle des Querlesens bequem zu sein scheint, aber die Studie etwas aufgebläht wirken lässt. Die Passagen zum Brexit (4-11) – insbesondere die bloßen Literaturverweise – wären statt als Einleitung besser als Ausblick geeignet gewesen und hätten sich weitaus konziser formulieren lassen. Auch finden sich einige wenige sprachliche Inkongruenzen: Zumeist wird durchgängig – und aufgrund des kolonialen Kontexts gut begründet – von ‘Aboriginals’ und ‘Aotearoa Neuseeland’ gesprochen, dann wiederum kommen (nicht in Quellen) die Termini ‘Aborigines’ (234) und alleinig ‘Neuseeland’ (3) vor. Generell trüben auch die allzu langen Zitate und Texte in den Fußnoten das Lesevergnügen. Ein sorgfältigeres Lektorat hätte diese störenden, obschon sicherlich nebensächlichen Kleinigkeiten beseitigen können. Diese negativen Kritikpunkte tun der hohen Qualität der hier vorliegenden Arbeit allerdings mitnichten einen Abbruch.

In der Gesamtschau ist Kochs Analyse ein hervorragendes Beispiel für transnationale Geschichte – nicht nur hinsichtlich der drei Siedlerkolonien Australien, Kanada und Aotearoa-Neuseeland, sondern auch generell bereichernd für die Historiografie nationaler Identitätsentwicklungen, die durch einen transnationalen Blickwinkel erst in ihrer komplexen Dimension verstanden werden können. Mehr transnationale Studien zu den einzelnen nationalen Geschichten können davon inspiriert werden, denn transnationale Methoden vermögen einen weitaus größeren Erkenntnisgewinn mit sich zu bringen als bloße Nationalgeschichten. Zum anderen beweist der Autor auf beeindruckende Weise, wie sehr Nationalismus ein flexibles und leicht adaptierbares Narrativ ist: Nur weil vermeintlich progressive Ideen von Vielfalt in neue nationale Mythen eingeschrieben werden, verheißt dies nicht eine Schwächung oder Überwindung des Nationalen. Nationalismus und Nationen sind Konzepte, die uns nicht verlassen haben; und alle, die sich in einem post-nationalen respektive post-nationalistischen Zeitalter glauben, werden durch diese Studie wohl zum weiteren Nachdenken veranlasst. Sebastian Koch ist mit ‘Identitätskrisen nach dem Ende des Britischen Empire’ eine bemerkenswerte Arbeit gelungen.

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Patricia Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake, Ann McGrath, Marian Quartly: *Creating a Nation*. Ringwood: McPhee Gribble 1994.

1 Vgl. Patricia Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake, Ann McGrath, Marian Quartly: *Creating a Nation*.

Holly Randell-Moon

Daniel Rothenburg: Irrigation, Salinity, and Rural Communities in Australia's Murray-Darling Basin, 1945-2020

Cham: Palgrave Macmillan 2023. 303 pp. ISBN:978-3-031-18450-5. EUR 128,39.

Daniel Rothenburg's 'Irrigation, Salinity, and Rural Communities in Australia's Murray-Darling Basin, 1945-2020' (2023) provides a localised environmental history of community and pastoralist responses to salinity crises and their settler colonial legacies in the twentieth century. Focusing predominantly on two regional towns (Kerang and Shepparton) and the action groups formed to respond to salinity, Rothenburg's study illustrates the broader relationships between governments, community, and pastoralist groups in shaping environmental policy and conservation discourse in Australia. The book also illustrates how the construction of rivers and waterways connected to the Murray-Darling Basin are informed by policy and cultural imaginaries regarding the importance of white and non-Indigenous inland settlement. The latter's viability is challenged by the environmental changes brought about by agro-ecologies. As a consequence, finite water supplies have fostered a neoliberal approach to water management that promotes sustainable development as both possible and necessary.

Irrigation is a central project of settler colonial infrastructure and the infrastructuring processes of irrigation have had a significant impact on the environment of Australia. As Rothenburg outlines, irrigation is "a promise to realize the settler dream of a closely populated Australia and a modern venture to subjugate the allegedly useless Australian nature and utilize it" (8). The attempt to reshape and extract value from a supposedly under exploited land has resulted in the "salinization of soil and water" (8), which is a global problem resulting in agricultural productivity decline "in about one-third of the globally irrigated area" (9). Rothenburg uses the concept of slow violence (via Rob Nixon) to understand agriculture and irrigation's temporally delayed impacts, where "causes and effects are not always clearly linked across time and space" (9). Studies of settler colonisation and settler colonial infrastructuring also provide Indigenous centred conceptualisations of this phenomenon.¹ The author notes that First Nations are not responsible for these environmental imposts (14) and this justifies "why there are few mentions of Indigenous people in this book" (14). Salinization "is a story of European Australians, played out among them, without any role by Aboriginal people" (14).

1 See Aileen Moreton-Robinson: *The White Possessive*; Irene Watson: *Aboriginal Relationships to the Natural World*; Anne Spice: *Fighting Invasive Infrastructures*; Andrew Curley: *Infrastructures as Colonial Beachheads*.

In taking this approach, the author fails to recognise or make explicit how settler colonial infrastructuring facilitates an ongoing relationship between non-Indigenous peoples and Indigenous dispossession. The latter is an active agent shaping the policy, cultural, and community imaginaries examined by the book and the temporal effects of dispossession have significant impacts on contemporary First Nations sovereignty, nation building, and custodianship of Country.

Navajo scholar Andrew Curley develops the concept of colonial beachheads to explain how colonial infrastructure projects, and the nations who inherit them, enact “temporal encroachments on Indigenous lands and livelihoods that augment material and political difference over time and exacerbate inequalities”.² Colonial administrators and later governments who inherit dispossessed land “can more easily accomplish what” they want “because of the political advantage made possible through” decades of expropriation and concessions made by First Nations.³ Colonial and national infrastructure projects such as irrigation facilitate ongoing relationships to dispossession that circumscribe First Nations activities and initiatives during the time period discussed in Rothenburg’s book. These practices are a crucial element of the localised and global environmental histories of agriculture and irrigation.

The book proceeds in a general chronological order, with chapters overlapping in places to illustrate the different policy, temporal, community, and environmental assemblages produced by salinisation. “Salinization is ... understood as a phenomenon caused by reciprocal interaction between humans and the natural environment” (18). The value of non-Indigenous agriculture, the primary industries, and inland settlement has been the primary mediator of the different responses to salinisation. Rothenburg notes that “46 per cent of the gross value of Australia’s irrigated products came from the MDB [Murray-Darling Basin]” and agriculture “consumes about 50-65 per cent of all water in Australia” (4). Despite this, agriculture’s place in the Australian economy “has steadily declined” (4) and attempts to arrest this decline underpin the so-called “water wars” (7) – contestations over how to best secure water – examined in the book.

The book begins with the geography and geology of the MDB. “In the twentieth century, the MDB became Australia’s most important agricultural region and its heartland of irrigated agriculture” (21). As a result, its flows have been engineered to provide water in the summer for irrigation, other rivers have been directed into it, and wetlands drained for agriculture (21). The canalisation of rivers is similar to the terrestrial cadastral model in the engineering of a particular spatial order onto the environment for human needs. “State power and resources have played a crucial role in the transformation of the environment, the patterns of settlement, and the living conditions of the people who inhabit the region” (28).

Rothenburg references James C. Scott’s notion of ‘seeing like a state’ (1998) to emphasise how a mode of seeing the environment persists even when material

2 Andrew Curley: *Infrastructures as Colonial Beachheads*, p. 387.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 388.

obstacles undermine the realisation of this seeing.⁴ Despite this engineering, as Rothenburg points out, the agency of the river systems are apparent in salinisation (22), which thwarts modernist state planning.

The third chapter titled 'Antecedents' examines the physiographical history of the area prior to sustained European irrigation. The 'problem' of irrigation emerged out of a scientific rationality regarding how to best redistribute existing water towards agriculturally productive ends. Rothenburg notes that Aboriginal landscape engineering worked with a similar set of logics, though directed towards more sustainable and continuous ends (31). The land settled by agriculturalists was explored by Thomas Mitchell and described as 'Australia Felix' (34), due to the apparently favourable conditions for productivity. "Mitchell's prophecy of a settled agricultural landscape, thanks to its suitability for channels, its permanent watercourses, and plentiful rainfall, was widely promoted in Australia and Britain" (35). Of course this landscape had been carefully managed for thousands of years by Wamba Wemba and Yorta Yorta Nations, among others. In just two decades, the Indigenous population fell by 80 per cent (36) and "settlers increased the country's fragility and their vulnerability to drought conditions" (39). White Australia Policy architect Alfred Deakin was a strong proponent of the yeoman ideal and helped pass the Victorian Irrigation Act 1886 (40); though early irrigators included Chinese market gardeners (39). Ownership of water became invested in the state and water rates were introduced after 1886 (43). Human induced salinity "was recorded in Victoria as early as 1853" (46).

The remaining chapters examine the assemblage of non-Indigenous actors responding to the salinisation crisis. Chapter Four examines post-WWII salinisation mitigation efforts in the context of the dialectic of environmental security. "River regulation was regarded as a benevolent force and environmental deterioration as a necessary loss in the pursuit of the common good. The special aura of irrigation influenced national goal-setting and defense interests" (52). These schemes are at war or battle (56) with the environment and overcoming the latter "was the way into a utopian future" (53). Realising these future gains involved a conceptual transformation of the Murray from a 'natural' entity to an asset connected to environmental security (53). Environmental security was also co-extensive with racial security as fears of an 'Asian invasion' fuelled the need for inland settlement as a form of defence (54). Similarly to the ways the White Australia Policy responded to a broader set of global socio-economic paradigms, irrigation plans in Australia also reflected global practices of damming; about two-thirds of water were managed through dams globally by the 1990s (58). These water security practices are also bound up in the continuing dispossession of First Nations and their economic circumscription or colonial beachheads as identified by Curley. For instance, the Roosevelt administration's Tennessee Valley Authority (151), and other water management schemes, were directly implicated in the legislative undermining of First Nations sovereignties.

4 For a similar notion of 'seeing like a settler' in relation to environment, heritage planning, and colonial imaginaries, see also Holly Randell-Moon: *Seeing Like a Settler. Place-making, Settler Heritage, and Tourism in Dubbo, Australia.*

While First Nations sovereign aspirations were being constrained by this infrastructural approach to water security, farmers received subsidies from governments throughout much of the twentieth century. Nearing the 1980s, protectionist policies were abandoned or wound down (87). From this period, water management shifted to “environmental insecurity” (98) and the introduction of neoliberal approaches to water markets to incentivise efficiency and sustainability. Against the imposts of economic rationalisation, local organisations in the Kerang region argued for irrigation as an ‘asset’ with significant social structures for rural communities (101). This reinforced the social as well as economic and environmental crises attributed to salinisation (102). Depopulation and declining farms or ‘absentee-owned farms’ meant the town’s socio-economic capacities were reduced (103). Rural decline is also a story of white flight that obfuscates First Nations populations in rural and regional areas. The crises and inequalities experienced in Kerang were not the same for Shepparton (106), with the former appearing to have been consigned to the status of a sacrifice zone in order to ensure sustainability for the wider agriculture sector. The book connects here with recent scholarship on ‘left behind places.’⁵ The upstream/downstream politics of the Murray, prompted by the governing rationalisations of water management (109), continue to be seen more broadly in regional and rural grievances regarding spatial injustice.

How these injustices were worked through at a community level involved community agricultural science projects as well as conservation efforts. A key insight from the book is that “the Salinity Action Groups show their lasting significance as key actors in the previously untold pre-history of Landcare in Australia” (263) and broader environmentalism in Australia. These groups sometimes came into conflict with non-human stakeholders in the Murray and their relative importance vis-à-vis human activity where for instance, some communities were aggrieved that birds and trees were supposedly being prioritised over humans (120). The persistence of settling inland, despite significant environment obstacles, is linked to the settler ideals and the notion of ‘countrymindedness’ (118). The heavy settlement on the coasts of Australia means that the inland is rendered peripheral and the periphery central.⁶ Despite differing stages of technical and infrastructural responses to salinisation, in the end, the consensus was that living with salinity was the reality (194), which may never be alterable by humans. The current approach, influenced in part by the action groups from the affected communities (149), is whole-of-catchment and attempts to manage the Murray as an inter-locking set of social, political, environmental, and economic dynamics – that does include a place for First Nations stakeholders.

While the slow violence of salinisation creates its own temporal crises, the flip-side, as Rothenburg suggests, is that the longevity of the problem creates apathy (138). “Development of the region for European agriculture resulted in the removal of 95 per cent of native forests and woodlands” (245) but this forms a normative backdrop to irrigation activities over a century. For Rothenburg,

5 See Andrés Rodríguez-Pose: *The Revenge of the Places That Don't Matter (and What to do About It)*.

6 See Holly Randell-Moon: *Aero-Regionalism*.

ignorance of this slow violence and lack of settler responsibility is hard to sustain given the evidence that proponents knew then and now what the ecological impacts of irrigation was (251). Ultimately, non-Indigenous governance and policy of irrigation has been largely “exculpatory toward the pioneers” (252). This is because, “notwithstanding the rise of ecological consciousness, the promise of development was never fundamentally put into question” (264) by community groups and other stakeholders. These logics can be seen in initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are attempts to mitigate the slow violences of geographically dispersed and localised over-development of the kind brilliantly analysed in this book.

Daniel Rothenburg’s ‘Irrigation, Salinity, and Rural Communities in Australia’s Murray-Darling Basin, 1945-2020’ This is an excellent book that will be of interest to environmental historians, local climate change studies, and for scholars interested in the interdependence between neoliberalism and sustainability.

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Jan Rupp

**Katrin Althans, David Kern, Beate Neumeier (eds.):
Migrant Australia. From Botany Bay to Manus Island**

Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier 2022. 202 pp. ISBN 978-3-86821-935-7, EUR 32,50

The title of the volume under review is both straightforward and provocative: “Migrant Australia” as a way of referencing the degree to which the continent has been shaped through migrancy and mobility is certainly plausible at a time when migration has reached unprecedented levels across the twenty-first-century world. However, none of the manifold forms of migration today – from professional to precarious migration, from migrant workers to asylum seekers and refugees – would quite seem to square with an act colonial settlement, as invoked in the volume’s subtitle: “From Botany Bay to Manus Island”. Then again, while this subtitle returns to the beginning of settler colonialism in Australia, it productively charts some uncanny continuities from colonial to present-day immigration regimes. As the contributions assembled demonstrate, Australia has frequently served, throughout this time frame, as a laboratory of dehumanizing practices, most recently epitomised by the system of offshore processing and indefinite detention of undocumented migrants and refugees on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea. As the reader learns, it has also served as a role model of sorts for restrictive immigration regimes elsewhere, which makes this collection of selected and expanded papers from the biennial conference “Australian Perspectives on Migration” of the German Association of Australian Studies in 2018 a highly instructive cross-disciplinary study for scholars of Australia and beyond.

As the editors Katrin Althans, David Kern, and Beate Neumeier note in their introduction, another possible provocation consists in the fact that locating the beginning of migrant Australia at Botany Bay runs the risk of reiterating colonial historiography and “neglects earlier migratory processes involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People” (1). However, these processes “lack[] the political dimensions of migration in modern history”, they argue, so that focussing on “post-1788 migration in Australia” may ultimately also reflect back on earlier periods and serve as a way to “acknowledge the catastrophic disruption colonization brought to Indigenous Australia” (all *ibid.*).

While this temporal demarcation of migrant Australia seems fair (if debatable), the volume’s first section, entitled ‘Discourses of the Theoretical’, suggests some interesting extensions at either end of the continuum from Botany Bay to Manus Island. In the two contributions of this section, Bill Ashcroft and Sneja Gunew build on their influential and highly pertinent work on contemporary Australian writing by offering a range of concepts to grapple with the effects of migration on national imaginaries. In his paper ‘On Postnational Belonging’

Ashcroft meditates on a range of convergent processes which interrogate ideas of the nation both from without and within. Insights into the significance of transnational and transcultural ties are complemented by a transhistorical retrieval of Indigenous pasts. The result is a “postnationalist discourse” that deconstructs the “fixity” and “myth of nation in Australian cultural history” (11). Fiction is a privileged medium of this discourse, as Ashcroft demonstrates in a reading of Peter Carey’s *A Long Way from Home* (2017). The novel, set in the 1950s, features a road trip around Australia, during which one of the central characters unexpectedly rediscovers his Aboriginal family history. By symbolically interlacing routes of mid-twentieth century mobility with a mesh of ancestral songlines Carey’s novel retraces a very different mythical map from modern Australia.

While Ashcroft thus gestures towards important links with past processes of migration well before Botany Bay, Gunew highlights the pending task of making connections for migrant Australia in and beyond the present moment of Manus Island. Picking up on the argument of her monograph *Post-Multicultural Writers as Neo-Cosmopolitan Mediators* (2017), her contribution ‘Neo-Cosmopolitan Mediators: Australian Im/Em/Migrant Writers Interrogate Museums of Identity’ shines a spotlight on bodies of non-Anglo-Celtic writing that are yet waiting to be incorporated into national imaginaries. One of her cases in point is the Kurdish-Iranian writer Behrouz Boochani’s novel *No Friend but the Mountains* (2018), which is based on his experiences as detainee on Manus Island. Boochani’s account offers a shocking analysis of what he and his translator Omid Tofighian describe as “Australia’s border-industrial complex” and “systematic torture inflicted in Manus Prison”.¹ Symptomatically, its author – the recipient of several Australian literary prizes and hailed as one of the most important Australian writers today² – was never able to set foot in Australia and contest museums of identity from within, before ultimately being granted refugee status in New Zealand in 2019.

The volume’s second section, entitled ‘Discourses of the Political and State Actors’, follows Ashcroft’s and Gunew’s meditations on the role of literature in shaping imaginaries with three papers on real-life policies, forms of resistance, and compounding ideologies of migrant Australia. Derya Ozkul and Sitarah Mohammadi provide an informative history of Australia as “one of the classical immigration nations” (39), which started with the “invasion” of European colonisers and a “variety of genocidal practices” (40), for a large part then benefited from the contribution of successive generations of foreigners and from the 1990s onwards has taken a turn towards more restrictive or even punitive policies. Jamal Barnes shifts emphasis on the people at the receiving end of this penalising approach, analysing acts of protest which foreground vulnerability – such as lip-sewing and hunger striking – as a “means by which asylum seekers and refugees [...] reaffirm their dignity and challenge their arbitrary detention” (62). As Matthew Zagor shows, the arbitrary regime of migrant Australia

1 Omid Tofighian: *No Friend but the Mountains*, p. 369 (both quotations are the translator’s reflections).

2 See the collection of critical responses and list of awards quoted on the jacket of Behrouz Boochani: *No Friend but the Mountains*, n.p.

is exacerbated by a “theological world-view” (67) that has prioritized Christians from the Middle East over other refugees in recent decades, a policy that resembles the infamous so-called ‘Muslim ban’ in Trump America as well as similar discriminatory biases on the grounds of religion and ethnicity in many other global North countries.

The papers in the volume’s third section, ‘Discourses of the Historical’, all present case studies around the White Australia Policy, a prototypical instance of racism and xenophobia in migrant Australia from the turn of the twentieth century onwards. Louise Thatcher revisits various stories involving the ship *Charon*, which ominously illustrate the “violent immigration policing” (89) through off-shore processing, already then, or even through the fumigation of Chinese stowaways on board the ship. In her paper, Stefanie Affeldt shows how the pervasive climate of White Australia could also at times be undercut, “through effective agency by those whose lives were otherwise framed by an overtly racist attitude” (113). She explores the migration history of a Japanese medical doctor, who was successfully lobbied for by a local expatriate Japanese community in Broome, north-western Australia. On a slightly related, maybe even redemptive note, Tihana Klepač rereads texts by the Irish-born writer Mary Helena Fortune, who emigrated to Australia in the 1850s. Through her journalism and memoirs, Fortune established herself as a writer “half a century before male literary Bohemia got professionalised” (117) and painted progressive picture of race relations that countered nationalist narratives.

The contributions in the last section, entitled ‘Discourses of the Cultural and Storyfication’, further elaborate on the role of writing, stories and images as an important counter-archive and antidote, which is a central motif of the present volume overall. In her paper, Victoria Herche explores recent cinematic representations of the often traumatic journey of Vietnamese boat people, in which the central image of the boat is variously rendered or sometimes even purposefully absent. The effect are different instances of “a mediated form that produces an ethical response with the topic of migration at large” (133). David Kern deals with the role of young adult fiction in working towards more informed and politically engaged responses. Reading young adult novels as “literary activist interventions” (147), he shows how the genre offers inclusive models of self-identification against a backdrop of anti-Muslim sentiment. Finally, Lina Pranaitytė analyses a trend towards more inclusive food cultures, such as in the TV show ‘Kriol Kitchen’, discussing the question whether this phenomenon constitutes “a proper acknowledgment of Indigenous communities” or “a commercialization and appropriation of native Australian foods” (163).

The volume’s concluding piece is an interview by Celine Yep with Human Rights Watch Australia Director Elaine Pearson, directing attention to forms of real-life activism and to current developments of migrant Australia on the ground. Given the exacerbating erosion of human rights and growing precarity in refugee systems world-wide, the interview provides some timely insights into the work of non-governmental organizations and clearly merits inclusion as well as further scrutiny in scholarly debates.

Overall, the present volume brings together a rich array of interventions while suggesting many perspectives for further scholarship to fill in additional chapters of migrant Australia within and beyond the time frame explored. The volume's individual sections are not entirely clear-cut (convincingly though mainly engaging with 'theory' or "discourses of the theoretical" in connection with literary and cultural analyses in the first section, for example); however, they profitably show how literary and cultural studies, area studies, migration studies, and activist debates can come together and unfold new interdisciplinary rigour as well as practical relevance. Such inter- and multidisciplinary endeavours are much needed to assess the mounting challenge of global migration, to contain or counter the restrictive tendencies of contemporary immigration regimes, and to reimagine and enact more humane, habitable, and just responses to migrants and refugees in Australia and beyond.

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The Editors

Managing Editors

Stefanie Affeldt is an independent researcher who investigates the history of colonialism, racism, and whiteness in Australia. She holds a B. A. in Sociology from Macquarie University, an M. A. in Cultural and Social History from the University of Essex, and a Dr. rer. pol. from the Universität Hamburg. Stefanie's research focuses on analyzing the history of racism and whiteness in Australia. Her publications include 'Consuming Whiteness. Australian Racism and the 'White Sugar' Campaign' (Lit 2014), 'Buy White - Stay Fair' (Oxford Handbook of Political Consumerism 2019), 'Conflicts in Racism' (Race & Class 2019), 'Racism Down Under' (ASJ|ZfA 2019/20), 'Kein Mensch setzt meinem Sammeleifer Schranken' (Tor zur kolonialen Welt 2021), 'A Peculiar Odor is Perceptible' (ASJ|ZfA 2023), and 'Zenit des Weißseins (WerkstattGeschichte, 2024). Stefanie's DFG-funded post-doctoral project 'Exception or Exemption?' (2018-2022, University of Heidelberg) analyzed multiculturalism and racist conflict in the Broome pearling industry. After this, she was a fellow at the Trierer Kolleg für Mittelalter und Neuzeit, where she researched the German contribution to colonization in Australia, in particular by Amalie Dietrich - the project is ongoing.

Stefanie is also a member of the executive board of the Gesellschaft für Australienstudien | German Association for Australian Studies (GASt) and the academic advisory board of the Specialised Information Service Anglo-American Culture (FID AAC).

She serves as the *Lead Managing Editor* of the 'Australian Studies Journal | Zeitschrift für Australienstudien'.
ORCID: 0000-0002-6346-0229

Christina Ringel completed her Ph.D. at the University of Cologne with a thesis on possession in the endangered Aboriginal language Miriwoong. She has held a post-doctoral position at the University of Cologne, a position as Subject Librarian at the Technical University of Dortmund, and is currently pursuing a post-doctoral project at the Technical University of Dortmund. Christina's recent conference papers and publications are concerned with the identification of rhetorical and linguistic features of certain genres using corpus linguistics, the research literacy of language teachers, app creation for endangered languages, definiteness and possession in Miriwoong, evidentiality in Australian languages, and the role of linguistic human rights, self-determination and country for language vitality.

Christina is a research affiliate at Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language and a member of Australian Linguistic Society, the Foundation for Endangered Languages, the Society for Endangered Languages, the German Association for Australian Studies, and the Association for Research Infrastructure in the Humanities and Cultural Studies. She serves as Affiliate Team Member at the Centre for Australian Studies, and on the Advisory Board of the Specialised Information Service Anglo-American Culture (FID AAC).

In the editorial team of the 'Australian Studies Journal | Zeitschrift für Australienstudien', Christina acts as *Reviews Editor*.
ORCID: 0000-0002-7895-3456

General Editors

Dany Adone is Professor and Chair of Applied English Linguistics at the University of Cologne and Co-Director of the Centre for Australian Studies. In Australia, she is also an Adjunct Professor at the College of Indigenous Futures, Arts & Society at CDU, a Visiting Professor at AIATSIS, a Visiting Scholar at the Language and Culture Centre in Kununurra, and Associate Professor at the University of Sydney. She has lived in Arnhem Land/NT, Australia for many years. Her current research projects focus on Yolngu Ethnoecology and Indigenous Sign Languages of Australia. Recent publications include Adone, James and Gosebrink: 'Indigenous Australia in the Anthropocene', a Special Issue of the *Australian Studies Journal | Zeitschrift für Australienstudien* (2024); Bartosch, Adone et al.: 'Zukunftsgestaltungskompetenz im Angesicht der Katastrophe: Überlegungen zu einer Ökologie interdisziplinärer, interkultureller und intergenerationaler literacies' in: Sippl, Brandhofer & Rauscher (eds.): *Futures Literacy. Zukunft lernen und lehren* (2023); James, Adone and Maypilama: 'Decolonizing Research Methodologies: Insights from Research on Indigenous Sign Languages of Australia' in: *Sign Language Studies* (2020); and Adone and Brück (eds.): 'Fire, Water and Land in Indigenous Australia' (Centre for Australian Studies, Cologne, 2019). ORCID: [0000-0001-9707-5444](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9707-5444).

Eva Bischoff is Assistant Professor at the University of Trier. Her second thesis reconstructs the ambiguous role Quakers played in the process of settler colonialism in 19th-century Australia: 'Benevolent Colonizers in Nineteenth-Century Australia. Quaker Lives and Ideals' (Palgrave MacMillan 2020). She has taught at the Universities of Cologne, Bonn, and Münster in North American History and Postcolonial Studies and worked as a Lecturer at the Department of North American History of the John-F.-Kennedy Institute and as a Postdoc Researcher at the DFG Research Center on 'Governance in Areas of Limited Statehood'. At the University of Trier she teaches classes on Global History, British as well as German Imperial History and Gender History.

Carsten Wergin is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies, Ruprecht-Karls-University Heidelberg. He is co-chairperson of the **GASt** and founding member of the Environmental Anthropology working group of the German Association for Social and Cultural Anthropology (DGSKA). His research is located at the intersections of heritage, culture and ecology and has resulted in diverse journal articles and books that include 'Materialities of Tourism' (*Tourist Studies* 2014, co-edited with Stephen Muecke) and 'The Call of the Trumpet Shell' (HeiBOOKS 2018, with Corinna Erckenbrecht), a monograph on German anatomist and explorer Hermann Klaatsch and his work in the Kimberley region of Northwest Australia.

The Contributors

Liza Brachtendorf is a PhD candidate and works as a Research Officer at the Australian National University's Centre for Indigenous Policy Research. Her research focuses on the transnational and intellectual history of First Nations' activism, Indigenous development, political resistance, and education. Liza works across a range of research projects, including the Learning on Country Program. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Politics and Economics of East Asia from Ruhr-University Bochum and a Master's degree in Asian and Pacific Studies from the Australian National University, for which she won the University medal.

Joevan de Mattos Caitano is an accomplished organist, pianist, and choir conductor. From 2022 to 2024, he served as a Kirchenmusiker in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony and Bavaria. Based in Germany since October 2013, Caitano has built a career as an independent musicologist. He was awarded a DAAD scholarship between 2014 and 2018 to pursue his doctorate at the Hochschule für Musik Carl Maria von Weber in Dresden, under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Jörn Peter Hiekel. His research has been published in esteemed journals such as *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, *Zeitschrift für die Musikforschung*, *Journal for Australian Studies*, *Journal Sounds of Music*, *ICTUS Journal Music*, *Journal Music Academy*, *MSGSÜ Sosyal Bilimler*, *NOVA Contemporary Music Journal*, etc. Since 2014, Caitano has participated in international conferences and symposia, presenting on the Darmstädter Ferienkurse from intercultural and intercontinental perspectives with the assistance of Internationales Musikinstitut Darmstadt.

Vijaya Chamundeswari is an early career researcher. Her research is focused on ethnicity, nationalism, nation states. Her newfound interests are environmental politics and impact of climate change on the Indigenous people. Vijaya's doctoral thesis investigated the Uyghur community of Xinjiang, China. Her area of interest broadly includes emerging global issues which are undermining the post-colonial global order.

Oliver Haag, MA (U of Vienna), PhD (U of Edinburgh), is Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Transcultural Studies, Vienna, and currently Visiting Professorial Fellow at the University of Madras. His research interests are in the areas of the European reception of Indigenous New Zealand and Australian literatures, the history of German interest in Indigeneity and critical race and whiteness theory. Oliver has authored numerous articles in journals, such as 'Continuum', 'National Identities' and 'Antipodes'. He is co-editor of 'The Persistence of Race from the Wilhelmine Empire to National Socialism' (Berghahn 2017) and of 'Ngapartji Ngapartji' (Australian National University Press 2014).

Holly Randell-Moon is a non-Indigenous researcher who uses critical race and whiteness studies theories to situate her Anglo-Celtic family and settler ancestors within the social and built landscapes of settler colonisation. Her publications on biopower,

cultural geography, and digital infrastructure have appeared in Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture, Media International Australia, and Policy & Internet. Along with Ryan Tippet, she is the editor of *Security, Race, Biopower: Essays on Technology and Corporeality* (2016). She edits *Somatechnics: Journal of Bodies – Technologies – Power*. ORCID: [0000-0002-9093-3837](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9093-3837)

Daniel Rothenburg is a Historian. He studied History and Philosophy at the Universities of Mannheim and Tübingen (Germany) and received his PhD from Tübingen University in 2020. He is now Assistant Professor at University of Konstanz (Germany). His first book, *'Irrigation, Salinity, and Rural Communities in Australia's Murray-Darling Basin, 1945-2020'*, was published in 2023 (Palgrave Macmillan). His research is focused on the history of science, technology, and the environment, the history of Infrastructures and Australian history. More recently, he has moved into research on the co-operative movement in Europe. He retains an interest in the relationship of ideas, society, and the environment.

Jan Rupp is currently coordinator of the Research Centre for the Study of Culture (RCSC), Giessen, having served as an interim professor at the universities of Frankfurt, Giessen, Heidelberg and Wuppertal. He has published widely on diasporic British as well as postcolonial Anglophone writing and theory, including on didactic perspectives of the literature classroom. Among his current work is a project on figurations of world writing and environmental memory in literatures of the Global South.

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