



## EDITORIAL

This newsletter is a bilingual platform to inform members of the *Association for Australian Studies* about academic and professional activities in their fields of study and research. The newsletter will accept relevant information on conferences, publications, lectures, scholarships, awards, research projects, institutions, internet tutorials, and web links to Australian resources. The editor welcomes contributions which will help build a vital network in the field of Australian Studies, including essays, news, critiques, e-lectures and constructive commentary on specific subjects of research. We encourage a liberal and creative approach to the topic. The editor urges every reader to help launch this professional news forum to reflect the spirit of Australian Studies in timely information, memorable dialogue, and innovative ideas. We need new ideas and colourful frames of presentation.

The newsletter presents an extraordinary survey of recent Australian Studies and public relations work. The Association has changed a lot since it was founded in 1989; however, it remains the most important network for German-speaking Australianists in Europe; and you can find GAST on Facebook. Together with the *Centre for Australian Studies* at the University of Cologne, the *Association for Australian Studies* provides professional advice for scholars and students. Both configure an important platform for e-learning in the field of Australian Studies. Use the platform for information on Australian Studies in Germany: [www.centreforaustralianstudies.org](http://www.centreforaustralianstudies.org), and <http://www.australienstudien.org/index.php/en/zeitschrift> if you want to be part of our academic authorship (Australian Studies Journal). And if you want to learn more about the networks of Australian Historical Studies in Germany, Europe and worldwide read the relevant edition of the CLIO Online Guide:



Henriette von Holleuffer

CLIO ONLINE Guide: Australien und Neuseeland (Aktualisierte Version 2018)

<https://guides.clio-online.de/guides/regionen/australien-und-neuseeland/2018>

Again, this e-Newsletter reflects the interdisciplinary character of German-Australian studies and activities. We all will appreciate new contacts in order to build networks and partnerships in our fields of interest: in Germany, Europe and overseas. Many thanks to all contributors, and in particular: Prof. Liesel Hermes, Dr. Victoria Herche, Dr. Stefanie Affeldt and Dr. Almut Breitenbach. Enjoy our new issue – and have a look at the photos of a very successful GAST-conference in Düsseldorf, organized by Prof. Beate Neumeier and Dr. Katrin Althans in 2018:

<https://australianperspectivesonmigration.wordpress.com/pictures/>

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Deadline of submission for Newsletter Nr. 21: July 1, 2019



## BY THE WAY



Reflecting on the past ©Photo Henriette von Holleuffer 2019

It was in 1770 that Lieutenant James Cook, captain of HMS *Endeavour*, claimed the eastern coast of the Australian continent for the British Crown. Two years before, in August 1768, he had started his long voyage to the Southern Ocean from Plymouth, England. In command of the converted coal carrier HMS *Endeavour* he wrote European history on Indigenous soil. This historical fact with all its problematic implications for the Indigenous people overseas appears crucial in one respect: Navigators like Vasco da Gama, Ferdinand Magellan or James Cook looked behind the curtain of ignorance. As result, Europeans stepped into a world of intercultural, interracial, or interreligious relationships. This is the world we know. Now that archaeologists with the *Rhode Island Marine Archaeology Project (RIMAP)* and *Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM)* say that they have found the HMS *Endeavour* again, although they have more work ahead to demonstrate it, this message has symbolic power<sup>1</sup>: Exploration is the endeavour to discover the world, academic research is the endeavour to objectify – but intercultural competence is the ability to find ways to communicate and understand. May this endeavour, diverse as it is, be ours in 2019.

Happy New Year 2019!

Henriette von Holleuffer

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.rimap.org/programs/5ba12f4086141cd417000023>



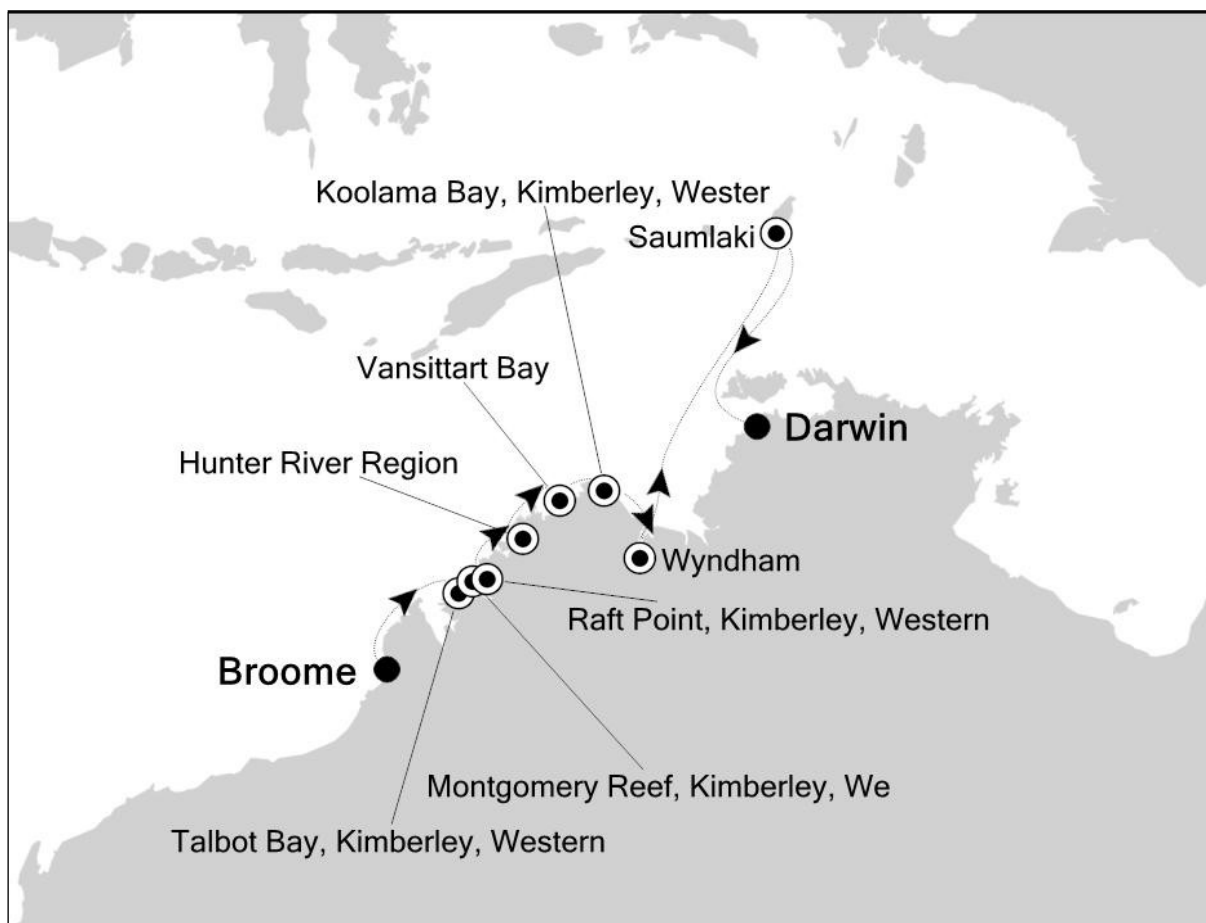
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## ADVENTURE AND SCIENCE

### From Broome to Darwin: Ten Days on Board the Silversea *Discoverer* through the Kimberley, WA (in July 2018)

Liesel Hermes



©Expedition Map by Silversea Cruises (UK) Limited 2018

#### Introduction: Western Australia

I assume that all the members of the *Gesellschaft für Australienstudien* are lovers of Australia.<sup>1</sup> But not all of them may be familiar with Western Australia, the largest state by

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Dr. Virginia Teichmann and Dr. Ken Evans for critically reading this manuscript with native speakers' eyes.



far. Germany with ca. 2,530,000 km<sup>2</sup> comprises just 14% of the total area of Western Australia. However, Western Australia has just under 2,600,000 inhabitants, around 3% of the population of Germany. That means a density of 1.02 persons per km<sup>2</sup> as compared with 232 persons per km<sup>2</sup> in Germany. I like these figures because they give an impression of the vastness of the state, a lot of which is semi-desert, and the climate of which ranges from Mediterranean in the southwest, which is an important agricultural region, to the tropics in the north where there are only two seasons, the wet and the dry. The highest population density is in the southwest. The capital Perth has ca. 1,700,000 inhabitants. Tourists usually prefer the more “trendy” cities like Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide and travel up and down the east coast, but Perth has its own charm, a sprawling metropolis with a lot of green parks, a long coastline and beaches and which is on the whole more laid-back and invariably hot and reliably sunny in the summer months.

The cruise I am talking about started from Broome in the Kimberley, which is the northernmost region of the state, a vast, sparsely populated area three times the size of England. The landscape is very varied with steep mountain ranges and deep gorges, but also rivers like the Ord and the Fitzroy, and very few paved roads that can be used year-round by ordinary vehicles (i.e. other than 4WD). When we drove through the Kimberly years ago on the road from Kununurra via Halls Creek and Fitzroy Crossing to Broome we kept wondering about the signs on the road sides, which read “road subject to flooding, indicator shows depth”. We were there in August, the driest time of year, and everything was bone-dry, with sizzling heat and a degree of isolation that meant we were happy to see 3 or 4 cars per hour. We know that these roads can be entirely closed because of flooding, which happened south of Broome shortly before Christmas 2017, when the town was hit by torrential rainfall and had to be supplied by air. Even high-clearance 4WDs got stuck and had to be towed when the flood receded. So much for this fascinating region of Australia. Along its isolated coast we cruised from Broome to Darwin.

### **Broome WA**

Being back in Broome after around six years was pure delight (see my article about Broome in the *E-Newsletter* No. 17, July 2017, pp. 11-26). It is not just the endless beach, the still small but very lively town centre, the booming planes landing or starting right above our

heads. It is the relaxed atmosphere of an isolated place in the middle of nowhere that exudes its unique lifestyle in spite of the considerably increased traffic during the day. We stayed for two nights with a long-term Broome friend, and I walked with her on the beach in the early morning when the air in the middle of July is still a little chilly, but warming up very quickly. It is always surprising how many people (with or without dogs) walk there in the morning, enjoying the expanse of the sand and the low sound of the small waves on the gently dipping beach. I was happy to find a number of undamaged sand dollars (which I managed to transport home intact). Sand dollars are the skeletons of a flat form of sea urchin.

We then moved on for four nights to our favourite haunt, the Cable Beachside Villas. Both places are not far from Cable Beach, one has to climb up a dune and when one is at the top and starts to dash downhill the endless sea is there, gleaming with little rolling waves. When we arrived in Broome it was new moon, which meant huge tides of about nine metres. The beach was vast at low tide and practically non-existent at high tide. The company that rented out beach chairs and umbrellas had wisely enough placed itself in anticipation with the stuff it hired out right next to the dunes, and at high tide barely managed to stay dry. I am mentioning this because the enormous tidal range would subside over the next few days, and a week later with the moon waxing, the tide would reduce to around 5 metres, which is of importance for the first full day of the cruise.

Of course we went to the Esplanade every evening for the sunset, which happened around 5.30 pm and was watched by hundreds of tourists, who were either having a picnic on the lawn with food and drinks or were wandering around the Esplanade, beer in hand chatting casually with other people. We had arranged to meet one evening with an English and a Melbourne couple whom we had met before and who, like us, had booked the *Discoverer* cruise. They had never been to Broome before and were fascinated by the atmosphere. One day after the new moon, the moon appeared again, a razor-thin sliver, but well visible in the clear atmosphere. And the spectacle was enhanced by Venus, with the moon passing by the next three days.

On the day of our departure our friend chauffeured us to the pier and we discovered that the Silversea *Discoverer* is indeed a very small ship for only around 110 passengers, tiny compared to the cruise ships one sees in all kinds of advertisements. We would have loved to take her along, and she would have loved to come and made up her mind to find out more about cruises of this kind. We familiarized ourselves with the vessel, found our suite to be small but sufficient and later attended the security briefing which includes donning the life vest and listening to important information about the sounding of the distress signal and which requires obedience.<sup>2</sup> We then “set sail”, as ship departures are still called, leaving Broome round Gantheaume Point in the late afternoon and were excited to watch a whale not too far away from the beach. Nature and observing wildlife would fill the next couple of days while we were sailing up north along the coast of the Kimberley, possibly the most isolated region in all of Australia, and we were looking forward to it.

### **Talbot Bay**

Compared to crossing the Atlantic Ocean, distances between stop-overs on this cruise were fairly short. From Broome to Talbot Bay it was 199 nautical miles (1 nautical mile = 1.852 km). All shore excursions were done in zodiacs. Zodiacs are small inflatable boats with a wide flat bottom, with people sitting on the rim on either side holding onto ropes if necessary. Even small waves can make the ride pretty bumpy because of the wide bottom. They have a capacity of 12-16 people. On the first evening the guests were divided into four groups to ensure smooth and orderly boarding of the small vessels. We went around in 8-10 zodiacs, and the order in which we boarded changed every day. Every night we had a brief look at the bulletin board to ascertain the next day's sequence. Each zodiac was manned by one member of the expedition team, mostly men with one New Zealand woman, all naturalists and experts in their fields of fauna, flora, geology and the like. In the course of the cruise we were together with all of them, each not just an expert but enthusiastic about their fields of interest and eager to let us learn as much as we could.

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<sup>2</sup> That this has to be taken seriously had become clear to us from a very competent cruise director of a previous cruise. Watching a TV programme in Germany of how and why cruise ships can sink we did not believe our eyes when we saw and heard “our” cruise director who was twice interviewed in that programme and talked about the two instances when he had been on board a sinking cruise ship and in one case had organized, together with his wife, the rescue of passengers by helicopter. I was so amazed that I got in touch with him by mail and asked for confirmation. And he wrote a long mail with a lot of details that we found important. So we listened carefully to understand how to respond to an emergency.



**Expedition Boats: Disembarking from our Zodiac ©Photo Liesel Hermes 2018**

Talbot Bay is situated in the Buccaneer Archipelago northeast of Derby and famous for its Horizontal Falls, described as “one of the greatest natural wonders of the world” (*Silversea Chronicle*, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2018). This natural phenomenon is not a waterfall in the strict sense of the word. It comes about as strong tidal currents press through two narrow gorges near the coast. The wide one is 20 metres across, the narrow one – which is more inland – just 10 metres. The incoming tide (with tidal ranges being the same as in Broome) presses through the two gaps into Poulton Creek, and the reverse happens with the outgoing tide. Each time, roughly every 6+ hours, this phenomenon occurs in one direction. The hurtling water may be up to four metres high (= horizontal falls) at the time of full or new moon. Since we were there just in between new and full moon with the moon seven days old, the tidal range was a lot smaller, which meant that the phenomenon was not as spectacular as it might have been a few days earlier or later. But who cares? In our zodiacs we travelled from the ship in a leisurely way and then through both gaps where we were close to the current and the eddies and the towering reddish rocks on either side. Watching the spectacular landscape and the rushing water was enjoyable.





**"Let's ride on the rushing water!" ©Photo Liesel Hermes 2018**

To top this still harmless experience, we went in a high speed boat ride through both gaps in the later afternoon. The guide steered us through the narrow gap a number of times, and we held onto our seats and I was thankful that we negotiated it safely each time. The speed boat was of course a noisy affair and I kept musing that the fish in the water and wildlife in the air and on the rocks might be looking forward to quiet times after we had left. I enjoyed it of course but could not help feeling that we were intruders spoiling pristine nature and its very special atmosphere around us.

In the sinking sun the colours of the rocks changed continuously. When we got back to our ship the sun had just gone down and since we were in the tropics, night came pretty fast, but not before the light in the west changed from light orange to a very dark glowing red. These spellbinding sunsets accompanied us for the next few days and lost nothing of their fascination. The day's official programme ended with a debriefing of our first day and its activities and a briefing of the following day's programme. This was a daily feature around 6

p.m. accompanied by champagne or cocktails which was invariably entertaining and informative since the expedition team always showed slides of animals, the landscape and natural phenomena. That was – by the way – the only “official” entertainment on board the ship, apart from highly interesting additional lectures along the way about a variety of topics, such as The First Wave of Australia’s First Peoples, Aboriginal Art, Wildlife, Crocodiles, and Indonesia.

### **Montgomery Reef and Raft Point**

The distance between Talbot Bay and Montgomery Reef is just 36 nautical miles, and the ship anchored off the Reef in the morning so that our disembarkation by zodiac started at 8.30 am. Montgomery Reef, around 400 square kilometres in size and the largest inshore reef in Australia south of Yawajaba Island, has tidal ranges of up to ten metres. When the tide recedes, the reef and little sandstone islands seem to rise out of the water. “At low tide a river is exposed that allows access to an amazing semi-submerged world.” (*Silversea Chronicle*, 12<sup>st</sup> July) Again the effect was not as intense when we were there because of the smaller tidal range at half-moon. The zodiacs went up the river for more than two hours and with the tide going out (luckily for us). So we were close to the waterfalls from the reefs and more and more of the reef appeared. We observed lots of white and yellow reef herons, manta rays and a number of smaller and larger sea turtles with their heads raised above the water, some of them quite close to our zodiac. In the brilliant sunshine and the light wind of the morning, the falling water of the numerous small waterfalls from the Reef was refreshing and invigorating. When we came back the tide had gone out far enough to expose a large sand bank not far away from the ship.

The *Discoverer* then sailed the 7 nautical miles on to Raft Point, where we were promised Indigenous Wandjina rock art paintings. The art of the Wandjina is an integral part of the Kimberley, as we were informed in the briefing session. Landing at Raft Point meant one of the “wet landings” of which we had been informed before departing from home. That means one has to wear water-proof sandals. Leaving the zodiac one rolls over the rim, lands in very shallow water and wades just two or three steps to the beach, great fun in the warm weather. But for the ascent to the rock art we had all brought solid shoes and left the sandals on the beach. We were welcomed by two Aboriginal women who painted our cheeks



with ochre in a ceremony and who introduced us to Raft Point with their stories and the paintings. The rock art was high above us and quite a few people understandably refrained from climbing up and decided to stay on the beach or go back to the ship. The climb took around 30 minutes over rocks of various sizes and loose gravel. Rugged hiking shoes and a stick would have come in handy, and a couple of times I was happy to grab a branch for balance. Drinking was essential as we had been told: "Don't just take a sip, drink!" And everyone took more than just a swig every now and then.



Wandjina Rock Art©Photo Liesel Hermes 2018

We were rewarded for all the trouble with gorgeous paintings under an overhanging cliff. The colours, ochre, white and black, and contours were very clear, the overall impression was breathtaking. The introduction to the artwork was given by an Aboriginal, who told us the traditional stories and explained everything. The physical features of the paintings have two meanings for the Aboriginals. The *haloed* heads are both: human in form and cloud-like. The elaborate head dress can also be seen as lightning. The Aboriginals conserve and maintain the paintings. Raft Point is thus one of the major windows to Aboriginal spirituality

in the Kimberley. Interestingly enough, the god “Wandjina became known globally when an enormous 12-metre-high version rose up in the 2000 Olympics opening ceremony” (see Website).

Scrambling down, especially over loose gravel, was even harder than coming up, and I was happy to find a branch to hold onto whenever I felt I was losing my balance and thus avoided a fall. A few people did fall over and were helped by the others. On the beach again we were greeted by a male Aboriginal who had put a few eucalyptus leaves on a fire and we walked through the light plume of smoke in a cleansing ceremony. Embarking on the zodiac was again a wet affair, which nobody minded in the warm weather, and later in the afternoon we set sail for the Hunter River region and enjoyed the magnificent sunset and a little later – after the briefing for the following day – the Captain’s Welcome Cocktails.

### **Hunter River Region**

The Hunter River (Western Australia), 156 nautical miles north east of Raft Point, was named by the navigator and explorer Phillip Parker King after the surgeon James Hunter on the ship *Mermaid*, on which King explored the Kimberley region in 1820. He had, like Matthew Flinders before him, circumnavigated Australia. “The Hunter River is home to an immense mangrove system surrounded by soaring red sandstone cliffs.” (*Silversea Chronicle*, 22<sup>nd</sup> July) There was an option of different programmes that day. One was a helicopter tour to the spectacular Mitchell Falls, three water falls towering to a cumulative height of 80 metres, which can be seen best by helicopter. The helicopters started and landed on nearby Naturalist Island, the earliest tour starting at 6.30 am. The other option was two different tours up the Hunter River. I opted for the 2.5-hour tour that started at seven, which meant having breakfast at 6 a.m.

Our expedition guide was a keen ornithologist who spotted the smallest birds and identified them by their sounds, but also large ospreys one couldn’t possibly miss. It was an exhilarating experience to be in the zodiac with other nature lovers and ardent photographers with huge zoom lenses. Our guide also took every opportunity to take photos of birds himself. His maxim was: “Shoot first and ask questions later!” He had published a book on Kimberley birds, which he showed around and which paid tribute to the quality of

his talks while we were moving along in a leisurely way. But he also pointed out mud skippers on the river bank, and I was amused that he knew the German term "Schlammspringer". He said he loved German terms for animals and often found out that German tourists did not know them (myself included). We went up the Hunter River and Perosus Creek and a number of smaller side channels. This morning trip was during high tide. The air, which had been cool and balmy at first, heated up quickly, but was still pleasant.

A similar trip of equal duration was offered in the afternoon with the tide going out. That meant another 2.5 hours sitting on the rim of the zodiac, when it was a lot hotter. The rocks and sheer cliffs looked quite different with the sun shining from different angles and we were happy for a swig from the water bottle every now and then. We saw different animals on this trip, among them a small crocodile that came quite close to the zodiac and apparently even followed us for some time. Another pretty large one that we spotted went under water when we approached it.



**Close to the intruders: A crocodile©Photo Liesel Hermes 2018**

The only drawback on our journey back to the boat was a light wind that had come up and that stirred up small waves. But zodiacs with their large flat bottoms are not made for even

small waves, so that we bounced up and down quite a bit which my spine resented. For me it was a mild form of torture. So I sat down on the floor and tried to anticipate the little waves and was happy to be finally back on board.

The 'recap' session that evening showed what we had missed as non-ornithologists who did not have the keen expert's eyes. The ardent ornithologist had managed not only to guide us and constantly point out living creatures, he had also managed to take magnificent photos of birds which I had certainly missed as we were moving along.

### **Vansittart Bay and Jar Island**

This remote location, 150 nautical miles northeast of the Hunter River which lies near the northern tip of Western Australia, was also named by Phillip Parker King: "Jar" probably being named for shards of pottery (see website), when he was exploring the region. The original schedule was for the first zodiac to leave at 7.30 am for Jar Island and a guided tour of Gwion Gwion Aboriginal rock art. However, a French ship was anchored at our destination, and since the access to the art sites is restricted we had no choice but to reverse the schedule, which meant that we first took the zodiacs to the beach to see the wreck of an American Douglas C53 war plane that had gone down in the wilderness on 26 February 1942. We had another wet landing and marched in groups for about 20 minutes in the sun to see the plane broken into several parts in the semi-desert shrub. The explanatory talk was fascinating. The plane had been on a routine flight from Perth to Broome (1680 km by air), but had got the navigation details wrong and flew off-course. It therefore did not find Broome and the pilot became disoriented by bad weather (wet season) and darkness, so that it went down to a hard landing when the fuel was running low. The six persons on board survived and a number of planes searched for them, since there were no instruments let alone GPS to locate the plane. An Aboriginal, who knew the area well, was able to determine the exact location when the vicinity and coastline were described. With that exact description the six were rescued by a Qantas flying boat. Our march back to the zodiac in the late morning with not a single tree or bush in evidence was hot and tiring, and we were happy that we had our bottles of water.





**Lost in history, lost in the wilderness: A World War II aircraft ©Photo Liesel Hermes 2018**

In the afternoon after lunch we went to where the French ship had previously been lying and had another wet landing with another march through treeless terrain, fully exposed to the afternoon sun. But we were more than rewarded by the two sites of magnificent Gwion Gwion rock art, mostly more than 17,000 years old. The artwork was discovered and documented by the pastoralist Joseph Bradshaw in 1891 (see website). Our expedition director explained the motifs in detail, and whoever felt fit enough lay down on their backs to get a good view of a few details that required looking up from below at an overhang. The second site required more scrambling over rocky ground and loose gravel, but the paintings were just as fascinating. At the same time we learned about plants and berries such as the poisonous crab eye fruit, which is a small red and black berry. The ride back to the ship in the zodiac was again bumpy, since a light wind had come up. But this time the trip was fairly short.





**Rocks at Vansittart Bay©Photo Liesel Hermes 2018**

### **King George River**

It is just 105 nautical miles from Vansittart Bay to Koolama Bay, our destination the following day. The King George River is located in the North Kimberley Marine Park. Due to its remote location it cannot be accessed by vehicle, only by boat or plane or – in our case – by zodiac. Again different options were offered, all of them requiring an early breakfast. The most daring guests (only 13 considered themselves daring) departed by zodiac at 6.30 am, went up the King George River and disembarked to climb up a very steep hill in order to have the full view of both waterfalls from the top of the rocks. I didn't consider myself daring after the expedition team announced that they would not be able to give a helping hand on the rocks uphill or downhill, and instead I opted for the three-hour zodiac tour. The two-hour express one, which meant just racing to the waterfalls and back again, did not sound too appealing to me. The river was named by the explorer Charles Conigrave in 1911 in honour of King George V, who had ascended the throne after the death of King Edward VII. The river, which finally empties into the Timor Sea, is around 112 km long and 12 km upwards from the mouth are twin waterfalls, the King George waterfalls, which rush down in full volume during



the wet season, i. e. between December and May, but then gradually diminish during the dry season. At the end of July, when we were there, a large volume of water was not expected (see website).



**Koolama Bay – King George River©Photo Liesel Hermes 2018**

Since the earliest departure took place at 6.30 am the zodiacs had to be lowered even earlier, which meant that we were wakened up by the noise and got up at 5.50 am to enjoy a very early breakfast. I was happy that the ardent ornithologist was our guide again, armed as usual with a camera with a huge zoom. The trip was very leisurely and we sat on the rim of the vessel and admired the huge sandstone rock formations, which came in the most bizarre shapes with ledges and overhangs. A few times I wondered when some of them might just collapse. On the way we saw a few long-tail manta rays and dugongs (the Australian variety of the American manatee), which always move at very slow speed. A small cormorant was drying its wet wings on a tree with the wings spread out wide to capture the warmth of the sun.

The twin waterfalls were pretty unspectacular because of the dry season, as was expected, but were impressive all the same because of their height. Another zodiac close by passed right underneath one of them thoroughly drenching all the people. We protested vigorously against having a shower and our guide complied. Of course we were glad to see our daring explorers who had actually made it to the top of the rocks and were waving happily at us from above. The afternoon meant an opportunity for another express tour to the waterfalls for those for whom it had been too early in the morning and another three-hour tour. But for once I remained on board, since the prospect of another three hours on the rim of a zodiac in the full sun sounded less appealing than a quiet afternoon on the ship for some reading and just enjoying the magnificent landscape. – At 6 p.m. the ship set sail for Wyndham, 111 nautical miles to the southeast.

### **Wyndham and Kununurra**

Wyndham has a population of 900 and was founded in the wake of the goldrush at Halls Creek in 1886. What started as a major port and trading station vanished with the decline of the gold a few years later. It also served as a port for exporting cattle and for the mines of the Kimberley, but lost in importance to Kununurra, a larger town to the southeast and a good hour's drive away (see website). For us Wyndham was the gateway to Kununurra, where we went by bus and from there on a two hour scenic flight in small planes which carried 14-16 passengers. Kununurra is the largest town north of Broome with ca. 7,000 inhabitants in the wet and 10,000 inhabitants in the dry season. The name Kununurra is an English malapropism for the Indigenous name of the place. It is not more than 37 km from the border to the Northern Territory to the east which is in a time zone 90 minutes ahead of Western Australia.

At 8.30 am we were picked up by a bus that took us to Kununurra where we had to wait for some time for four small planes that were to take us on the scenic flight to Lake Argyle, the Bungle Bungles and back across the Argyle mine to Kununurra. Our pilot asked before boarding who would like to sit next to him in the co-pilot's seat, and since nobody volunteered I did, and thus had the best view through the front and the side windows. We first flew south and saw the River Ord, which is 320 km long with an irrigation scheme that was meant to create electricity and to be used for agricultural cultivation. The Ord River

Irrigation Scheme was constructed over 9 years in the 1960s with a dam around 70 km south of Kununurra. This dam is 335 metres wide and just under 100 metres high and created the huge reservoir of Lake Argyle, the largest artificial lake [measured by water surface]<sup>3</sup> in Australia. Today, in the irrigated areas tropical agriculture products such as bananas, melons and mangos are grown.



Lake Argyle©Photo Liesel Hermes 2018

We then flew across semi-desert landscape on to the Bungle Bungles which consist of a maze of orange and black striped “beehive-shaped domes” that were first seen by European eyes as late as 1983. Aboriginals, who had lived there for thousands of years, called the area Purnululu (sandstone). It was declared a National Park in 1987 and a World Heritage Area in 2003. Today it is managed by the Western Australian Government together with two

<sup>3</sup> According to the *Ord Irrigation Cooperative Ltd.* Website It is “Australia’s second largest inland **reservoir** called Lake Argyle. Its operating storage capacity is 11, 000, 000 megalitres or 204, 719, 140, 000 cubic feet (5, 797, 000, 000 cubic metres) it is said to comparable to 21 times the size of Sydney Harbour.”

<http://www.ordirrigation.com.au/about-us/>



Aboriginal Language groups (Chronicle factsheet). The views from above were spectacular with the colours of the domes changing in the light.



**Bungle Bungles©Photo Liesel Hermes 2018**

We turned north again and as we approached Lake Argyle again, we flew across the Argyle mine, one of the world's biggest producer of natural diamonds. In 1972 the Kimberley region was identified as a potential location of diamonds and later the "Argyle diamond pipe" was discovered. These days the annual production is ca. 35 million carats per year (1 carat = 2 grams), however most of them are industrial-quality diamonds and only 5% are gem quality, including champagne and cognac-coloured ones as well as very rare and therefore very expensive pink diamonds. Again we were overwhelmed by the sheer size of the area. It took some time after landing in Kununurra – without any help from a tower – to digest the multitude of impressions. Over lunch at a hotel we only discussed what we had seen and how grand and overwhelmingly isolated the region is. The town by then had warmed up to 35° degrees, but with very low humidity. Going back to Wyndham and the ship I watched out for deciduous Boab trees that shed their leaves in the dry season, and I was pleased that



some were apparently still in the process of shedding them. Some still had a few, others had shed them entirely.



**Boab Trees©Photo Liesel Hermes 2018**

We set sail for Indonesia at 4.30 p.m. The sun set as early as 5.15 p.m. because we were further East than in Broome and closer to the equator.

### **Indonesia and the lunar eclipse**

The trip to Saumlaki on the Indonesian island of Palau Yamdena, 468 nautical miles to the north, was made because under Australian law cruise ships that are not registered in

Australia but go on cruises there have to leave the country for at least one day. That meant going up north and spending half a day in that town and going south again to Darwin, where the cruise ended on the 10<sup>th</sup> day.

I would therefore like to close with a brief description of the total lunar eclipse which we were fortunate enough to witness in this hemisphere and to see in the early morning of July 28, whereas in Germany, which is 7 ½ hours behind the Northern Territory, people watched the same phenomenon in the late evening of July 27. Having been a confirmed star gazer for decades I was happy that this very special event, the longest total eclipse of the century, was also visible in our part of the world, however not for the full time of more than one hundred minutes, but long enough to enjoy the blood-red moon in conjunction with the bright Mars. My husband and I were in the little town of Port Douglas north of Cairns in Queensland in August 2003, when the last opposition of Mars occurred that was just as bright as the one this year. So I looked forward to getting up very early to make the most of it. I was on deck at 5.30 am and marveled at the number of people who were there to watch the moon with Mars close by. Since the deck was in total darkness and the moon was practically gone it was really dark and it took some time to get used to it. So everyone groped about slowly and carefully so as not to bump into anyone else. Some had their cameras, others their binoculars, and it seemed to be a very social and convivial situation since people talked and did not necessarily know who they were talking to. But all were united by the fascination of the blood-red moon, although very small because it was far away in apogee position, with the bright red Mars. The phase of the total eclipse started around 5.50 am, and around 6.30 am dawn was beginning. But before that I observed Orion rising in the east, the most conspicuous winter constellation in the northern and a summer constellation ("upside down" of course) in the southern hemisphere. Standing there watching I even saw five shooting stars. It was a great joy for me to receive a *whatsapp* from my daughter with a photo of the eclipse from a field near Freiburg, where she and her family were standing observing. Media can help bridge distances.

Looking back I find that writing this diary brought it all back to me. I have relived every single day of our West Australian expedition as a very intense experience. I have seen and learnt a lot and was fortunate enough to meet people with similar mind-sets, who had come on the



cruise to learn about the Kimberley, about its unique landscape, fauna and flora and its awesome and overwhelming beauty in total isolation.

**Article and Photos © Liesel Hermes 2018**

**Websites** (accessed in August 2018)

Western Australia

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western\\_Australia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Australia)

Kimberley

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kimberley\\_\(Western\\_Australia\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kimberley_(Western_Australia))

Broome

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broome,\\_Western\\_Australia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broome,_Western_Australia)

Talbot Bay, Horizontal Falls

<http://www.kimberley-australia.com/kimberley-attractions/horizontal-falls/>

Zodiac

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inflatable\\_boat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inflatable_boat)

Montgomery Reef

<http://www.australiaforeveryone.com.au/wa/montgomery-reef.htm>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montgomery\\_Reef](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montgomery_Reef)

For a better understanding how the tidal change on the reef works, go to Youtube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kiy pb -x9vc>

Raft Point and Wandjina rock art

<http://www.traveller.com.au/western-australia-where-to-see-one-of-the-worlds-oldest-art-galleries-h13lot>

Hunter River

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hunter\\_River\\_\(Western\\_Australia\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hunter_River_(Western_Australia))

Mitchell Falls with spectacular photos

<https://www.world-of-waterfalls.com/australia-mitchell-falls.html>

Vansittart Bay and Jar Island

<http://www.travelimages.com.au/vansittart-bay-jar-island-kimberley-coast-australia/>

Gwion Gwion Bradshaw Art

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bradshaw\\_rock\\_painting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bradshaw_rock_painting)

For more general information about Indigenous Australian Art

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indigenous\\_Australian\\_art](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indigenous_Australian_art)

Koolama Bay and King George River

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King\\_George\\_River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_George_River)

Wyndham

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wyndham,\\_Western\\_Australia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wyndham,_Western_Australia)

Kununurra

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kununurra,\\_Western\\_Australia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kununurra,_Western_Australia)

Bungle Bungle Range

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bungle\\_Bungle\\_Range](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bungle_Bungle_Range)

Argyle mine

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argyle\\_diamond\\_mine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argyle_diamond_mine)



Professor Dr. **Liesel Hermes** was president of the University of Education, Karlsruhe, Germany from 2002-2011. Before coming into office she was a professor of English literature and didactics. From 1997-2004 she was the editor of the journal *Neusprachliche Mitteilungen aus Wissenschaft und Praxis*. She is a member of the *German Association for Australian Studies*. Professor Hermes was a visiting scholar at the University of Western Australia in Perth in 2001 and 2002 and at the John Septimus Roe Anglican Community School in Perth in 2012. Her research interests are 20<sup>th</sup> century Australian and English literature, EFL methodology, especially teaching literature, Action Research and Learner Autonomy in Higher Education. She has published widely in these areas. Moreover she is instrumental in the development of English course books as an adviser and has published numerous teaching materials herself.

## CONFERENCE REPORT

### **Mabo's Cultural Legacy The Mabo Decision, 25 Years On**

**Stefanie Affeldt (Heidelberg) and Victoria Herche (Köln)**

Conference Location: Stuttgart

Organizer: Gesellschaft für Australienstudien / Association for Australian Studies &  
Department of English Literatures, University of Stuttgart

Date: 16.11.2017 – 18.11.2017

The colonial thesis of Australia as *terra nullius* – a country belonging to no one that became Crown land upon its 'discovery' by British explorers<sup>1</sup> – was very tenacious. In accordance with Patrick Wolfe's claim that "territoriality is settler colonialism's specific, irreducible element" namely that the "primary motive for elimination is not race (or religion, ethnicity, grade of civilization, etc.) but access to territory", means that Indigenous peoples still suffer from the experience of land dispossession.<sup>2</sup> In the early 1970s, in the first litigation on native title in Australia, the courts still ruled against Aboriginal claimants and rejected the recognition of Indigenous Australian customary claims to land.

It was not until 1992 when the sensation-causing High Court's Native Title decision challenged this quasi-doctrine and opened up the space for discussions about traditional land ownership and sovereignty. The decision in the court case initiated by Edward Koiki Mabo – ›Mabo and Others v. Queensland (No 2)‹ – verified that "the common law of this country recognizes a form of native title which, in the cases where it has not been extinguished, reflects the entitlement of the indigenous inhabitants, in accordance with their

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<sup>1</sup> See Andrew Fitzmaurice: "The Genealogy of Terra Nullius", *Australian Historical Studies*, 38 (2007) 129, pp. 1-15.

<sup>2</sup> See Patrick Wolfe: "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native", *Journal of Genocide Research* (2006), 8(4), December, pp. 387–409, here: p. 388.

laws or customs, to their traditional lands”<sup>3</sup> and thus marked a decisive alteration in the discourse on native title and the legitimacy of British land occupation.

Subsequently, Mabo and his court case became a precedent for other court cases in which Indigenous Australians fought for rights to their traditional lands. Moreover, the ‘Mabo decision’ has found expression in the cultural arena, where Indigenous and other Australian authors continue to critique ‘white’ historiography, advance the struggle for Indigenous Australian sovereignty, and examine relationships between land and people. Cultural actors continue to voice anxiety and displeasure (mostly from a Western perspective) over the repercussions of the confirmation of traditional ownership and the disavowal of *terra nullius*. To what extent has Australian law, history, language policy, political and social affairs, as well as literature, film and other forms of cultural expression, been challenged and/or transformed by ‘Mabo’?

In three keynote lectures and five panels, the participants and discussants of the Stuttgart workshop addressed the successes and shortcomings the ‘Mabo decision’ posed to thinking about land, justice, identity, belonging, and history. While the High Court acknowledged the existence of Indigenous peoples’ property rights in Mabo, it refused to recognise Indigenous sovereignty. The main focus of debate, therefore, was perspectives beyond ‘Mabo’, i.e. not only what the court ruling immediately granted but addressing what it denied. The Mabo decision remains most prominent in enabling a discourse of change with regard to Indigenous Australian claims to sovereignty, including a “sovereignty of the mind” (Alexis Wright).

In the first keynote lecture LYNETTE RUSSELL (Melbourne) presented the long history of Indigenous Australian agency in Victoria (Melbourne in particular) that preceded and succeeded the ‘Mabo decision’. Commonly, Mabo’s activism is considered to have emerged out of the land rights movement in the 1960s. However, Russell pointed to early protection movements in the nineteenth century and the twentieth century, including campaigns for recognition of native title and cultural heritage, introducing among others William Barack and William Cooper, as leading important Indigenous struggles. These focussed mainly on

<sup>3</sup> <http://www6.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/cases/cth/HCA/1992/23.html>.

group rights instead of individual rights. This protection of their rights, for equality and recognition, and for land claims, native title and sovereignty shape contemporary activism in the 'post-colonial' era, exemplarily shown in current debates around plans for a treaty with the Victorian government.<sup>4</sup>

The participants of the first panel – *Mabo in Politics and Poetry* – looked at the ways in which 'Mabo' became part of the political and literary spheres. Inspired by Stan Grant's *Talking to my Country*, LARS JENSEN (Roskilde) reviewed the creation of memories in the context of 'Mabo' and discussed its becoming a milestone in Australian history. The collapse of the idea of *terra nullius* did pave the way for further steps to reverse dispossession and enable further court cases on the recognition of Indigenous land rights. Jensen stressed the potential for a counter-narrative, a 'sceptical hope' that carries the remembrance of past wrongs into the present. The historical events need to be addressed on an equal footing, i.e. without perpetuating the colonial power relations in which one part of the population is declared in need of rescue by the very social group that dispossessed and racistly degraded them in the first place. LIOBA SCHREYER (Bochum) showed how poetry functions as a means of Indigenous Australian agency and resistance. By referring to a diverse list of Indigenous poets from the 1990s to today, Schreyer argues that these responses to the 'Mabo decision' record and rewrite 'white' historiography through direct reference to the case and people involved in it or by going beyond 'Mabo' and addressing the relationship to the land and the issue of sovereignty. The talk was followed up by a discussion on the possible audience for such poetry and poetry's potential in shaping the discussion on sovereignty.

The second panel – *Negotiating Native Title* – examined some of the challenges Indigenous claims to land ownership pose for non-indigenous jurisdiction from an anthropological perspective. CARSTEN WERGIN (Heidelberg) portrayed a recent court case from the northern shores of Western Australia (Broome area) which exemplifies how Western law and science wrongly confines Indigenous Australian knowledge to days gone by. By failing to unite both narratives on equal terms, the discourse on native title will not be able to adequately address the underlying tensions. In the claims for land rights, one means of determining the relationship between an Indigenous Australian group and the land is

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.vic.gov.au/aboriginalvictoria/treaty.html>.

proving the connection between people, land and culture in terms of their language. CHRISTINA RINGEL (Köln) made the case for the linguists' contributions to the native title narrative. Besides anthropology, history, archaeology, and geography, linguistics is increasingly drawn upon for evidence of traditional land ownership. Findings based on archaic elements in place names and ethnonyms has recently gained prominence in the settling of land disputes. Both papers commented on the current state of ethical responsibilities in conducting fieldwork.

The third panel – *Mabo and Film* – looked at cinematic representations of Eddie Koiki Mabo in bio-pics and the broader issue of treaty negotiations and land claims in documentaries and fictitious narratives. PETER KILROY (London) talked about the discrepancies between the symbolic resonance of the 'Mabo decision' and its relatively limited political and economic benefits for Indigenous Australians and Torres Strait Islanders. While the symbolic resonance of the person Eddie Mabo was expanded via medial presentation, movies and TV shows produced by Torres Strait Islanders themselves function as a redistribution of power and control over narratives. RENATE BROSCHE (Stuttgart) compared the narration and the depiction of Eddie Koiki Mabo in two major movies dealing with his life story: Trevor Graham's documentary *Mabo: Life of an Island Man* (1997) and Rachel Perkin's bio-pic *Mabo* (2012). In carving out a shift from an impersonal, museological (1997) to an emotional (2012) depiction, she traced the imaginary construction of Mabo over time and the increasing recognition of his achievements which are even compared to those of Martin Luther King. By highlighting the role of family (in particular Benita Mabo) and the spirit of communality in depicting Mabo's life and activism, the cultural imaginary in public discourse has, according to Brosch, shifted towards more inclusive, interracial ideas of communality.

The second keynote lecture, delivered by PAUL TURNBULL (Hobart), contextualized the history of Eddie Koiki Mabo and his court case within the broader (left-wing) political and social scene of Queensland from the 1970s to the 1990s (e.g. union movements). He acknowledged Mabo's significant contributions to communal education which comprised, inter alia, the foundation of a Black Community School in Townsville in 1973, providing means of transportation for the pupils, and the import of books from the United States



which, other than Australian school books, enabled Indigenous Australian students to identify with 'non-white' characters. In sharing some personal memories of Mabo's activities and persona, he retraced Mabo's advocacy of Indigenous Australian and Torres Strait Islander rights and his making contact with the academic landscape. Moreover, Turnbull emphasized Mabo's embeddedness within a wider nexus of political actors and campaign participants, which comprised, not least, his wife Bonita.

The second, and last, day of the workshop was kicked off by the third keynote lecture. Via Skype, KIERAN DOLIN (Perth) talked about the dissonance between the High Court's acceptance of the Indigenous Australians' claim to traditional lands and its rejection of Indigenous sovereignty. Drawing on several literary works, he discussed the reflection of the Mabo case in both Indigenous (Fiona Doyle's *Whispers Of This Wik Woman*) and non-Indigenous (John Danalis *Riding the Black Cockatoo* and Peter Docker's *Someone Else's Country*) memoirs. All of these works acknowledge the cultural impact of the watershed decision. However, while Indigenous authors tend to negotiate issues of belonging and relationship to the land, the 'white' authors express anxiety over identity or an increased critical concern with the continuation of racist attitudes in the present.

The fourth, and last, panel – *Literary Legacies* – examined reactions to the 'Mabo decision' and its consequences in Indigenous fiction writing. DOROTHEE KLEIN (Stuttgart) shed light on the significance of land as a plot structure and the focus on land-people relationship in the narration of place in Kim Scott's *That Deadman Dance*. The novel's multiple perspectives and voices (communal 'we') and representations of webs of relations is thus compared to Aboriginal Songlines. The text points towards a positive future in which relations to the land might also include non-Indigenous Australians, on the condition of the latter's acknowledgement of past and present Indigenous ownership. KATRIN ALTHANS examined the ways in which Indigenous Australian jurisprudence is explored through a focus on land and mining rights using Philip McLaren's *Lightning Mine* and Werner Herzog's *Where the Green Ants Dream*. Hereby the importance of stories in order to understand Aboriginal jurisprudence is emphasised, as stories *are* law.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See C.F. Black: *The Land is the Source of the Law: A Dialogic Encounter with Indigenous Jurisprudence*. London, UK: Routledge Cavendish, 2011.

By means of a conclusion, the workshop's rapporteur BARBARA SCHMIDT-HABERKAMP (Bonn) drew together the major strands of discussion and stimulated a broader discussion about the recognition and negotiation of Indigenous land rights, sovereignty, and agency. The 'Mabo court case' was the first successful challenge to longstanding 'white' juridical dominance and occupation of the continent. Nonetheless, discussion of the symbolic significance of 'Mabo' must also include questioning the multitude of narratives that followed and the subsequent court cases. 'Mabo' must be contextualized within a long history of Indigenous activism that eventually led to a challenging of dominant discourses. While the discourse, in general, has since moved from the particulars of 'Mabo' to a broader discussion of Indigenous Sovereignty and Human Rights, it must be kept in mind that the power relations have long been formalized in mainstream institutions and continue to be tipped in favour of Western law and science. The definitional authority still lies with the linguists, anthropologists, ethnologists, and historians who attempt to subsume Indigenous knowledge, experience, and historical narration into a Western frame of reference.

The workshop convenors EVA BISCHOFF and GEOFF RODOREDA emphasized the general legacy of Eddie Koiki Mabo – his achievements in terms of culture, politics, education, and society as well as the impact of the Mabo decision itself on debates about the past and the present in Australia. They remarked on the necessity for further critical exploration of the achievement of sovereignty through treaties between Indigenous Australians and the colonizing society.

**Article © Stefanie Affeldt and Victoria Herche 2018**

## **Workshop Overview:**

### *Welcome & Opening Statements*

Geoff RODOREDA (Stuttgart) and Beate NEUMEIER (Köln)

### *Keynote Lecture*

Lynette RUSSELL (Melbourne): A Longer History of Activism: Before and Beyond Mabo, a View from the Southeast

### *Panel 1 – Mabo in Politics and Poetry*

Chair: Geoff RODOREDA (Stuttgart)

Lars JENSEN (Roskilde): Speaking to Mabo

Lioba SCHREYER (Bochum): Re Mabo: Poetic Responses to the High Court Decision and its Legacy

### *Panel 2 – Negotiating Native Title*

Chair: Katrin ALTHANS (Düsseldorf)

Carsten WERGIN (Heidelberg): Responsibility = Ownership? An Ethnographic Moment in Native Title

Christina RINGEL (Köln): The Contributions of Linguistics to Native Title Claims

### *Panel 3 – Mabo and Film*

Chair: Victoria HERCHE (Köln)

Peter KILROY (London): Screening Mabo: Between Representation and Institution

Renate BROSCHE (Stuttgart): Filming Eddie Mabo for Cultural Memory

### *Keynote Lecture*

Paul TURNBULL (Hobart): Mabo and the Return of Cultural Heritage

### *Keynote Lecture*

Kieran DOLIN (Perth): Extending Recognition: Intimations of Sovereignty and Restitution in Post-Mabo Australian Memoirs

### *Panel 4 – Literary Legacies*

Chair: Martina Horáková (Masaryk University, Brno)

Dorothee KLEIN (Stuttgart): Writing the Land, Writing Relations: Kim Scott's *That Deadman Dance*

Katrin ALTHANS (Düsseldorf): Mabo in Literature: The Ratio Decidendi in Philip McLaren's *Lightning Mine*

### *Conclusions & Outlook*

Rapporteur: Barbara SCHMIDT-HABERKAMP (Bonn)

Eva BISCHOFF (Trier)

Geoff RODOREDA (Stuttgart)



Dr. **Stefanie Affeldt** studied Social Economics at the University of Hamburg and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the Macquarie University, Sydney. Subsequently, she did her post-graduate studies in Cultural and Social History at the University of Essex and obtained her doctorate in (Historical) Sociology from the University of Hamburg. Her most recent publication, *Consuming Whiteness. Australian Racism and the 'White Sugar' Campaign*, examines the entanglement of the political history of Australian nation building with economic, cultural, and social processes and investigates the mechanism of inclusion/exclusion and questions of socio-political organisation in the settler society, with a particular interest in the role of mass media and popular culture in the everyday (re)production of ideology. Currently, she is a Research Fellow at the Heidelberg University, Transcultural Studies, with a project about multiculturalism and racist conflict in north-western Australia: ›[Exception or Exemption?](#) The Broome Pearling Industry and the White Australia Policy‹.

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Dr. **Victoria Herche** is a post-doctoral Researcher and Lecturer in the English Department at the University of Cologne. Since 2017 she serves as Public Relations coordinator at the Centre for Australian Studies in Cologne. After studying Theatre, Film and TV Studies, English Studies and German Studies at the University of Cologne, she conducted a dissertation project on "The Adolescent Country – Re-Imagining Youth and Coming of age in Contemporary Australian film" which will be published in Universitätsverlag Winter (2019).

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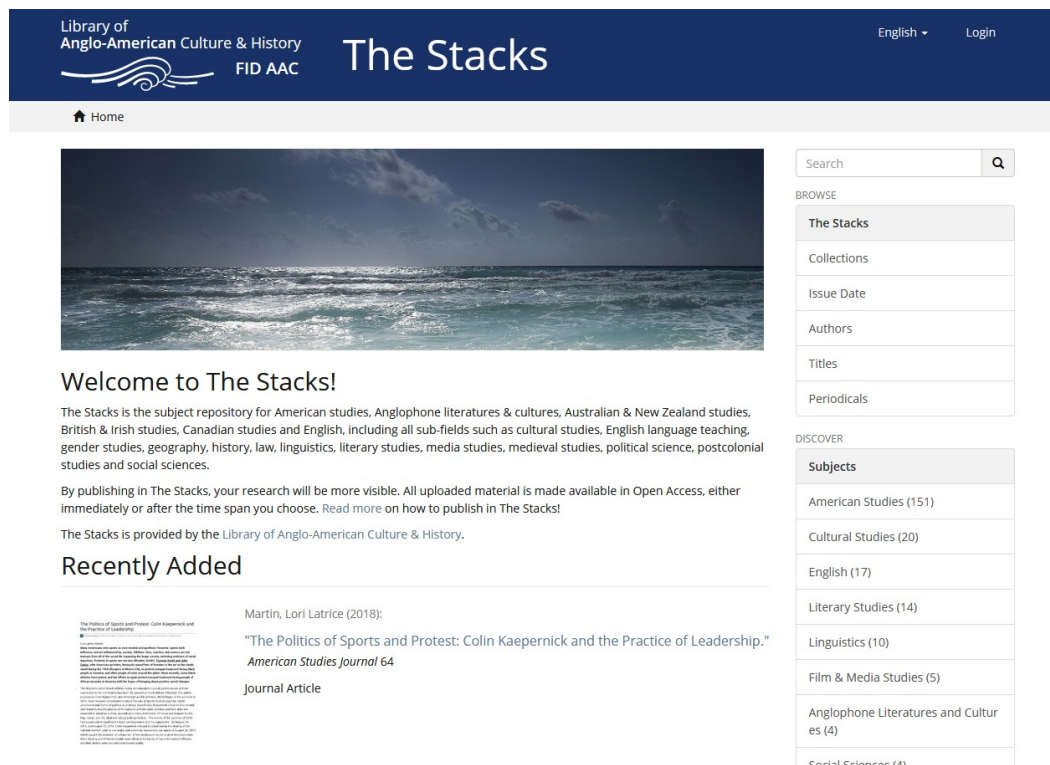


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**Almut Breitenbach**



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## IN MEMORIAM

Univ.-Prof. em. Dr. phil.  
**Geoffrey V.Davis**

25. November 1943 - 22. November 2018

Liebe GAST-Mitglieder,

im Namen des Vorstandes teile ich Ihnen mit großem Bedauern den Tod unseres langjährigen hochgeschätzten Mitglieds Professor Geoffrey V. Davis mit, der am 22. November 2018 verstarb.

Als Vorsitzender der *Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies* (ACLALS) und als herausragender Kenner postkolonialer Literaturen hat Professor Davis die Entwicklung dieses Forschungs- und Lehrbereichs entscheidend geprägt. In diesem Zusammenhang ist insbesondere sein nachhaltiges Engagement für Indigene Studien von großer Bedeutung. Sein Wirken und Beispiel hat junge Wissenschaftler/innen und indigene Schriftsteller/innen weltweit inspiriert und ermutigt.

Professor Davis wird als international anerkannter Wissenschaftler, als geschätzter Mentor und als überaus großzügiger Mensch in Erinnerung bleiben. Es ist unsere Aufgabe, die scharfsinnigen Analysen seiner herausragenden Forschung weiter zu führen. Die *Gesellschaft für Australienstudien* (GAST) spricht seiner Frau und Familie ihr aufrichtiges Beileid aus.

Prof. Dr. Beate Neumeier – Vorsitzende *Gesellschaft für Australienstudien e.V.*

Dear members of GAST,

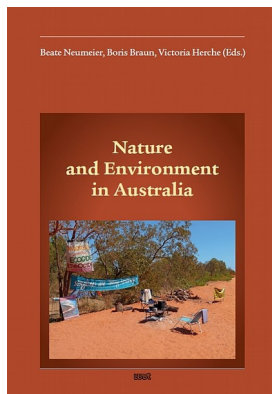
It is with great regret that we announce the death of Professor Geoffrey V. Davis, a valued member of GAST. He passed away on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2018.

Professor Geoffrey Davis is known for his dedication to Indigenous Studies. As Chair of the *Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies* (ACLALS) and as a committed scholar of post-colonial literature he played a leading role in the field. He was a remarkable scholar who encouraged young scholars, especially many Indigenous writers in India, New Zealand and elsewhere to participate and contribute to the current discussion in the field.

He is remembered as a respected academic, an admired mentor and a very generous person. We will miss his outstanding scholarship. The *Gesellschaft für Australienstudien* (GAST) extends its condolences to his wife and family.

Prof. Dr. Beate Neumeier – President *German Association for AustralianStudies*

## RESEARCH AND RESULT



**Neumeier, Beate; Braun, Boris; Herche, Victoria (eds.):**

**Nature and Environment in Australia**

This volume presents inter- and transdisciplinary reflections on nature and environment in Australia in different but interrelated contexts at the intersection of the humanities and the social sciences. The wide scope of the volume includes contributions from anthropological (and ethnographic), historical, geographical (and urbanistic), as well as legal, linguistic, literary and media perspectives, highlighting the productive intersections between these different approaches. The overall goal is to show their inseparability in the concerted efforts to meet the environmental challenges of our time. The specific situation of Australia in the context of the current global environmental crisis is connected to the effects of climate change in relation to the post/colonial destruction of the ecological balance through interventions in fauna and flora and the exploitation of natural resources. The nexus between ecocide and genocide is thus at the core of Australian postcolonial ecocriticism, laying bare the links between and persistence of the ongoing histories of colonization, globalization and environmental destruction.

**Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier: ISBN 978-3-86821-774-2, 252 S., 17 Abb., kt., € 34,50 (2018);  
KOALAS – AUSTRALIEN STUDIEN, Vol. 14.**



**Wergin, Carsten and Erckenbrecht, Corinna:**

**Der Ruf des Schneckenhorns: Hermann Klaatsch (1863 – 1916). Ein Heidelberger Wissenschaftler in Nordwestaustralien, Heidelberg: heiBOOKS, 2018. 122 Seiten.  
DOI: [10.11588/heibooks.320.441](https://doi.org/10.11588/heibooks.320.441) (Open Access)**

**ISBN**

**978-3-946531-76-0 (PDF)**

**978-3-946531-77-7 (Softcover)**

This publication introduces original and so far unknown material of the Heidelberg scholar Hermann Klaatsch (1863-1916) about the cultural heritage of Indigenous groups in Northwest Australia. Between 1904 and 1907 Klaatsch conducted extensive ethnographic research and collecting activities in Australia. The analyses of his most productive time in Northwest Australia 1905/1906 presents new approaches concerning the history, influence and dissemination of the German academic tradition, its understanding of cultures and research ethics. Thus, this book makes a crucial contribution to provenance research, repatriation and cultural heritage in a globalized world.

Dr. **Carsten Wergin** is a sociocultural anthropologist and Research Group Leader in Transcultural Studies at Heidelberg University (German Excellence Initiative). His work is located at the intersections of culture, ecology and political economy, with regional foci in Australia, the Indian Ocean, as well as islands and coastal regions of the European Ultraperiphery. He is Vice-President of the German Australian Studies Association (GAST) and founding member of the Environmental Anthropology Working Group of the German Anthropological Association (GAA).

Dr. **Corinna Erckenbrecht** is a cultural anthropologist with an extensive work and research experience regarding collections from Indigenous Australia and Oceania in various museums in Germany and abroad. From 2004-2007 she conducted an in-depth research about Hermann Klaatsch at the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum – Kulturen der Welt in Cologne, financed by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation. Recently she worked at Heidelberg University in the Junior Research Group “The Transcultural Heritage of Northwest Australia: Dynamics and Resistencies” for the research project “From the homo heidelbergensis to the dugong dance: Indigenous Cultural Heritage in Northwest Australia as reflected in the German Science Tradition”.



## CONFERENCES

69, 00-681 Warszawa

**GAPS**

gesellschaft für anglophone postkoloniale studien  
association for anglophone postcolonial studies

International Association for Colonial  
and Postcolonial Linguistics

**IACPL**

### Joint Annual Conference of GAPS and IACPL

30 May-2 June 2019, University of Bremen

#### Organisers:

Prof. Dr. Kerstin Knopf (GAPS, INPUTS<sup>1</sup>, WoC<sup>2</sup>, U Bremen)  
Prof. Dr. Ingo Warnke (IACPL, CULCC<sup>3</sup>, WoC, U Bremen)  
Prof. Dr. Anna-Katharina Hornidge (ZMT<sup>4</sup>, WoC, FMS<sup>5</sup>, U Bremen)  
Prof. Dr. Michi Knecht (IFEK<sup>6</sup>, WoC, U Bremen)  
Prof. Dr. Thomas Stolz (IACPL, CULCC, U Bremen)

#### Postcolonial Oceans – Contradictions and Heterogeneities in the Epistemes of Salt Water

Postcolonial studies have a vested interest in embodied and discursive, social and political, historical and ecological dimensions of oceans. They foreground histories of colonization, imperial wars, the dispossession of territories, enslavement of people, and circulation of goods and ideas, in their entanglements with contemporary postcolonial societies, substantially shaping decolonial knowledge production, postcolonial literatures and academic discourses until today. In his interview on the third space, Homi Bhabha (1990) has pinpointed the inherent contradiction in the genesis of Western modernity: the progressive development of Western societies, individuals and thought traditions according to ideas and values that were monumentalized as the "Enlightenment" on the one hand, and the history of the West as despotic power pursuing various forms of colonial aggression and possession, on the other. Walter Mignolo (2000) and Paul Gilroy (1993) have likewise defined histories of colonization and enslavement as Western modernity's well-concealed darker side. Studies of oceans and coasts have generated a variety of heterogeneous and sometimes contradictory academic and public discourses from a range of different disciplinary perspectives, including postcolonial studies, the sociology of knowledge, anthropology, literary studies, linguistics and social studies of science and technology. A more systematic perspective on the relations between colonialism, postcolonialism, oceans and lands, rejecting and/or complementing one-sided terrestrial perspectives, emerged only gradually. Rupert Emerson, for instance, defines colonialism as "imposition of white rule on alien peoples inhabiting lands separated by salt water" (1969, 3), understanding salt water – in line with widespread Western ideas of seas and oceans – as *separating* lands, cultures, people and ideas. In contrast, Gísli Pálsson (1991, xvii) argues that different and isolated worlds were connected by colonial sea voyages into a "global but polarized network of power-relations". Epeli Hau'ofa (1994; 2008), working from a perspective grown in a marine epistemology, understands diverse Pacific islands, cultures and environments as a network, not separated but *linked* by the ocean – a "sea of islands". Extending this idea, Édouard Glissant's (1997) "archipelagic thinking" shifts understanding the entire world as a connected archipelago, an epistemic shift that is a counterpoint to insular thinking and allows registering the heterogeneities and myriad entanglements and creolization processes in our globalizing world. Early anthropology saw the sea as "atheoretical", while it became an explicit category of study in environmental history (Gillis 2004, 2011; Bolster 2012; Kehrt/Torma 2014), in geography (Steinberg 2001; Peters 2014, 2015) and maritime anthropology (Astuti 1995; Helmreich 2011). In the construed nature/culture divide, water appears as natural form and "uncontainable flux" as opposed to culture imagined as "land-based idiom", or it is perceived as materiality to

<sup>1</sup> Institute for postcolonial and transcultural studies

<sup>2</sup> Research network "Worlds of Contradiction"

<sup>3</sup> Former Creative Unit "Koloniallinguistik – Language in Colonial Contexts"

<sup>4</sup> Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research

<sup>5</sup> Research network "Fiction Meets Science"

<sup>6</sup> Department of anthropology and cultural research

channel (nature) as opposed to being a medium of pleasure, sustenance, travel and disaster (culture) (Helmreich 2011). The nature/culture divide implicates water as one domain "open to control and colonization by the other" (Strathern 1980). Critical maritime history grappled with the opposition between a fully historicized land vs. a supposedly atemporal, "ahistorical" sea that is "outside and beyond history" and researches oceans as polymorphous and transnational contact zones (Klein/Mackenthun, eds. 2004). Indigenous seascape epistemologies are often approaches "to knowing through a visual, spiritual, intellectual, and embodied literacy of the 'āina (land) and kai (sea)", explicitly stressing the nexus between sea and land, and knowing the ocean, wind, and land as interconnected system (Ingersoll 2016). Colonial exploration, colonization and (forced) migration via oceans have created cultural, linguistic and epistemic contact zones where transcultural processes, creole and pidgin languages, and pluriversal knowledges and narratives emerged, however implicated in a hierarchical power matrix (Pratt 1992; Warnke/Stolz/Schmidt-Brücken 2016). The sea prominently features in colonial literatures as both facilitating sea voyages and sustaining colonial myth-making (e.g. Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift, Herman Melville, Edgar Allan Poe), whereas in postcolonial literatures it often appears as lethal force enabling colonization and enslavement (e.g. Fred D'Aguiar, George Lamming) or life-giving force and as life itself, integrating all elements and beings (e.g. Eden Robinson, Patricia Grace, Linda Hogan, Alexis Wright). Contradictory and heterogeneous views and ideas of the ocean are commonplace, while knowledge production on and with oceans and saltwater appear to be under-researched through multidisciplinary scholarship. We want to extend the study of oceans and salt water as "theory machine", an "object that stimulates theoretical formulation" (Galison 2003), and research saltwater knowledge systems, knowledge production and narratives from various epistemological, geographical, cultural and disciplinary perspectives. We are particularly interested in:

- imaginaries of the seas and oceans in various discourse formations as well as colonial, postcolonial and decolonial genealogies of ocean, coastal and marine spaces;
- contradictory and heterogeneous concepts of marine spaces; likewise pluriversal ocean and coast-related epistemologies;
- entangled colonial histories of oceans with regard to the Black, Red and White Atlantic, the Black Pacific, and early non-Western cross-ocean contacts; the circulation of ideas and goods and their role in shaping ocean-related epistemes;
- salt water spheres as zones of epistemic and cultural contact, neo- and postcolonial communicative practices and linguistic smoothness;
- linguistic overlaps and language contact, the universalist spread of colonial languages and their status in contact zones, the threat of local languages;
- the role of European Atlantic port cities (e.g. Bremen, London, Rotterdam, Antwerp) in colonial histories of oceans and the role of port cities outside Europe (e.g. Dakar, Cape Town, Dubai City, Hong Kong) in world trade and global relations, incl. changing discourses constituting such port cities;
- the ship as vessel enabling and as metaphor for colonization, enslavement, migration, global trade, scientific exploration and various forms of harvesting marine and ocean floor resources;
- ecological and resource-related aspects of oceans such as rising sea levels, hurricanes, earthquakes, overfishing, resource extraction, and ocean pollution;
- symbolic oceans in colonial literary and non-literary texts and postcolonial constructions of oceans and salt water epistemologies in literature, theatre, film, electronic and other media.

#### Keynote Speakers:

Anne Collett (U Wollongong)  
Robbie Shilliam (Johns Hopkins U)  
Anne Storch (U Cologne)

Karin Amimoto Ingersoll (U Hawai'i) invited, tbc  
Rita Astuti (LSE London) invited, tbc  
Nicholas Faraclas (U Puerto Rico) invited, tbc

Please send abstracts outlining your theoretical approach, subject of study and argument (max 400 words) and short bios (max 150 words) to [woc@uni-bremen.de](mailto:woc@uni-bremen.de) by **31 Oct 2018**.

## **The 38th Australian Historical Association (AHA) Conference**

**8 - 12 JULY 2019**

**EMPIRE THEATRE, MASONIC TEMPLE (SOUTHERN CROSS LODGE),  
TOOWOOMBA CITY LIBRARY**

The 38th *Australian Historical Association (AHA)* Conference, hosted by USQ's School of Arts and Communication, invites submissions on the theme of Local Communities, Global Networks.

- How have the local and the global intersected, inspired and transformed experiences within and from Australia's history?
- How do the histories of Indigenous, imperial, migrant and the myriad of other communities and networks inform, contest and shape knowledge about Australia today?

Inspired by a photographic fragment of two children displaying their cultural heritage, the conference theme speaks to the centrality of History for engaging with community and family networks. Constructing livelihoods within an empire and a nation that have had a global reach, local communities have responded in diverse ways. The varieties of historical enquiry into this past enrich our understanding of Australian and world history. Local Communities, Global Networks draws together the latest research on the re-shaping of communities and the re-fashioning of imperial relationships and transnational in turn.

### **Organising committee:**

- [Catherine Dewhirst \(Chair Convenor\)](#)
- [Libby Connors \(Convenor\)](#)
- [Jayne Persian \(Convenor\)](#)
- [Amy Clarke \(University of the Sunshine Coast\)](#)
- [Martin Crotty \(University of Queensland\)](#)
- [Richard Nile \(James Cook University\)](#)
- [Fiona Paisley \(Griffith University\)](#)
- [David Roberts \(University of New England\)](#)
- [Celmara Pocock \(University of Southern Queensland\)](#)

### **Further information:**

**For further information, please email [AHA2019Conference@usq.edu.au](mailto:AHA2019Conference@usq.edu.au)**

## 2nd Biennial International Conference on Redefining Australia and New Zealand: Changes, Innovations, Reversals: Warsaw, 16-17 September 2019

This conference will be taking place at the **Faculty of Modern Languages building, University of Warsaw**. The purpose of our conference is to consolidate research groups in the field of Australian and New Zealand Studies, and to promote the culture of Australia and New Zealand in Europe. For our Warsaw conference, which will be followed by a publication, we aim to bring together scholars representing a variety of disciplines including history, political science, law, sociology, literary studies, film studies, linguistics in order to achieve a truly interdisciplinary perspective on Australia and New Zealand past and present; we would also be interested in hosting authors and artists who could offer us unique insights into the cultures of the Australasian region.

We invite papers on topics connected with, but not limited to, the exploration of Australian and New Zealand identities in a wide range of cultural texts, such as film, theatre, architecture, visual arts and media, including the social media and advertising. Based on notions of heterotopia and thirdspace, the proposals may address issues related to spaces of representation as “the terrain for the generation of ‘counterspaces,’ spaces of resistance to the dominant order arising precisely from their subordinate, peripheral or marginalized positioning” (Soja 1996, 68). Hence, the proposed papers may discuss power relations that affect both the construction and the representation of gender, ethnic and class identities in a variety of contexts. Referring to Benedict Anderson’s notion of “imagined communities,” the proposals may also explore the importance of history and geography in the process of creating Australian and New Zealand identities. The scope of themes may address (but is not limited to):

- **History** (Innovative Perspectives on Australia’s and New Zealand’s Past)
- **The ANZAC ‘Myth’** (De-Re-Constructions of Australia’s and New Zealand’s Participation in the Great War, the Second World War, and Post-1945 Military Conflicts)
- **Race and the Nation** (Indigenous Peoples in Colonial versus Post-Colonial Perspectives on Australia and New Zealand in Past and Contemporary Cultures)
- **Multiculturalism** (Inclusion versus “Otherness” in Australia and New Zealand of the ‘Here and Now’)
- **Gender** (‘Feminising’ the Past and Present of Australia and New Zealand; the Politics of Constructing National ‘Masculinities’; the Female versus the Male Body)
- **Environment** (The Ideology of Landscape: Australia and New Zealand from Ecocritical Perspectives)



- **Linguistics** (The Epistemology and Ideology of Language – Dialect/Discourse in the Australian and New Zealand National Contexts)
- **Culture** (Popularizing/Re-Thinking Australia and New Zealand in Literature, Film, Internet – Genres, Forms, Medias)
- **Critical Theory** (The Influence of Contemporary Thinking on Our Understanding of Australia's and New Zealand's Past and Present)
- **Contemporary Politics and Geopolitical Challenges** (Australia's and New Zealand's Present and Future)

**Keynote Speakers:**

**Prof. Dr. Ian Conrich**, University of Vienna, Austria

**Prof. Dr. Beate Neumeier**, University of Cologne, Germany

**Publication:**

Selected texts by conference contributors will be published 2020.

**Submissions:**

The language of the conference is English. Accepted conference participants will be given twenty minutes for their presentation, with an additional ten minutes for discussion. We ask for proposals up to 300 words. We would also ask for a biographical note, no longer than a 100 words, including your professional affiliation, title, publications.

**Contact:**

All submissions should be sent to Marzena Sokołowska-Paryż ([m.a.sokolowska-paryz@uw.edu.pl](mailto:m.a.sokolowska-paryz@uw.edu.pl)) and Anna Wojtyś ([a.wojtys@uw.edu.pl](mailto:a.wojtys@uw.edu.pl)).

**Deadline for proposals:**

**1 March 2019**

Confirmation of accepted participants will be sent by 15 March 2019

**Conference fees:**

Early Bird Registration 1 April – 31 May 2019: PLN450 or €115

Ph.D. Students: PLN 350 or €75

Regular Registration Fee 1 June – 30 July 2019 PLN 500 €125

Ph.D. students: PLN 400 or €100

**Conference Organizers (Institute of English Studies):**

Marzena Sokołowska-Paryż – Anna Wojtyś – Przemysław Uściński – Katarzyna Kociołek –

Piotr Szymczak – Anna Orzechowska – Maria Piątkowska – Andrzej Księżopolski

