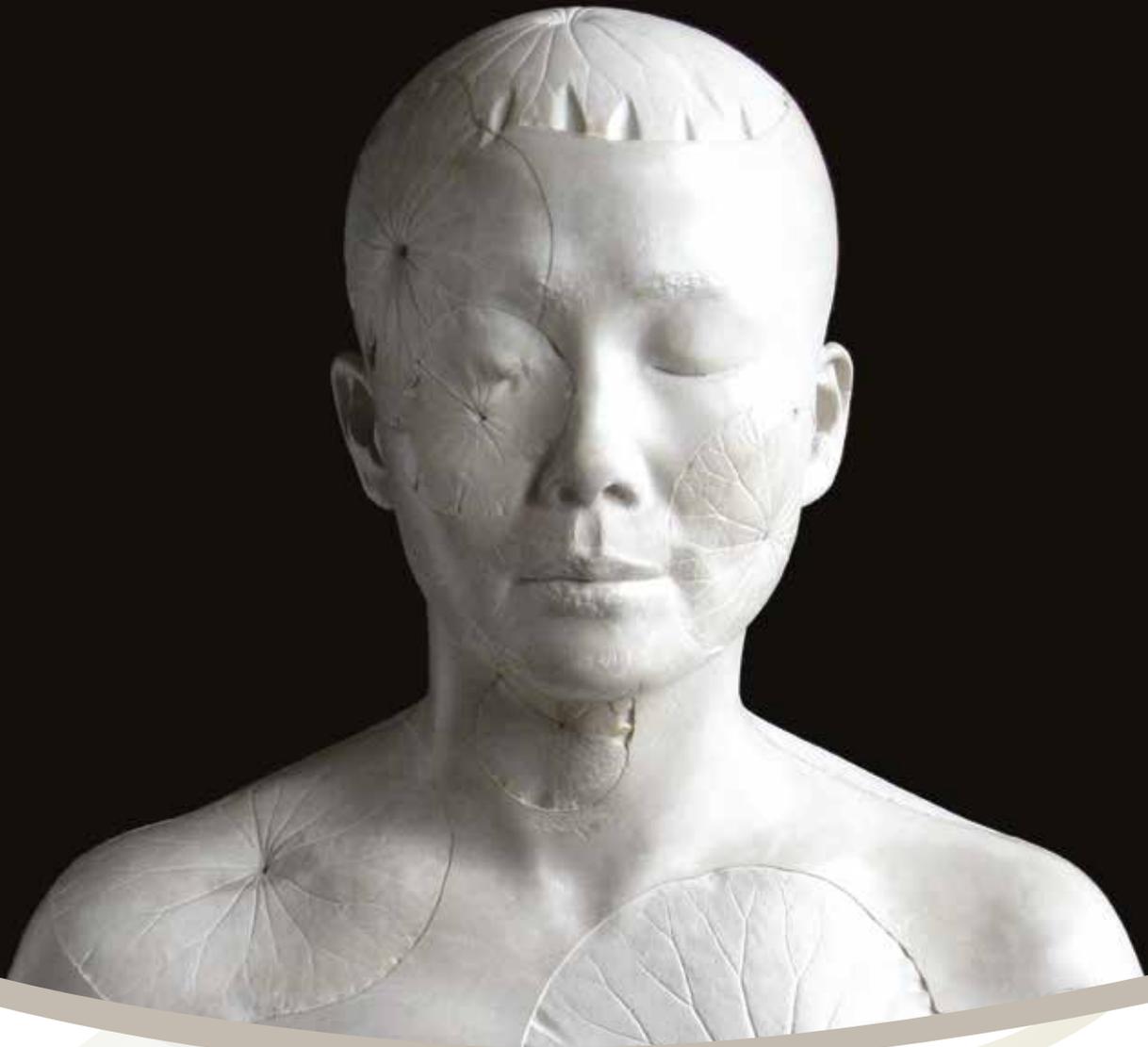


Humanities Australia

NUMBER 6, 2015



» PETER COCHRANE » KATE GRENVILLE » LESLEY JOHNSON

» MABEL LEE » LES MURRAY » TOM MURRAY » PAM PETERS

» ANTONIO SAGONA » GRAEME TURNER » SIMON WINCHESTER

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Welcome

I am delighted to welcome you to the sixth issue of **Humanities Australia**, the annual journal of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

The Australian Academy of the Humanities promotes excellence in the humanities in Australia for the benefit of the nation. Founded by Royal Charter in 1969, its nearly 600 distinguished Fellows are elected in recognition of the excellence and impact of their scholarship in fields including archaeology, art, Asian and European studies, classical and modern literature, cultural and communication studies, languages and linguistics, philosophy, musicology, history and religion. The Academy also provides advice to governments, industry, the media and the public on humanities and the arts. It administers a range of grants and awards, supports early career scholars, convenes workshops, and hosts an annual symposium.

Humanities Australia was established in 2010 and has become an important flagship publication for the Academy. It is one of the ways in which we support excellence in the humanities, and communicate its value to a broad audience. This issue showcases exciting humanities work about Australia and the world we inhabit, illustrating the value of humanities research for deepening our understanding of both. I hope you will enjoy reading **Humanities Australia**.



JOHN FITZGERALD FAHA
President, Australian Academy
of the Humanities, 2014–

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Editor's Introduction

» ELIZABETH WEBBY

*T***This issue of Humanities Australia** again aims to present a small sample of the outstanding research and writing being carried out by humanities scholars and arts practitioners in Australia and internationally. There is a particular focus here on material originally presented at the Academy's annual symposium in November 2014 and on essays about the First World War, to mark the centenary of the Anzac landing at Gallipoli in 1915.

The issue begins with the Academy Address given by our retiring President, Lesley Johnson, on the topic of 'Generosity and the Institutions of the Humanities'. In this warmly received lecture, she examined some of the changes and challenges to three of the institutions that have nurtured work in the humanities over the centuries: the library, the university and the academy. She concluded by urging us to act not only to sustain such generosity but to ensure that it is 'refreshed and reinvigorated to take historical forms appropriate for our times.' During her three years as President, Lesley Johnson provided a model of such generosity, devoting much time and thought to reinvigorating the Academy's international programs and refreshing its links with government bodies, as well as planning some major new initiatives.

A report on one of these, 'Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences: Data for the Future', was also delivered during the Symposium and is included here. As Graeme

Turner explains, this detailed examination of the current health of teaching and research in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences area was inspired by the 2012 report *Health of Australian Science* by the Chief Scientist, Professor Ian Chubb. Undertaken by Graeme Turner and Kylie Brass, the Academy's Policy and Projects Manager, this report provides for the first time, 'comprehensive empirical evidence' of what the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences do, 'the value they bring to the nation, and the conditions in which they do it.'

We are also delighted to include an edited transcript of the public lecture delivered at the Symposium by one of our international speakers, the distinguished author Simon Winchester. The large audience was enthralled and entertained by this account of the genesis of his books, particularly the more recent ones. In 'The Atlantic, the United States and the Pacific: How to Structure Books on Big Things' he emphasised the importance of structure in making this type of non-fiction readable: 'You can write lyrically about a brilliant idea but if the structure is all to breakfast time, people will go to sleep.'

As Simon Winchester noted at the beginning of his address, the 2014 Symposium was entitled 'Look it Up: Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, Atlases'. A comprehensive survey of the histories of these three essential works of reference, 'Transcending their Format: Dictionaries, Encyclopedias and

(above)
Academy
Secretariat,
Canberra, Australia.

PHOTO: AAH ARCHIVES

Atlases', was delivered by Pam Peters, who also helped organise the Symposium. As she demonstrates, the digital age has allowed all three to break out of the constraints of print publication, with 'maps that are scalable and multidimensional, an encyclopedia that is open-ended and open-authored, and dictionaries that are multimodal and multilingual.'

At the 2014 Fellows' Dinner held at the end of the Symposium, the Max Crawford Medal was presented to Dr Tom Murray from Macquarie University. This prestigious award is given biennially to an early-career humanities researcher 'whose publications contribute towards an understanding of their discipline by the general public.' Tom Murray's publications include three feature-length documentaries, the first two of which focused on Indigenous communities. In 'Screen Rites: Getting Close to Death and Dying', he discusses the filming of his third, *Love in Our Own Time* (2013). This was inspired by the very different attitudes to death and dying Murray had observed in Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Dying would of course have been very much on the minds of those who kept diaries while serving overseas from 1914–18. In "Diamonds of the Dustheap": Diaries from the First World War', Peter Cochrane discusses some which have been collected by the State Library of New South Wales. These were often begun on the voyage from Australia, and initially recorded the exotic scenes and experiences of foreign travel. Once the soldiers were immersed in battle, however, 'Assumptions changed and with them language. The quaint imperial conviction that war was manly and glorious gave way to the grim certainty that it was "butchery" or "murder" in a vast slaughterhouse.'

Some very different material remains of the War are the subject of Antonio Sagona's 'An Archaeology of the Anzac Battlefield'. He describes the evolution of the JHAS, which he led, where researchers from Australia, New Zealand and Turkey worked together from 2010–14 to study 'the tangle and tactile expressions of the Anzac Battlefield, which is without a doubt the best-preserved First World War battleground.' Among their fascinating findings were remains of the very different types of food consumed by the soldiers. The Anzacs had to

make do with tinned food such as corned beef and jam, while the Turkish soldiers were served a much healthier diet of fresh food, including bread baked on the battlefield in brick ovens.

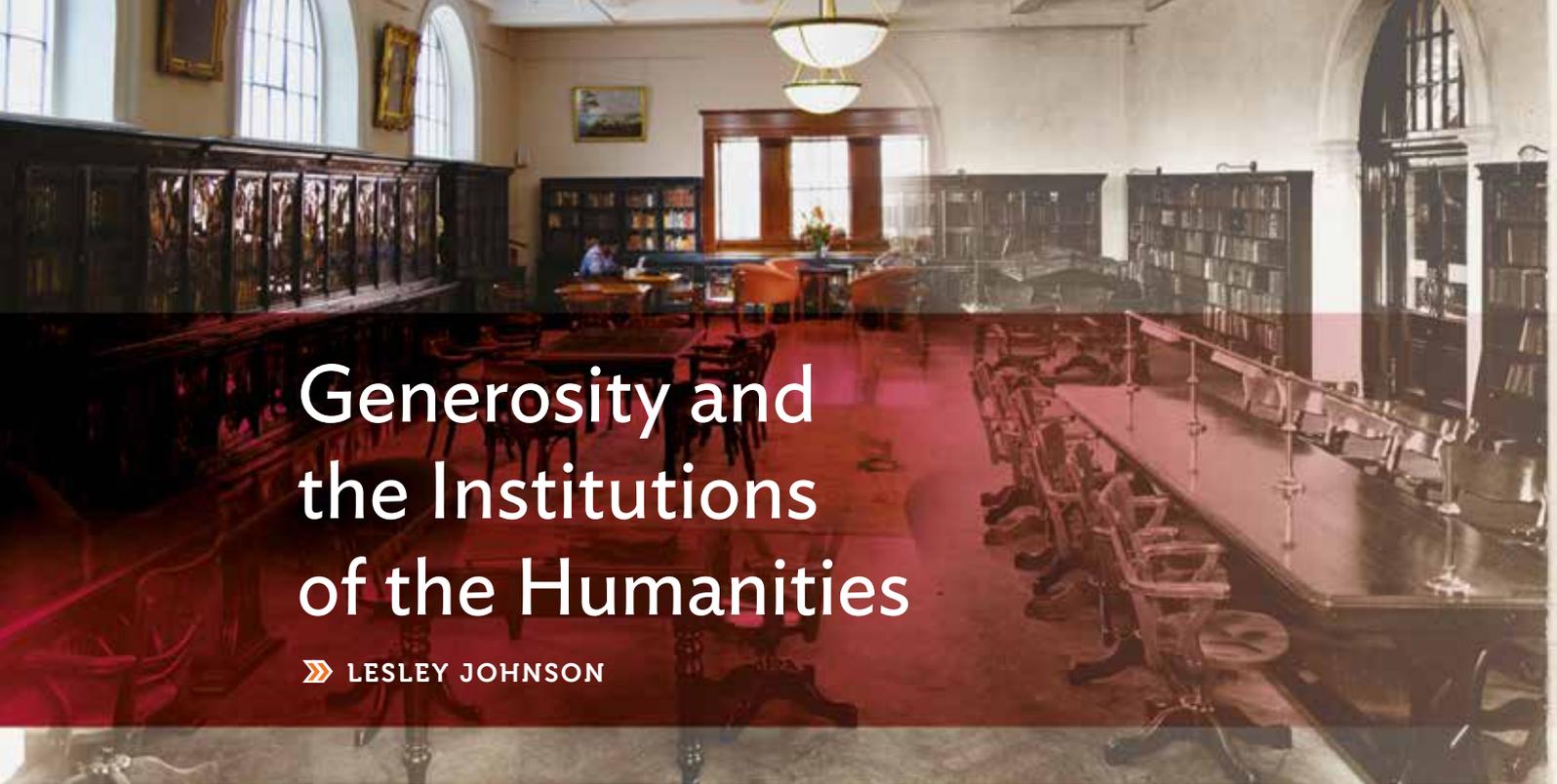
We are also delighted to include in this issue Mabel Lee's essay on the work of a leading contemporary artist: 'Ah Xian: Challenging the Spatial Limitations of Sculptural Art'. As readers will see from the photographs of some of his artworks, kindly provided by Ah Xian, one of his aims has been to celebrate both the human body and traditional Chinese arts and crafts by bringing them together in highly original combinations. As Mabel Lee notes, 'As a self-taught artist who had grown up during the Cultural Revolution, Ah Xian staunchly defends his own sensibilities and perceptions as an artist who responds to art as a calling: he is the sole arbiter of his aesthetics and art practice.'

This issue also features work by two Honorary Fellows of the Academy, whose poems and novels have won wide recognition and many national and international awards. Les Murray has just published a new collection of poetry, bringing to well over forty the number that have appeared in Australia and overseas. His two poems take us close to the beginnings and ending of a life. In 'When Two Per Cent Were Students', Murray recalls his student days during the 1950s, with their 'Gorgeous expansion of life'. 'The Care', however, movingly confronts the realities of old age, while also celebrating the carers.

Kate Grenville's 'Hospitality' originally was part of her celebrated novel *The Secret River*, now adapted for an ABC TV series, after an earlier very successful stage adaptation. Grenville is known for the dozens of drafts she writes of each of her books; somewhere along the way she decided to cut out this section. We are grateful to her for allowing it to be included here, giving us another glimpse of convict turned settler William Thornhill as he negotiates his new life in Australia.



ELIZABETH WEBBY AM FAHA
Editor, Australian Academy
of the Humanities, 2009–



Generosity and the Institutions of the Humanities

» LESLEY JOHNSON

A public controversy erupted at the beginning of 2014 over the Mitchell Library Reading Room of the State Library of New South Wales.¹ Nearly ten thousand signatures were gathered through an online petition calling for a rethink of the library's plans for this historic room. Those plans included the relocation of readers using the library's famous research collections into a smaller, but also historically significant, room. The library proposed this in response to complaints from researchers about noise and distraction from other library users. The Mitchell Library Reading Room was to become solely a public reading room. Users of this space would be able to obtain materials online using their own computers, but not access any of the library's books or research collections. Contributing to public alarm, no doubt, was the fact that reference books on the ground floor of the Reading Room were rapidly and unceremoniously moved to the library's other reading room soon after these changes were announced in late 2013.

Distinguished literary figures and public intellectuals, such as David Malouf and Phillip Adams, were associated with the petition. Its organisers circulated, locally and internationally, an email calling for signatures:

A library without books just isn't a library at all. Yet such a fate could befall the Mitchell Library, if the government goes through with a planned \$25 million

'revitalisation'. Not only is the library's staff being cut. The government is proposing to convert the Mitchell Reading Room into a public space equipped with WiFi but with no books to speak of.

The issue attracted considerable press coverage. Elizabeth Farrelly, a regular columnist in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and an architect by training, wrote in early March 2014:

The \$25 million 'revitalisation' of the Mitchell Library Reading Room is an attack both on one of Sydney's finest rooms and on the minority it nurtures; the last minority that it is OK to trash, writers and thinkers. ...



(above)
Montage showing the (former) Mitchell Library Reading Room, c. 1911–12, on the right, and the room today (now the Friends Room, since refurbished) of the State Library of New South Wales, photographed in Oct 2014, superimposed on the left.

PHOTOS: STATE LIBRARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES & L. JOHNSON

(right)
The Mitchell Library Reading Room at the State Library of New South Wales, October 2014, since refurbished.

PHOTO: L. JOHNSON

This grand, glass-ceilinged, book-lined sandstone trove was a rare refuge from godless populism. It still had its microfiche and its card catalogues. Still had its globally renowned Australian document collection — the biggest and most significant in the world — including maps, drawings and journals from the start. Still obeyed David Scott Mitchell's will, providing a space for scholars to read, pore, dream and write.

No longer. The collection will be merged and dungeoned. The beautiful room where Manning Clark and Patrick White wrote will become a wi-fi hub for school-kids with backpacks and water bottles. Nothing sacred will remain.²



Many of the claims being made in this campaign were inaccurate and misleading but in April, as the petition neared its target of ten thousand signatures, the library moved to take the heat out of the situation by making a number of concessions. The major one was that access to the library's special collections would continue to be facilitated in the Reading Room, in a newly refurbished, glassed-off area to provide the necessary security for rare materials. And the reference books were returned to the lower shelves of the room.

I want to reflect here on some of the changes to three kinds of civic institutions over the last fifty or so years, changes that are continually reshaping our ways of working and thinking

about ourselves as humanities scholars. The institutions I discuss are the research library, the university and the learned academy. They serve and influence in important ways the form and content of the disciplinary knowledges associated with the humanities. As well, they provide important spaces in which modes of social exchange, values and ways of thinking and writing associated with these disciplines are shaped and enacted. And, as we have seen with the Mitchell Library, they are also institutions in which various publics, including humanities scholars, invest a considerable amount of emotion.

In discussing the major changes that have impacted on these three institutions, I show that generosity has been fundamental to the norms of the humanities and to how these institutions have served and shaped humanities scholarship in the past. Tracing the now embattled character of this institutional virtue, I argue that a renewed focus on generosity provides us with a way of thinking about what it is we, as humanities scholars, want to protect, recreate or rework in our practices and institutions for the future.³

THE RESEARCH LIBRARY



Before his death in 2008, Greg Dening, one of Australia's most imaginative and humane scholars, often wrote of his love of libraries. In Peter Cochrane's edited collection of essays commemorating the National Library of Australia's first one hundred years, Dening celebrated the experience of being in a research library, communing with its treasures. He paid

(left)

Main Reading Room, Public Library of New South Wales, 1950s.

PHOTO: STATE LIBRARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

(below)

'Bird's Eye View of Domed Reading Room, Public Library Victoria', Sear's Studio, photographer (ca. 1950).

PHOTO: STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA



(above, top)

The corridor outside the Mitchell Librarian's Office, State Library of New South Wales, October 2014.

PHOTO: L. JOHNSON

(above, bottom)

The (then) Mitchell Library Reading Room, Public Library of New South Wales, c. 1911–12.

PHOTO: STATE LIBRARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

tribute to the work of librarians in manuscript rooms, their experience, professional skills and the imagination required of them.⁴ In other essays and lectures he focused on the pleasures of libraries as physical spaces. In one, he wrote of the State Library of Victoria as a 'magical place', of loving the 'heavy silence' — a silence, he said, 'you could feel on you (sic) shoulders, something like standing on the edge of the Grand Canyon or in the Australian bush.'⁵ He also spoke in the same reverential tones of the Mitchell Library, where he would take groups of Melbourne students for a week each year, to immerse them not just in documents but in the Library itself.

In a lecture given at the Mitchell Library in 2003, he talked of a 'love affair' that had begun forty-eight years ago:

I loved the walk down the corridor past the Librarian's office to the old Reading Room [and] I treasure the memory of coming into that room and seeing the greats of Australian history in their seats: Manning Clark, A. G. L. Shaw, Lloyd Robson, Russell Ward, Keith Hancock, Geoffrey Serle ...⁶

Ironically perhaps, Dening was speaking here of the original Mitchell Library Reading Room, the small special collections room that the State Library had proposed in 2013 to restore to its previous use, not the large one that generated the controversy I outlined earlier.⁷

In the inaugural Greg Dening Annual Lecture on 'History and the Creative Imagination', Tom Griffiths honoured what he referred to as a 'gift of Greg's' — of how he helped us 'be generous in our scholarship and in our scholarly lives'. Just as Dening paid tribute to the work of the curators and librarians in manuscript and collecting libraries, Griffiths drew attention to the way he acknowledged, 'elaborately and discursively', mentors, teachers, colleagues and students.⁸

In writing of his love of particular libraries in which he had worked, Dening, I suggest, was also weaving the effects of those physical spaces into the story of his scholarship, into a reflection on how he thought and wrote.

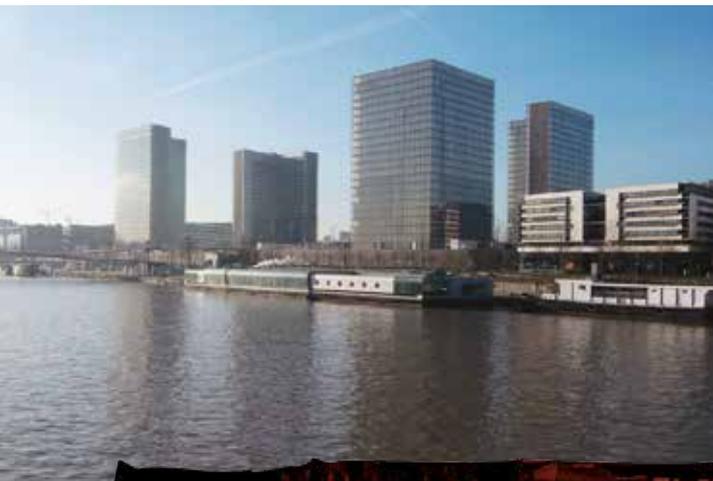
And he was seeking to teach us to do the same, to be similarly generous and recognise the generosity not only of our colleagues but also of these institutions and their physical spaces. He identified the silence, the grandness of the spaces, the community they created, the sense of scholarship and the pleasures of reading that such libraries conveyed and supported.

Libraries, in this sense, are spaces in which the humanities are performed. But they are not just symbolic of certain practices and values that humanities scholars and their audiences might share. As Dening was suggesting, these physical and social spaces have real effects in terms of how we think and work and the forms of social exchange we experience, value and create in such spaces.⁹ For Dening, the library spaces he loved

were generous in their support of humanities scholarship and contributed to the shaping of that scholarship itself to be generous.

* * *

Dening was still writing of his love of the library in the early years of the twenty-first century but, at least several decades earlier, major changes had started appearing in ideas about libraries and how their spaces should be designed and used. In *Future Libraries* (1993), R. Howard Bloch and Carla Hesse invited a range of writers to consider the ‘force field of passions’ that erupted around the Bibliothèque nationale de France and its four modernist towers in the shape of open books built in the late 1980s. A number of essays reflected on the changing architecture, and changes to the uses, of national libraries; others considered the challenges and opportunities created by the move to digitise collections.



their planning — buildings like the Louvre. Generosity in this sense is about the inclusive, democratic character of both the buildings and the institutions they house, the way in which they welcome and serve many different kinds of publics.

Vidler, however, was one of the critics of this new library. For him, it was ‘dominated by the expression of books in storage (in the towers), and books already read ...; the place of reading itself is strangely absent’. He argued that the book was valorised in the symbolism of the towers only as a static object, with the processes of researching and reading effaced. He contrasted this architecture to that of the great reading rooms of nineteenth century national library buildings, such as in Henri Labrousse’s for the French Imperial National Library, a precursor to the Bibliothèque nationale and Sidney Smirke’s British Library Reading Room (subsequently embalmed as an exhibition space in what has become solely the British Museum).¹¹ Clearly, the Mitchell Library Reading Room is also the kind of traditional space Vidler lauds as appropriate for a national or public library, as is the domed reading room of the State Library of Victoria.

Vidler was drawing attention to changing trends in architecture that both reflect and shape different ways of accommodating the various publics who use libraries today. His concern was that the new modern architecture of libraries celebrates and facilitates their democratic openness at the expense of enabling the practices

(left)
The four towers of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

PHOTO: 'BIBLIOTHEQUEENF17F.JPG' BY SCARLETGREEN, FLICKR <[HTTPS://WWW.FLICKR.COM/PHOTOS/9160678@N06/752287563/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/9160678@N06/752287563/)> CREATIVE COMMONS (CC BY 2.0) <[CREATIVECOMMONS.ORG/LICENSES/BY/2.0/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/)>

... THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE... WAS TO BE GUIDED BY A ‘PHILOSOPHY OF OPENNESS — EMBRACING ALL FIELDS OF KNOWLEDGE, WELCOMING READERS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE’.

Conceived by then President François Mitterrand and launched as a project for a new national library in July 1988, the Bibliothèque nationale de France was to be guided by a ‘philosophy of openness — embracing all fields of knowledge, welcoming readers from all walks of life’.¹⁰ In his essay, Anthony Vidler noted that the architect of the modernist towers, Dominique Perrault, situated his work on the library ‘in a line of *grands projects*’ that have combined, in his terms, ‘grandeur’ and ‘generosity’ in

and performance of reading and scholarship associated with books and libraries in the past.

Other writers have pointed to the way in which the digitisation of library collections is having a similar impact on the readerly practices and experiences of their users. Carla Hesse, a few years after the publication of *Future Libraries*, writing about the library in the digital age, concedes that digitisation of library collections ‘holds out the promise of unprecedented possibilities for the expansion of knowledge and



(above)

The Friends Room, of the State Library of New South Wales, previously the Mitchell Library Reading Room, photographed in October 2014, since refurbished.

PHOTO: L. JOHNSON

our power to access it'. But at the same time, she warns, it threatens to undermine any sense that the library once conveyed and facilitated of a synchronous form of community and a space for reflexivity, for the 'slow form of exchange', where there is time and space for reflection and debate.¹²

Building on Hesse's argument, Rey Chow claims that the 'informatization of knowledge'¹³ constitutes a major challenge to the ways in which we acquire, disseminate and preserve knowledge. With book knowledge, she argues, the principle of 'reflective delay' organised the ways of working of humanities scholars, as work conducted through 'the deliberate and reflective search for knowledge'. Today we are in danger of the 'expedient access to information' now defining 'what it means to know'.¹⁴

In 2015, digitisation of library collections continues apace. Those of us who are now enjoying the luxury of being able to access from our homes an extraordinary range of materials from national and international collections only wish the process could be accelerated. In the meantime public libraries — national and local — are buzzing as school students and other sections of the general public use their

spaces to access the web and, to some extent, their reference materials. And at night and during the weekends, libraries are increasingly running events: offering a range of talks and exhibitions in their community engagement and educational roles.

Public libraries today, then, are serving a widely diverse clientele and juggling divergent missions. Changes to the physical spaces of libraries and digitisation of their collections are indicative of their democratic openness as they seek to engage a broad set of publics. But the very busyness of libraries today also suggests that there is an increasing danger of expedient access to information becoming the sole way of knowing in this space. The particular kind of generosity libraries have extended towards scholarly work and the slow and reflective search for knowledge and understanding that they nurtured in the past, appear to be under siege.

Changes to the physical spaces of research libraries and digitisation of collections are both reflecting the emergence of new intellectual and bodily practices for scholars and at the same time shaping them. The deep emotional investment in the Mitchell Library Reading Room that became so apparent early in 2014, articulates,

I suggest, alarm about the loss of a particular kind of intimate intellectual community and a public presence for a set of practices involving reading, silence, stillness and the sort of thinking and social exchange that go along with these. Even though we, as humanities scholars, may be enthusiastic users of the digitised collections of research libraries, it seems many of us are also profoundly invested in the buildings and institutions of public libraries, which symbolise particular ways of being and working as humanities scholars. In the past, their generosity has shaped and sustained humanities scholarship and a particular kind of intellectual community in a specific historical form.

In thinking about these matters, we need to recognise that changes to libraries' organisation and modes of operating are part of a wide range of complex developments impacting on our worlds. Instead of simple defensive responses to such changes, to protect certain traditional spaces and what they symbolise about our idea of the library, we need to consider what we as a scholarly community want of the research library today and what forms its generosity towards its

Australia. In her usual carefully nuanced way, she notes that the training she received as a literature student was predicated on a notion of a consistent and durable vocation. This world is 'becoming unimaginable now'. The 'community of scholars' that shaped her as a student shared an ethos with a range of humanities disciplines and with the university as a whole. It was a world, Morris suggests, that commanded, 'ineffably', a 'life-long allegiance' for the 'very small number of students, by today's standards', who continued on to postgraduate studies at that time.¹⁵

In recent decades, Morris argues, we have seen a reshaping of humanities research and scholarship by 'a science-based model of knowledge', a result as much of 'drastic changes in university funding' as of changing understandings and practices around knowledge production. In this new world, humanities scholars have learnt to 'fake it', acquiring the skills to produce funding applications as a particular genre of writing.¹⁶

In another paper canvassing similar issues about the humanities, Morris suggests that



... WE NEED TO CONSIDER WHAT WE AS A SCHOLARLY COMMUNITY WANT OF THE RESEARCH LIBRARY TODAY ...

different publics might take for the future. I will return to this issue later. But, whatever we think we might want of libraries in the future, we clearly need to work through these issues with librarians as they manage a huge but fascinating set of challenges for their institutions.

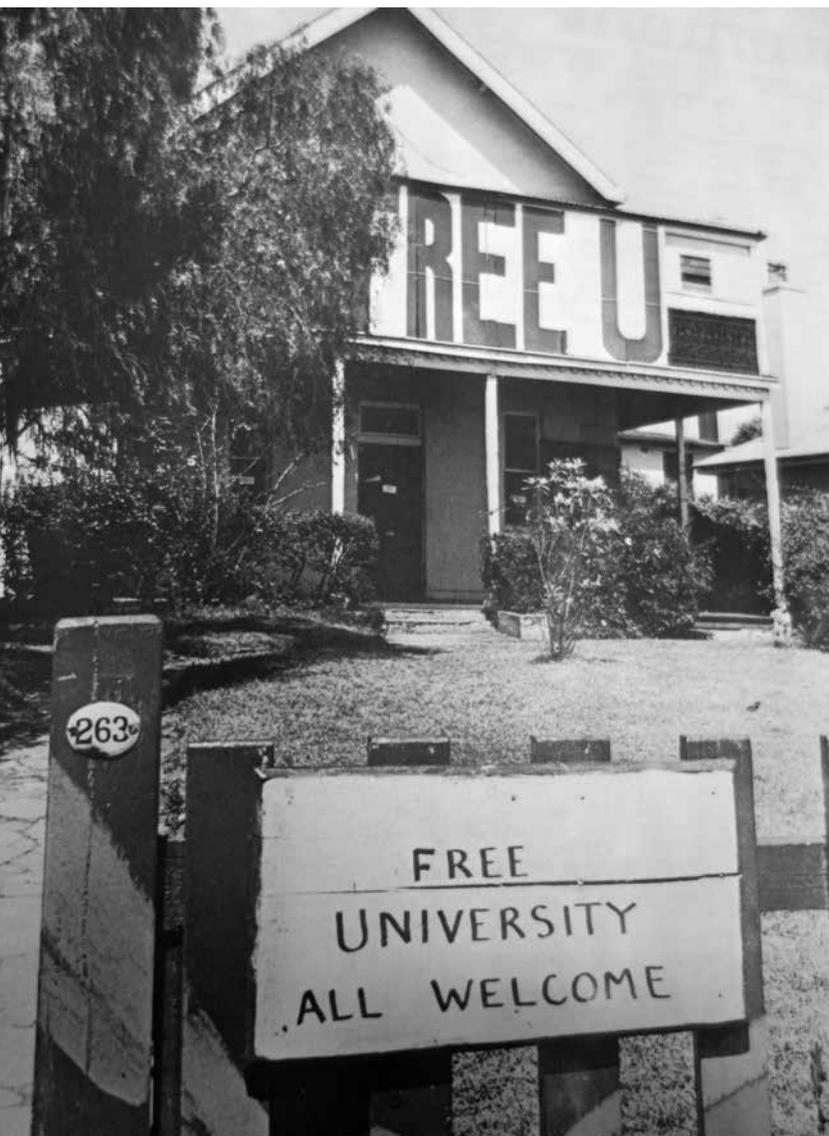
The continual transformation of universities as public institutions over the last few decades also poses significant challenges to the values, dispositions, and material practices of humanities scholars, as well as to ideas about and the functioning of scholarly communities. I turn to these now.

THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY

In a number of essays, Meaghan Morris has reflected on changes over the last thirty or so years to the world of humanities scholars in

junior scholars today have not experienced any other kind of academy.¹⁷ At one level this claim is probably true but, I believe, does not acknowledge sufficiently how complex our relationships as humanities scholars are to what is today a very confusing institution. I became more aware of this complexity a couple of years ago at a Cultural Studies Association of Australia conference held in Sydney. There, English academic Rosalind Gill spoke of academics having a 'passionate investment' in the 'idea of academic work' and a 'sacrificial orientation to the myth of autonomy' that 'keeps us working at 2 am'. Our complicit fascination with the ideals on which our idea of academic work is based, she concluded, means that we do not challenge the audit culture that makes us one of the 'most surveilled occupational groups in history'.¹⁸

This lively session of the conference generated considerable discussion from the floor. It made



(above)

The headquarters of the Free University in 1969, located at that time in Oxford Street, Paddington, Sydney.

PHOTO: FREE U. SOURCES, ARTICLES AND DOCUMENTS ON THE FREE UNIVERSITY, THE JOURNAL OF THE FREE UNIVERSITY, NO. 1, 1969

me acutely aware of how dearly continuing generations of humanities scholars, despite the dominance of the audit culture in our universities, hold on to an ideal of the university that I too had committed myself to when I went to Sydney University as an undergraduate in the mid to late 1960s. I did not find the ‘community of scholars’ I had hoped to be part of in the formal structures of the university but found it in my second year in the ‘Free University’. In 1967 this was established by a group of undergraduate and postgraduate students in an old terrace house in Darlington near Sydney University. There we read and discussed a range of literary, philosophical and social sciences texts, often late into the night, in loosely organised groups committed to a climate of intellectual freedom and critical thought and debate, ideals we

thought universities should be about but were failing to deliver.¹⁹

Interestingly, a group of young scholars and PhD students in Melbourne recently set up a ‘Free University’ in 2009. This organisation reflects some of the same idealism that students involved in the earlier Free University had about the university in the late 1960s. Writing in 2010 about his involvement in the Melbourne project, Aurélien Mondon expresses his dismay at how ‘knowledge for its own sake seems to have lost its currency in a world where “outcomes” have become the goal of tertiary education’. Tutoring in French, both before and during his PhD, Mondon learnt that ‘It was clear that universities were no longer what I had dreamt they should be. Most students no longer go there to broaden their intellectual horizons, but merely to get a job.’²⁰ His dream of a particular kind of university is reminiscent of the passionate investment in the idea of academic work that Rosalind Gill suggests haunts academe more generally today, even though the reality is different.

This same dream can be found in the memoirs of earlier generations of humanities scholars writing about their student experiences and what drove their commitment to becoming an academic. Leonie Kramer speaks of her ‘impossible dream’ of going to Oxford University and speculates that it was inspired by several of Matthew Arnold’s poems.²¹ Similarly, Kathleen Fitzpatrick writes of going to Oxford in the 1920s with her ‘head stuffed full of dreams gained from books.’²² And Andrew Riemer, more circumspectly, admits to having had dreams of walking among ‘dreaming spires garnered mostly from old Ealing comedies and *Brideshead Revisited*.’²³ He speculates that the architecture of Sydney University, where he was an undergraduate in the 1950s — ‘Blacket’s sandstone extravaganza’ as he calls it — may have furnished the model and further inspiration for his dreams.

What these memoirs illustrate is the level of investment that earlier generations of humanities scholars had in a particular idea of the university — one in which a community of scholars was driven by a commitment to a particular relationship to knowledge and scholarship. They shared, too, an appreciation



of particular modes of exchange and forms of conduct. But, as I have noted, the discussion provoked by Rosalind Gill's paper also demonstrates that this emotional investment continues to shape the relationship that at least some members of later generations of humanities scholars have to the contemporary university, and, no doubt, to other institutions of the humanities, such as the research library.

Ruth Barcan, in her recent book *Academic Life and Labour* (2013), similarly argues that many contemporary academics continue to see their academic work as a vocation. They hold onto a belief in the university as functioning as a gift economy, one that 'secures the ties and obligations that bind people into a community'.²⁴ Work and life are inseparable in this idea of having a vocation. The individual is committed to such a life because of a fundamental belief in the meaningfulness of the work, a sense of obligation to one's fellow workers and a conception of the university as having a fundamental social mission. But no academic today, she believes, can understand themselves and their work in terms of this single idea. Barcan sees three different ideas of the university operating within our

institutions — the scholarly, the bureaucratic and the corporate — jostling with each other to make a range of contradictory demands on the academic. The values, the forms of accountability and belonging, of these three ideas of the university sit uneasily alongside, overlap or often cut directly across each other. In this precarious world, the modern academic has had to learn how to manage three sets of demands on them and their work, more-or-less successfully enabling this by developing hybrid identities, often, as Barcan documents, at great personal cost.²⁵

As a result, the scholarly practices of humanities academics have changed significantly. In particular, the importance of research grants since the late 1980s in advancing the prestige of universities has meant that humanities scholars have needed to learn how to conceptualise their research in terms of 'projects' and 'outcomes', to undertake more than one 'project' at a time, and to work in teams of researchers. And, in possibly the most profound change, humanities academics have increasingly learnt to conceptualise themselves as 'researchers' for whom teaching is a problem in terms of demands on their time, rather than



(above)

University of
Sydney quadrangle

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a set of practices through which humanities scholarship is performed and furthered.

Has this led to our 'faking' it, as Meaghan Morris suggests? For some perhaps this is the best description. The changes to how we do things and understand our work are certainly profound. But many humanities scholars, including some trained in the 1950s and 1960s, when the idea of a vocation was more dominant, have adapted and learnt to flourish in this modern university. In doing so they demonstrate how humanities scholarly practices are constantly shaped by the institutions in which we work. Indeed, in reflecting on these processes, we need to remind ourselves that earlier ways of being humanities scholars were also historically shaped. The scholar working alone for long periods of time on a major book, for example, who understands him or herself

of humanities research' working locally and internationally.²⁷

Here and in other papers, however, Morris is passionately interested in making clear what humanities scholars should still, without sentimentality, wish to retain of past practices, values and modes of social exchange. Many of these she sees as being too 'exclusive' to sustain on the public purse in the current political context.²⁸ But she has also argued, in various settings, for the need to retain the importance of critique, independent thought, intellectual freedom and a sense of joy in what humanities scholars do. In a 2005 paper she summarised this beautifully as holding onto 'that old, irritating, precious sense of obligation to something more than the market, larger than a profession, and more vivid in its human complexity than a stripped down research "user"'.²⁹



THIS SENSE OF OBLIGATION TO SOMETHING BIGGER THAN OURSELVES ...
HAS BEEN SHAPED HISTORICALLY WITHIN THE WORLDS OF HUMANITIES SCHOLARSHIP
BY THE GENEROSITY OF OUR INSTITUTIONS.

as a scholar in particular ways, was also formed over time in particular historical contexts (and remarkably recent ones at that). Similarly, the kind of scholarly community that was shaped and performed in institutional settings, such as the public research library of the twentieth century or university humanities departments in the 1960s and 1970s, was also a particular historical form of community, fashioned in and by a more socially exclusive institution than today's.

Meaghan Morris demonstrates a keen sense of this history in an article on the public intellectual co-authored with Iain McCalman in 1998. They trace changes to spaces and institutions, including universities, pointing to how these no longer make it possible to define 'a single omniscient scholar' as the public intellectual. This model 'emerged in its current form at a particular moment in the more recent history of Australian universities — one which is now well behind us'.²⁶ Instead, the work of public intellectuals is now conducted across 'networks of specialised producers and consumers

This sense of obligation to something bigger than ourselves, I suggest, has been shaped historically within the worlds of humanities scholarship by the generosity of our institutions. This is the generosity that Greg Dening both exemplified and celebrated in his writings on research libraries. As a scholarly disposition it has involved a reflective kind of thinking, an openness of mind, a respect for others and a desire to engage with and support one's current and potential future colleagues in a collective commitment to the joys of scholarship and a scholarly life. The institutions that have played a central role in encouraging, supporting and symbolising these virtues, such as the library and the university, have, in the past, provided the spaces for and trainings in this scholarly disposition, just as they have provided a place in which a sense of community and belonging could be experienced and articulated. We need to identify ways in which this sense of obligation to something bigger than ourselves can be sustained and reinvented for the twenty-first century, and in doing so, how the generosity of

our institutions can similarly be retained and recreated where necessary.

I turn, finally, to the learned academy as another institution of the humanities that has been reshaped significantly at various times in its history. I suggest it is also one where we can hold onto and revitalise precisely this sense of obligation to something bigger than ourselves and take a leading role in refreshing the generosity of the institutions of the humanities. The learned academy is a space where we might take the opportunity to define more clearly, as humanities scholars, what it is that we value and want to take into the future in our practices and dispositions, our engaging with the institutions I have called ‘institutions of the humanities’, as well as our ways of functioning as a community.

THE LEARNED ACADEMY

The French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, in an essay published in English in 1997, argued that Europe was progressively, incrementally, breaking away from the gift economy thanks to the spread of calculation and self-interest as dominating forces in civic institutions. He called for collective investment in institutions that create universes in which generosity and a refusal of self-interest or egoistic calculation are encouraged and rewarded. These civic virtues, he observed, are the product of the pedagogic labour of such institutions; generosity as a disposition needs to be deliberately taught.³⁰

The history of the Australian Academy of the Humanities as a learned academy suggests that it, like the research library and the university, has been a space in which such virtues have been encouraged and celebrated, albeit in particular historical forms. Deryck Schreuder, a former President of the Academy, has drawn attention in a number of contexts to what he refers to as the rapidly disappearing courtly gentlemen of the humanities.³¹ Even though he has not elaborated at any length on this, no doubt ambivalent, lament, Schreuder gave some sense of the world that he sees as disappearing in an obituary written on the death in 1990 of John Ward, one of the Foundation Fellows of the Academy. Ward, a respected historian, was vice chancellor of the University of Sydney

from 1981 to 1990. He died tragically in a train accident shortly after his retirement. In an eloquent tribute to Ward, Schreuder wrote of his ‘character, personality and style’ in relation to his work as a vice chancellor as well as his scholarly work:

He certainly could be confident and courtly, both professional and professorial. Yet he also retained about him an early shyness and a gentle reserve. Combined with a certain endearing ‘unworldliness’, it made him a very human academic. ... The capacity to see life in all its preposterous guises, allowed him the precious qualities of magnanimity and proportion.³²

The image of the ‘courtly gentleman’ as characterising the personal style of Fellows of the Australian Academy of the Humanities is, of course, clearly a gendered one. But I am interested in the way in which it captures a certain disposition — personal characteristics, bodily comportment, scholarly practices, a set of values and an ethic — associated with a particular way of being a humanities scholar, in the past at least. Other obituaries of Foundation Fellows of the Academy elaborate further on this set of traits. For instance, Bill Ritchie describes George Shipp, an eminent classical scholar who died in 1980, as a hugely influential teacher who inspired students with his ‘enthusiasm’ for languages but who was also an ‘extremely modest man’.

Those who knew him were at once impressed by the acuteness and honesty of his mind and by the range of his learning even in areas where he would disclaim expertise, while his personal warmth and humanity won him both respect and affection.³³

Enthusiasm or passion for their area of scholarship is frequently mentioned in obituaries of Foundation Fellows; so is generosity — whether explicitly using this term or not. To give one more example, David Armstrong, who himself recently died, described the distinguished philosopher and public intellectual Alan Ker Stout, who died in 1983, in these terms:

he brought a quick intelligence, intellectual grasp, a flair for putting things simply and clearly, together with a genuine respect for the views of others and readiness to appreciate their point of view. These virtues served him well as a teacher and academic. He was always an approachable person, with something to say himself and wanting to know what others had to say.³⁴

These accounts of the attributes of Fellows in the Academy are of a particular personality shaped in a particular historical moment. They describe a way of being in the world and sensibilities that Ian Hunter has characterised as resulting from a set of practices of ‘aesthetic-ethical self-cultivation’ that arose in the nineteenth century within a minority vocation.³⁵ But in the twentieth century these ‘arts of living’, as Michel Foucault described them,³⁶ began to be more broadly disseminated through popular education and the increasing democratisation of university education after the Second World War.

What interests me in these obituaries are the ways in which they are stories of the generosity of the person — stories about an interest in others, openness to other ways of thinking, a desire to encourage others, warmth and magnanimity. And they are stories about engagement with a larger world, a world of thinking and reflection that can also be characterised as generous in the sense of seeking to engage in something bigger than the individual self’s world, something that requires scholars to be continually open to others’ thinking.

This was, of course, within a relatively small and homogeneous community of scholars of the 1960s and 1970s. As Ian Donaldson observed in his 2009 Academy Address, early European academies were conceived essentially as clubs exclusive to men. Following to some extent in this tradition, he noted, the Australian Academy of the Humanities was proposed to the Queen in 1969 by ten male members of the Australian Humanities Research Council — its predecessor institution — and one female member (Ursula Hoff).³⁷ But what the Academy of that period also exemplified was an institution of the gift economy that still operated

powerfully in the modern university of the time and in other institutions of the humanities that surrounded it. The obituaries of Foundation Fellows provide clear evidence that generosity has been considered a key virtue to be celebrated as characterising Fellows of the Academy and the humanities generally. And these obituaries also constitute one of the ways in which the Academy has sought to educate future generations in the ways of this particular disposition.

In its establishment, too, the Academy as an institution was based on and exemplified generosity. It came into being through the dedication and selfless interest in and love of the humanities, and of scholarship more generally, of people such as Max Crawford, W. K. Hancock, and Dale Trendall. The objects and purposes of its charter focus on advancing and supporting the humanities, assuming a commitment among its Fellows to a vocational attachment, not just to their particular disciplines, but the whole endeavour of the humanities. And the generosity of the key figures involved in its founding has continued over time in the way in which the Academy has relied on the voluntary activities of its Fellows in a whole range of functions. Over the years there have been extraordinary examples of such dedication from Fellows who have made outstanding and selfless contributions for a long period of time.

* * *

Despite its embattled character, I propose that a continuing commitment to generosity should be a guiding object of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, one to be encouraged within the organisation itself and within other institutions of the humanities. As an Academy, we remain a club of a kind, although now based on more explicit and transparent principles of membership than was originally perhaps the case. We do need to continue to scrutinise these principles and to be open to critique from within as well as without. But as an institution of the humanities we can embrace the opportunities the Academy provides in symbolising and disseminating the civic virtues associated with generosity, and the way it maintains the possibility of scholarly activities that are not just driven by self-interest and the spirit of calculation.

How generosity will be practised by and within institutions of the humanities — the individual and institutional forms it will take — will necessarily change over time. But we have some wonderful contemporary examples to celebrate and build on. A particularly interesting one is that twenty-first-century version of a ‘grand project’ called ‘Trove’ — the search engine for locating resources about Australia and Australians. A centralised national service, managed by the National Library of Australia, built with the collaboration of all major Australian libraries, it is democratically generous in its concept, the wealth of material it provides for a broad range of publics, including the scholarly, and in the way it has encouraged a culture of reciprocity, engaging the community generally in its very development and improvement.

I just wanted to say what an amazing service this is. I’ve been making a database and analysing stores journals from the 1910s for a NSW sheep station as part of a household archaeology project and the digitised newspapers have been invaluable. I love the way you can copy citations and really love that you can edit the mistakes in scanned text — it feels great to be able to ‘give something back’ when I’ve accessed this fantastic service for free!³⁸

But generosity can also still be found in much smaller worlds, in the nooks and crannies of our institutions: activities such as academics working together in reading groups, helping each other conceptualise and polish their research grant applications, reviewing papers or editing scholarly journals — activities mostly



HOW GENEROSITY WILL BE PRACTISED BY AND WITHIN INSTITUTIONS OF THE HUMANITIES...WILL NECESSARILY CHANGE OVER TIME. BUT WE HAVE SOME WONDERFUL CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES TO CELEBRATE AND BUILD ON.

But it has not yet been possible to realise the full potential of this institution for facilitating new forms of scholarly exchange and intellectual communities, ones that support the kind of thinking characteristic of the humanities in the past that we might want to retain today. More resources will be needed for this as well as a broader engagement from the scholarly community in the future of Trove and other digitalisation projects in order to argue for these resources and develop their potential.

The National Library of Australia has some wonderful examples of tweets and emails that demonstrate the passionate sense of attachment users of Trove feel. These suggest an emotional investment similar to the passions surrounding libraries such as the Mitchell. Two examples of the outpourings of emotion that the National Library receives daily have interesting echoes of the language used by Greg Denning about the Mitchell Library, although they are also very twenty-first century in style:

@TroveAustralia, some days I think I love you more than life itself. How did people undertake research before you?!

not counted in any workload formula. The gift economy of the humanities still survives, albeit mostly in hidden forms. We need to reflect, as an Academy, on these practices and institutions in order to identify ways we can support them and ensure that they can extend into the future what we value about humanities scholarship and institutions.

* * *

In conclusion, then, we spend a lot of time these days organising and participating in symposia about ‘valuing the humanities’. But these are geared to how we can more successfully promote the value of the humanities to what is seen as a largely unsympathetic, external world. I suggest it is equally important that the Academy take a lead in ensuring that institutions of the humanities are clear about what it is we value as scholars for the future. The generosity that has characterised humanities institutions in the past needs to be sustained but, more importantly, refreshed and reinvigorated to take historical forms appropriate for our times. In doing so, I think it

(right)
Quotes from
Trove users

COURTESY
MARIE LOUISE AYERS,
NATIONAL LIBRARY OF
AUSTRALIA

'In passing, as a PhD candidate, may I just say that the NLA is simply fantastic. In fact, I have told people that the NLA is the most important building in Australia... bar none. Your newspaper digitizing program is one of the most important projects we historians could imagine. And Trove... well, what can one say about something as brilliant and important as that? Thank you NLA.'

'What a marvellous site you have and what a fabulous idea for editing. I am doing research on the Great Famine – Madras 1876–1878 and you have a wealth of research material. I have just finished some editing to thank you in return.'

'@TroveAustralia, some days I think I love you more than life itself. How did people undertake research before you?'

'I just wanted to say what an amazing service this is. I've been making a database and analysing stores journals from the 1910s for a NSW sheep station as part of a household archaeology project and the digitised newspapers have been invaluable. I love the way you can copy citations and really love that you can edit the mistakes in scanned text – it feels great to be able to "give something back" when I've accessed this fantastic service for free!'

is crucial that scholars and professionals from all institutions of the humanities and, just as importantly, all generations, are engaged in this project together. I think we will find that new generations of scholars, now bearing the brunt of the latest major changes in our universities and libraries, have as much to teach Fellows of the Academy, if not more, as we have them, about how it is still possible to cherish and elaborate a culture of generosity within and of our institutions. 🍷



LESLEY JOHNSON AM FAHA was President of the Australian Academy of the Humanities from 2011–14. She was Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research) at the University of Technology, Sydney, a position she held for nine years,

and in 2004 Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) at Griffith University, a position she held for just over 5 years until her retirement in 2009. She was made a member of the Order of Australia in 2010 for her service to education as a leading academic, administrator, and author, particularly in the fields of cultural history and feminist studies. She is now working with several colleagues on a history of the humanities in Australia.

1. This article is an edited version of the Annual Academy Lecture delivered in Canberra on 21 November 2014 as part of the Australian Academy of the Humanities' 45th Annual Symposium, 'Look it Up: Encyclopedias, Dictionaries and Atlases'.

2. Elizabeth Farrelly, 'Mitchell Library Malaise Sign of a Deeper Struggle', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 March 2014, <www.smh.com.au/comment/mitchell-library-malaise-sign-of-a-deeper-struggle-20140305-347fd.html>
3. I wish to acknowledge the work of Rosalyn Diprose in shaping my interests in generosity, particularly in her book *Corporeal Generosity. On Giving with Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty, and Levinas* (State University of New York Press, 2002).
4. Greg Denning, 'MS 1, J. Holograph Journal', in *Remarkable Occurrences. The National Library of Australia's First 100 Years. 1901–2001*, ed. by Peter Cochrane (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2001), pp. 1–19.
5. Greg Denning, *Beach Crossing. Voyaging Across Times, Cultures and Self* (Carlton, Vic.: The Miegunyah Press, 2004), p. 168.
6. Quoted in Elizabeth Ellis, 'An ambitious endeavour. The Mitchell Library in the 21st Century', *Upfront. Journal of the Friends and Supporters of the State Library of New South Wales*, 15, 1 (2003), p. 6.
7. In her *Sydney Morning Herald* article Elizabeth Farrelly makes a misleading comment about the room that great writers such as Manning Clark and Patrick White worked in. She suggests this was what is now referred to as the Mitchell Library Reading Room, whereas in fact, as Denning's talk indicates, they worked in the smaller room that was referred to as the Mitchell Library Reading Room until 1988 when the new library building on Macquarie St. was opened and what had earlier been the Reference Library Reading Room became the Mitchell Library Reading Room. See Brian H. Fletcher, *Magnificent Obsession. The Story of the Mitchell Library, Sydney* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2007) pp. 204–14; p. 325.

8. Tom Griffiths, 'History and the Creative Imagination', Inaugural Greg Denning Annual Lecture, University of Melbourne, 11 December 2008, *History Australia*, 6, 3 (2009), 74-9.
9. Germaine Greer also talks of the State Library of Victoria in such terms — of how it formed in her the 'habit of a lifetime'. She celebrates libraries in similar ways to Denning, referring to them as 'reservoirs of strength, grace and wit, reminders of order, calm and continuity, lakes of mental energy, neither warm nor cold, light nor dark. ... In any library in the world, I am at home, unselfconscious, still and absorbed'. Germaine Greer, *Daddy I Hardly Knew You* (Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin Books, 1990), pp. 69, 70.
10. Dominique Jamet and Helene Ways, 'History, Philosophy, Ambitions of the Bibliothèque de France', in *Future Libraries*, ed. by R. Howard Bloch and Carla Hesse (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 76.
11. Anthony Vidler, 'Books in Space: Tradition and Transparency in the Bibliothèque de France', in Bloch and Hesse, pp. 106–10; pp. 145–47.
12. Carla Hesse, 'Humanities and the Library in the Digital Age', in *What's Happened to the Humanities?*, ed. by Alvin Kernan (Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 114–15.
13. Rey Chow, 'An addiction from which we never get free', *New Literary History*, 36, 1 (2005), p. 50.
14. Chow, pp. 49, 53.
15. Meaghan Morris, 'From "Criticism" to "Research": The Textual in the Academy', in *Comparative Cultural Research: Hong Kong/Western Sydney Exchanges*, <UWS.edu.au/research/lcs/partnerships>, 2002, p. 11.
16. Morris, 'From "Criticism" to "Research"', pp. 19–20.
17. Meaghan Morris, 'Humanities for Taxpayers: Some Problems', *New Literary History*, 36, 1 (2005), p. 118.
18. Rosalind Gill, paper delivered at the Cultural Studies Association of Australia Conference, University of Sydney, 4–6 December 2012; subsequently published as 'Academics, Cultural Workers and Critical Labour Studies', *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 7, 1 (2014), p. 22.
19. See, for example, Robyn Dasey's essay 'The University: The Ideal and the Actuality', in *Free U. Sources, Articles and Documents on the Free University, The Journal of the Free University*, 1 (1969), p. 7.
20. Aurélien Mondon, 'Education is Not Just About Getting a Job', *Age*, 4 June 2010. While there are similarities between this example of a free university and the Sydney one of the 1960s, the latter was more political in concept with an emphasis on universities being agents of social change.
21. Leonie Kramer, *Broomstick. Personal Reflections of Leonie Kramer* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2012), p. 39.
22. Kathleen Fitzpatrick, 'A Cloistered Life', in *The Half-Open Door. Sixteen Modern Australian Women look at Professional Life and Achievement*, ed. by Patricia Grimshaw and Lynne Strahan (Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1982), p. 125.
23. Andrew Riemer, *Sandstone Gothic. Confessions of an Accidental Academic* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1998), p. 40.
24. Ruth Barcan, *Academic Work and Labour in the New University* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), p. 79.
25. Barcan, p. 128ff.
26. Meaghan Morris and Iain McCalman, 'Public Culture', in *Knowing Ourselves and Others. The Humanities in Australia into the 21st Century*, vol. 3 (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Services, 1998), p. 17.
27. Morris and McCalman, p. 18.
28. Morris, 'From "Criticism" to "Research"', p. 11.
29. Morris, 'Humanities for Taxpayers', p. 122.
30. Pierre Bourdieu, 'Marginalia — Some Additional Notes on the Gift', in *The Logic of the Gift. Toward an Ethic of Generosity*, ed. by Alan D. Schrift (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 233.
31. Personal communication.
32. Deryck Schreuder, 'John Manning Ward, 1919–1990', Obituaries, Australian Academy of the Humanities, <<http://www.humanities.org.au/Portals/o/documents/Fellows/Obituaries/JohnManningWard.pdf>>
33. W. Ritchie, 'George Pelham Shipp', Obituaries, Australian Academy of the Humanities, <<http://www.humanities.org.au/Portals/o/documents/Fellows/Obituaries/GeorgePelhamShipp.pdf>>
34. D. M. Armstrong, 'Alan Ker Stout, 1900–1983', Obituaries, Australian Academy of the Humanities, <<http://www.humanities.org.au/Portals/o/documents/Fellows/Obituaries/AlanKerStout.pdf>>
35. Ian Hunter, *Culture and Government. The Emergence of Literary Education* (London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 70.
36. Hunter, p. 96.
37. Ian Donaldson, 'The Idea of an Academy', Academy Address, in *Taking Stock. The Humanities in Australia*, ed. by Mark Finnane and Ian Donaldson (Crawley: UWA Publishing, 2012), p. 24.
38. My warmest thanks to Dr Marie Louise Ayers, Assistant Director-General, Resources Sharing, National Library of Australia, for sending me examples of tweets and emails about Trove. My thanks also to Pauline Johnson, Roger Bendall, Katrina Schlunke, Alex Byrne, Rachel Frank and Elizabeth Webby for their very valuable assistance with this address.

» LES MURRAY



(above)

Sydney Harbour
Bridge, NSW, 1954

PHOTO: MARK STRIZIC
(1928–2012), STATE
LIBRARY OF VICTORIA
COLLECTION



LES MURRAY AO FAHA is one of Australia's most celebrated and widely read poets, with over nine hundred poems published since 1959. He has won many Australian and international awards, including in 1998 the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry. Since 1990 he has been the literary editor of the journal **Quadrant**. His most recent collection is **Waiting for the Past** (2015). AUTHOR PHOTO COURTESY OF MARGARET CONNOLLY & ASSOCIATES.

When Two Percent Were Students

Gorgeous expansion of life
all day at the university,
then home to be late for meals,
an impractical, unwanted boarder.

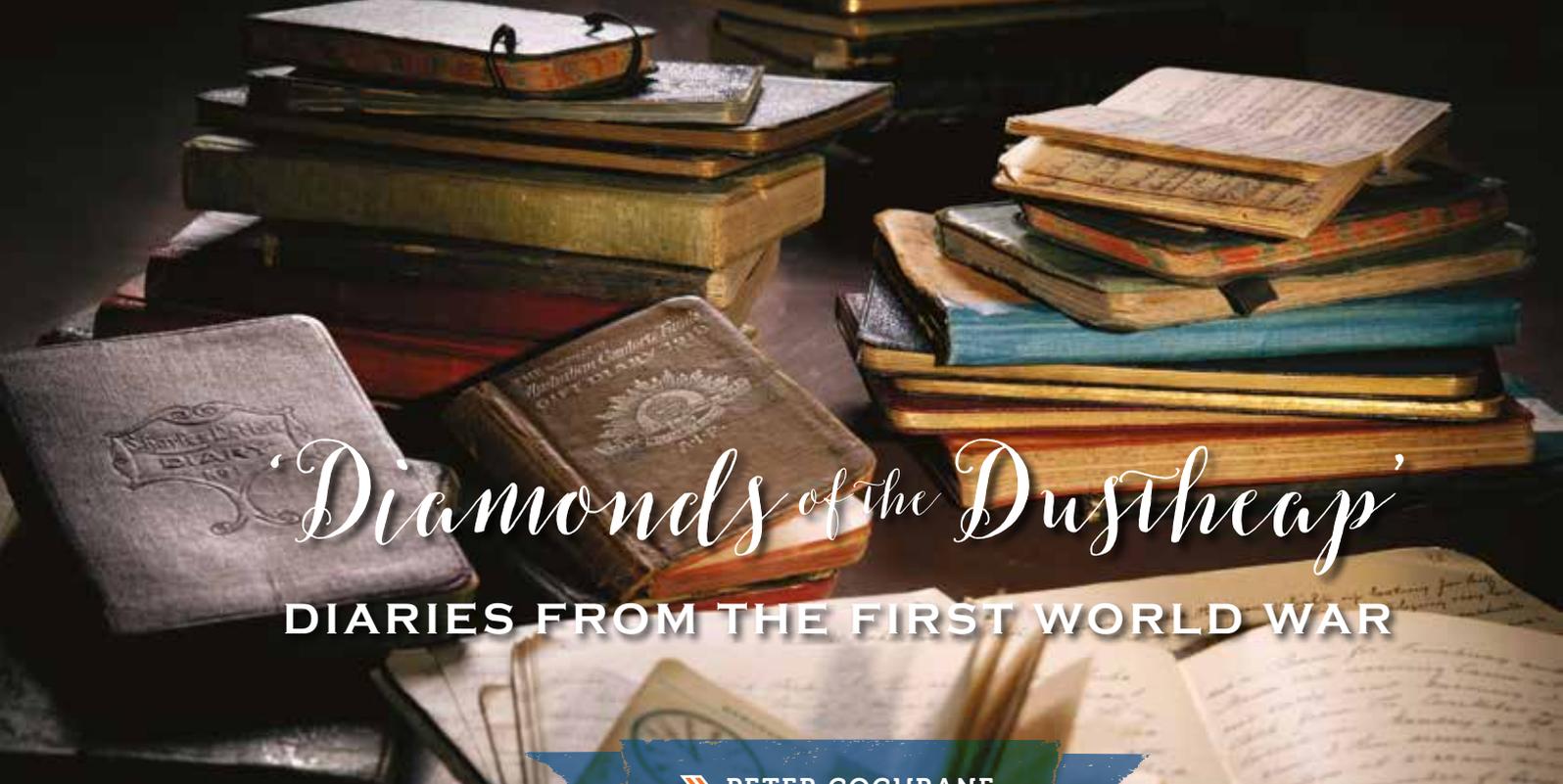
When rush hours were so tough
a heart attack might get stepped over
you looked up from the long footpaths
to partings in the houses' iron hair.

Hosts of Depression-time and wartime
hated their failure, which was you.
Widows with no facelift of joy
spat their irons. Shamed by bookishness

you puzzled their downcast sons
who thought you might be a poofter,
so you'd hitchhike home to run wild
again where cows made vaccine

and ancient cows discovered aspirin,
up home, where your father and you
still wore pink from the housework
you taught each other years before—

and those were the years when farm wives
drove to the coast with milk hands
to gut fish, because government no longer
trusted poor voters on poor lands.



Diamonds of the Dustheap

DIARIES FROM THE FIRST WORLD WAR

» PETER COCHRANE

If I stopped and took thought it would never be written at all; and the advantage of the method is that it sweeps up accidentally several stray matters which I should exclude if I hesitated but which are the diamonds of the dustheap.

{ VIRGINIA WOOLF, 20 JANUARY 1919¹ }

The comparison may be unlikely, but Virginia Woolf's insight into her diary keeping is a pointer to what defines almost all the soldiers' diaries that I have examined in the remarkable collection held by the Mitchell Library in the State Library of New South Wales.² They are not carefully planned, they are raw and unpolished, they are a more-or-less spontaneous record or narrative of the day or the week, and they are rich with 'diamonds'. Their pre-eminent quality is an unpretentious authenticity and immediacy, a realism matched by no other literary form in the records of wartime experience.

Being authentic in this way, the diaries have no panoramic grasp or God's-eye view, nor are they marked by the modifying reassessments of hindsight. They provide a uniquely *inside* perspective, plain and unvarnished, caught in the swirl of daily life, regardless of whether the diarist is travelling, training or fighting; happy in a billet behind the lines, or miserable in a mud-soaked dugout in the midst of an artillery barrage on the Somme.

These diaries are intensely 'in the moment', perhaps all the more so when written in the trenches where death is near. Their diurnal

form means that the rendering of some events will be spasmodic and episodic but, as Robert Latham has pointed out, 'this is the way in which many events — even processes — happen.'³ The soldier's diary is a narrative unfolding in a tremulous present, a still fluid context with all its uncertainties, whether in Egypt, Gallipoli, Palestine or on the Western Front.

We do not know how many Australian soldiers took a diary to the Great War, nor how many took to keeping a diary once there. Certainly not a majority, for most of the 330,000 soldiers who went abroad preferred to write letters or postcards, if they wrote at all. The thousands of diaries that were kept, however, are not introspective or confessional; rather, they are spectator diaries: records of travel and war, of tourism and duty done, something to be sent home to be read by family and friends, or perhaps, to be consulted later, to settle an argument or fuel a reminiscence.

The psychological importance of a serial conversation with home can hardly be overstated. The diaries are, therefore, much more than records of war, or reminiscences to be filed under 'military'. They are, first and

(above)

First World War Diaries, Mitchell Library.

COURTESY JOY LAI, DIGITISATION & IMAGING SERVICES, STATE LIBRARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

foremost, 'literary' — they are part of the history of writing and, in this case, they are a distinct branch of the genre we call travel writing. They are also 'cultural' in the sense of being about travel, family, love, big-noting (in some cases), devotion, despair, homesickness and consolation in trying times.

THE VISION

As the First World War drew to a close, the then Public Library of New South Wales began collecting the personal records of the men and women who enlisted in order to document the war as they had experienced it.

Planning began as events at Gallipoli seized the nation's imagination. In response, the principal librarian, William Ifould, hastily formulated an acquisition policy. Ifould was determined to collect firsthand accounts of battle written by both the frontline men of the rank and file and the officer class. In entrepreneurial mode and conscious that the Commonwealth would move into this sphere, he was keen to act pre-emptively. With the approval of his Trustees, Ifould placed advertisements in newspapers around Australia, offering to buy diaries and letters in original form. The Library's Letter Books for 1918–1922 reveal that many diaries subsequently offered to Ifould were rejected as insubstantial or in some way rewritten or

might not have been in a position to obtain information of any value to historians from strategic or tactical points of view, yet the daily and intimate records of individual men, their hopes and fears and feelings generally, their expressions of opinions concerning their officers, their mention of other men by name — especially those coming from particular districts who refer to the doings of men of their own districts; all these things must be taken into consideration in estimating value.⁴

By 1919 the collection was already a large and valuable one. By 1921 the total number of war diarists in the collection had reached 247, complemented by collections of letters and, in some cases, photo albums. The current collection stands at 550 diarists and over 1100 volumes.⁵

The diaries take many forms. Some were written on odd sheets of paper or in notebooks or signal message books. Others were cloth or leather bound. Occasionally the narrative begins in a hefty gilt-edged volume but, inevitably, continues in any kind of notebook that comes to hand. Most diaries were pocket sized and fit for purpose. The variety of bindings complements the range of writing styles. Some are terse and random: 'Getting warmer. Glassy sea but strong under currents ... Dance tonight for Officers and Nurses only! Have commenced growing a



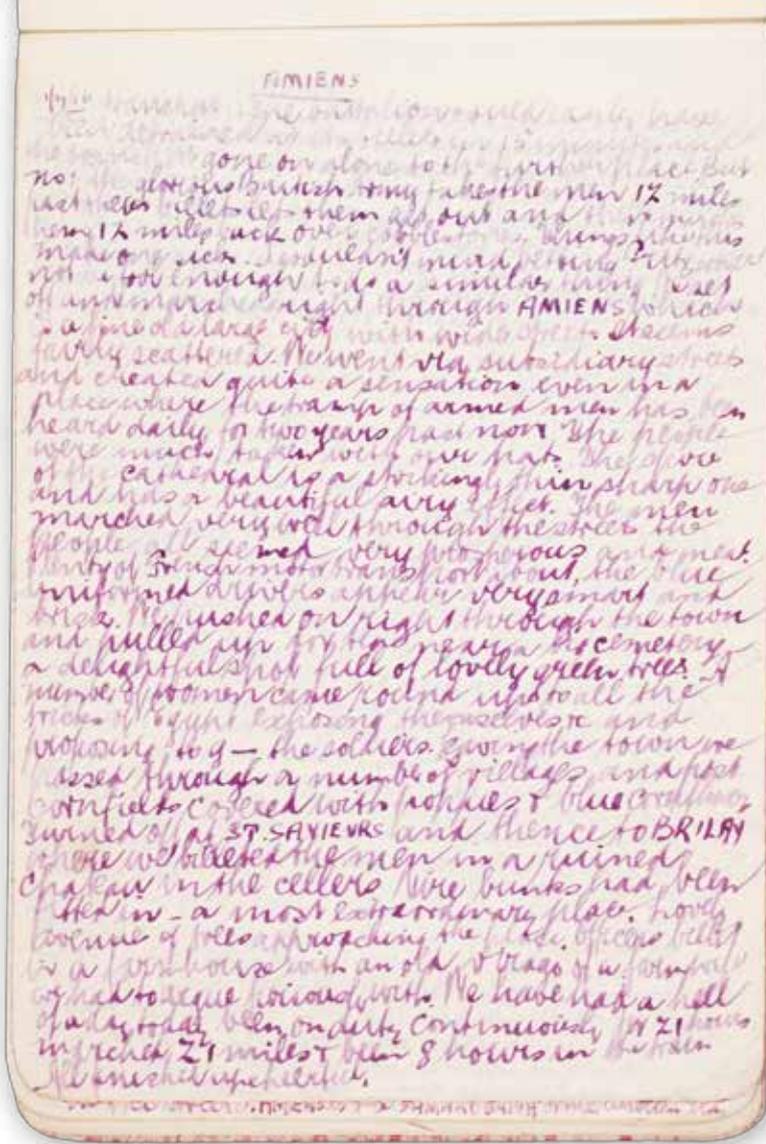
'OH GOD WHAT A FIGHT, THE SKY IS A BLAZE OF FIRE &
THE EARTH TREMORS, AS IF IN AGONY.'

overwritten later. Substance and authenticity were at a premium, and the library was prepared to pay for it, as Ifould indicated in a letter to the Library's agent in London in 1919:

By original diaries we mean diaries actually written up from day to day and not the copies of those diaries. The value of such diaries must be judged from the extent of the period covered, the opportunities of the diarist to procure and record information, the fullness of the entries, the value of the entries to future historians ... The record from a psychological view is of some importance as is also the record from a sentimental point of view ... whilst a diarist

moustache today.'⁶ Some are prolix and strain for literary effect: 'The sun as it arose threw a golden glory over the distant horizon and finally appeared in a great white disc in all its glittering heat.'⁷ Some don't strain at all, having an economy (or lyricism) that is effortless and a delight to read: 'Oh God what a fight, the sky is a blaze of fire & the earth tremors, as if in agony.'⁸

A small number of diaries were acquired from the families of men who were killed abroad, but the vast majority in this collection were purchased from men who made it home, survivors, many of whom were diarists over two, three or four years. These are, for the most part, substantial memoirs.



(above)
A day entry for 11 July 1916 by the prodigious diarist Captain Aubrey Wiltshire. MLMSS 3058/Box 1/6.

COURTESY STATE LIBRARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

WHY?

The men who took to keeping a diary did so, in the first instance, because they could. Many soldiers had only the most elementary education. Their grammar and spelling was mostly poor to average, but they were uninhibited about writing, about putting their story down. Most white Australians in 1914 were sufficiently numerate to know when they had been short changed over the counter and sufficiently schooled to pen a letter to a pal or a loved one. More than that, they were immersed in a print culture, typified by the *Bulletin*, which reached out to the wretched and the poor and told them, to paraphrase the editor J. F. Archibald: ‘Everyone has a story to tell, even if it’s only one.’ Writing, rather than literature, was a widely diffused social practice as Sylvia Lawson’s *The Archibald Paradox* (2006) makes clear. Entitlement to write, to record, was a given — from there the not-uncommon phenomenon of the Australian soldier–diarist was inevitable.

He was inevitable for another reason. The diaries had an imagined audience — the

folk at home. They were meant to be read by others. Some diarists gave their diaries titles, as if imagining the work as a publication in the tradition of the empire’s ‘Boy’s Own’ literature: ‘My Experiences & Adventures During my Sojourn in France.’⁹ References to an ‘Adventure’ or ‘Great Adventure’ are not uncommon.

For the prolific practitioners, their diary work might complement letters, postcards and, in some instances, photographs. The psychological importance of a serial conversation with home can hardly be overstated. Diaries thickened the conversation. As one soldier–diarist declared at the head of his first volume:

This diary, begun on the day of my departure for the front from Sydney, is being written chiefly for the benefit of my loved ones at home as it will be nearly impossible to tell all in letters and this will be sent home from time to time as opportunity offers and my efforts will be concentrated in keeping it up to date.¹⁰

Diarists talked to their imagined readers: ‘I am simply longing to see you all,’ wrote one. ‘I suppose you wonder where I am,’ wrote another, ‘I’m in a good safe place but it may be otherwise next week.’¹¹

The leisurely sea voyage from Australia — a month or more on the ocean — allowed the would-be diarists to ease into the unlikely business of writing about travel and war. Going to war offered a rare chance to ‘see the world’, to see England, to visit the relations at Home, to tour exotic places (such as Egypt), to earn a quid, or to test their manhood in more ways than one. The term ‘six-bob-a-day tourists’ was coined for the well-paid Australians and they adopted it, often without irony. Patriotic motives did not get in the way of touristic ambitions. Indeed, many of the soldiers saw ‘sightseeing’ as a quid pro quo. The chance of death or mutilation was there to contemplate. ‘We are here on the Great adventure,’ wrote a Light Horseman-cum-diarist in Palestine in 1916, ‘and we are simply taking the fat with the lean and doing our duty unflinchingly and cheerfully for our King and Country.’¹²

‘The fat with the lean’ is an instructive phrase. Sightseeing had its own rituals, a kind of ceremonial agenda that was eagerly anticipated



(left)

The serial conversation with home. Writing home from Egypt. From H.C. Marshall photographs, ML PXA1861/item 112.

COURTESY STATE LIBRARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

by the soldiers. There were places, monuments and exhibits one simply had to see and the diarists slipped effortlessly into this grand tradition. One of the rewards that the soldiers expected, almost as a right, was the opportunity to do what tourists do — to climb the pyramids in Egypt, to tour the English countryside, to walk the Royal Mile in Edinburgh, to visit Madame Tussauds in London, to gaze upon a chateau in France, or to photograph the ruins of the Cloth Hall at Ypres.

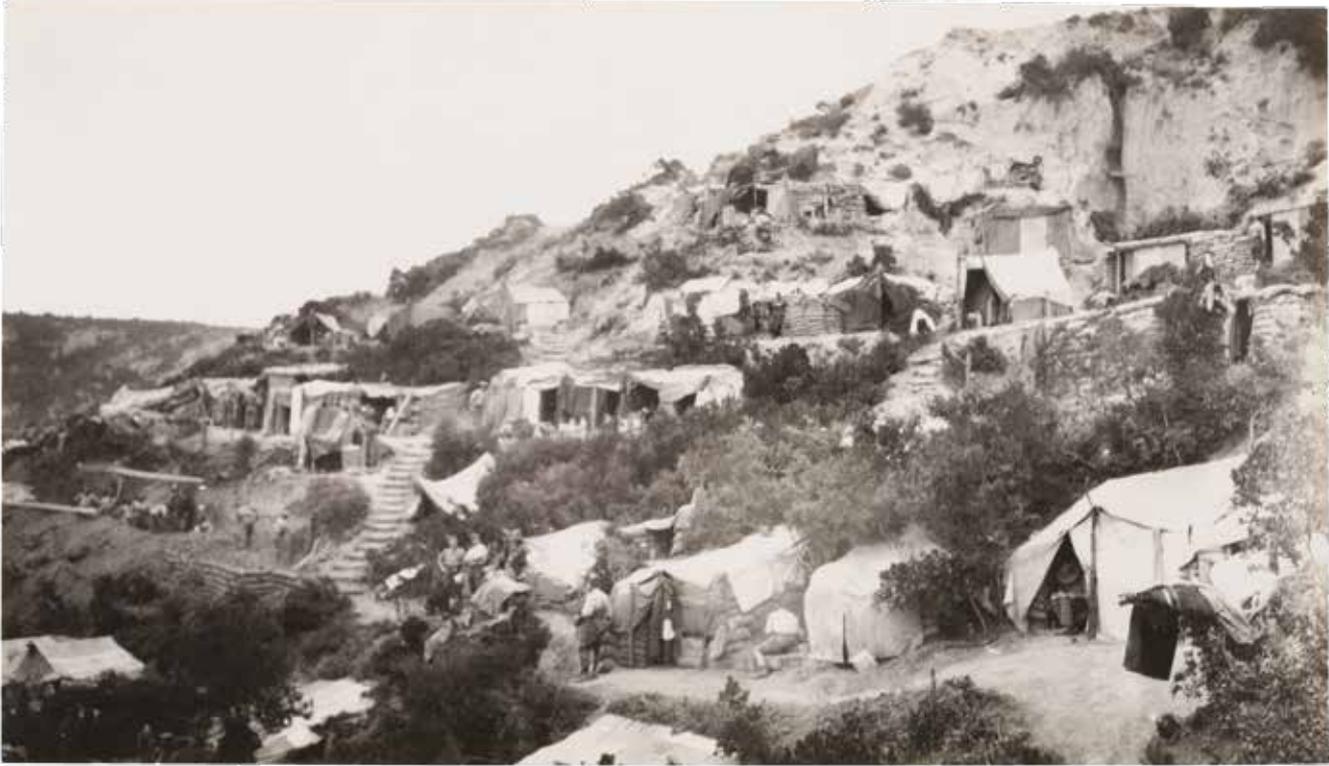
A handful of soldier-diarists went into this wider world with great reverence for what they might see — places, plants and seasons corresponding to familiar art and poetry, a sense of having entered into the literature of Europe, scripture in the 'Holy Lands', or the classics in the Mediterranean. Travel in these unusual cases carried imagination to its deep origins if not its source. The prolific diarist Aubrey Wiltshire was alert to both history and mythology in the landscapes and the seascape about him:

1/9/15 Up at 6. on boat deck very fresh and cool. Sea at its best and delightful ... Land probably not far off. The route we are on is that ploughed by the earliest sailors in the world; the Phoenician galley. Probably the transports, the dark ribbed ships of the Iliad en route for Troy went past here. We shall pass through the Archipelago

soon all the islands between Greece and Turkey towards Lemnos the base of our A.I.F. the island whence Homer's galley returned 'freighted with wine'.¹³

But most soldier tourism was a less informed exercise in sightseeing. Just wandering around or seeing people or seeing another way of life was, by its modesty of ambition, an intellectually satisfying pursuit. These were mostly unsophisticated tourists, men who were disappointed by a weatherworn Sphinx or who marvelled at how well the French spoke French. Their reporting was matter of fact, sometimes wondrous or humorous, and often irreverent. A sailor on the troopship *Bulla* recorded a moment of sightseeing puzzlement a few weeks before the landing at Gallipoli: 'Entered the Red sea today & blow me if it isn't as green as that bit of ocean at Bondi. I made enquiries as to why I had been misled.'¹⁴

These are diaries of praise and complaint and comparison with the norm, which was home. Travel was mostly an affirmation of the great south land: 'Beautiful day [wrote a soldier-diarist in Cairo]. The people here don't observe the Sabbath — it is just the same as week days ... This afternoon went through the Native quarter and Native markets. Some queer sights, a bloke deserves the V.C. to tackle the food they prepare.'¹⁵



(above)

See the writer in his tent. From Dr Herschel Harris photographs, ML PXA403/item 65.

COURTESY STATE LIBRARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The ‘coloured races’ were rich fare for pranks and derision: ‘Great fun tonight [on the Nile]. Halted a Dhow after 6 o’clock & put a couple of shots — one into her & another across the bows. You should have seen the niggers duck & I’ll bet they prayed “Allah Allah” for hours after.’¹⁶

A year later the same diarist was on leave in country England. His thoughts went back to Egypt, as a comparison of sorts, which contrasts with his bucolic positioning of himself for the dear reader: ‘Rather nice here by the quiet backwater, with the green low lying hills in the foreground & the intermittent chirping of the birds. And what a change after the everlasting desert, the intolerable heat & the dirty niggers of Egypt.’¹⁷

VISCERAL REALITY

When the adventure shifted from travel to fighting, the horrors of trench warfare soon registered in the little pocket annals. The Australians had eagerly anticipated their ‘baptism of fire’. They lived up to their high standards at Gallipoli, in Palestine and on the Western Front. But their enthusiasm for battle was soon blunted by the realities of modern warfare. The diarist who, on 25 April 1915, saw not the shrapnel but ‘little white puffs of smoke’ and watched ‘men running down the beach

and up the hill with bayonets glistening in the morning sun’ would soon change his tune.¹⁸

Assumptions changed and with them language. The quaint imperial conviction that war was manly and glorious gave way to the grim certainty that it was ‘butchery’ or ‘murder’ in a vast slaughterhouse. For the Light Horse on the sands of Palestine, some small vestige of the mythology of martial grandeur might be retained, but illusions were butchered at Gallipoli and in France. Novices charging to glory became, if they survived, dour professionals sustained only by duty and the camaraderie of the trenches, sometimes called ‘mateship’ as if it was unique to Australia. Rivers of blood destroyed the romance of battle. All this figured in the form of a new realism in the soldier’s diaries, hurried onto the page, in some cases, by shock or adrenalin.¹⁹

If there is one month when this shift registered widely in the diaries, then it is July 1916 when the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) joined the slaughter on the Western Front. Some anticipated the worst and penned it in their daily jotting. One of these was Herbert Harris, a 42-year-old Sydney man serving with the 5th Division in the 55th Battalion:

Must pray to God that I come through all right. Have not been paid since last entry & amount owing to me now is £2.9.1 to

date with deferred pay £10.7.0 making £12.16.1 ... I hope the wife gets it if I Pass out. It promises to be worse than the other night was ... feel tired and hardly fit for what is in front of us but it's no use not being fit you just have to do it. Good bye Nelly and boys ... and all friends, hope it is only au revoir. A lot of the boys have promised to send this diary on if I get knocked. I'm sure you will get something out of it besides knowing that my thoughts have been with you and the boys in every situation I have found myself.²⁰

Harris was at Fromelles where, in the space of twenty-four hours, the 5th Division was wrecked. Nearly half of the division, 5553 men, were casualties. Some battalions almost disappeared. A week later the battle for Pozières began. Pozières exemplified the horrific nature of modern trench warfare — the unrivalled massing of numbers, the near suicidal charges, the murderous machine guns and the relentless artillery barrages — the ceaseless, merciless, murdering guns. In seven weeks of fighting the Australians lost more than 24,000 wounded and almost seven thousand were killed in the heat of battle. The numbers for the killed and wounded fell just short of the ten-month toll at Gallipoli.

A stretcher-bearer with the medical corps recalled the comfort of prayer in his daily diary:

All day the battle raged with furious intensity. Artillery on both sides shrieked and roared. High explosives and shrapnel. Not a yard of ground that was not torn and rent. Hair breadth escapes were our portion every hour. The words of that grand hymn 'Jesus lover of my Soul' were continually in my mind. 'Other refuge have I none, hangs my helpless soul on thee, Cover my defenceless head with the shadow of thy wing'. A merciful Providence protected me from all harm ... wonderful fortitude of our boys.²²

None coming out of Pozières expected the war to end swiftly; that dream was gone. The marathon diarists, those who saw it through to the end, would fill volume after volume for another two years or more.

SURVIVING

How did they see it through to the end, these survivors? How did they keep going, given the ghastly horrors of trench warfare? As John Keegan pointed out in *The Face of Battle* (1976), such endurance needs to be explained.



'... WE WERE NEARLY ALL IN A STATE OF SILLINESS AND HALF DAZED
BUT STILL THE AUSTRALIANS REFUSED TO GIVE GROUND.'

A remarkable diarist and soldier, Archie Barwick, was in the thick of it:

24 July. All day long the ground rocked & swayed backwards and forwards from the concussion ... [like] a well-built haystack ... swaying about ... men were driven stark staring mad & more than one of them rushed out of the trench over towards the Germans, any amount of them could be seen crying & sobbing like children their nerves completely gone ... we were nearly all in a state of silliness and half dazed but still the Australians refused to give ground. Men were buried by the dozen but were frantically dug out again some dead and some alive.²¹

One way that the Australians kept going was to persist with their tourism. Sightseeing probably mattered more when the troops were doing time in the trenches than ever before.

Being a spectator permitted a certain detachment, a step back or a step aside, the war at one remove for a few minutes, and sometimes more. Even in the trenches the soldiers took time out to be spectators at an artillery barrage or witness to the drama of a daring balloonist or a battle between 'flying machines'. On such occasions we find the diarists among them straining for the poetic with phrases like 'wonderful spectacle', 'magnificent but awful spectacle', 'startling fireworks', or 'awe inspiring sight'.

Monday 23.8.15

To all at home

I cannot let a chance like this go by of writing a lengthy letter home not that you shall be any wiser after I am finished but I suppose a letter composed of any rubbish will be welcome just at present; we have always had to be careful in ordinary letters to make them as brief as possible as our censors would not commence to read them if they were long ones & they would either be returned or destroyed, but the envelope this is enclosed in does away with the censorship, & if he has enough curiosity to scan these pages I guess the reading of them will be punishment enough for him at any rate it is the only punishment we can inflict on him; I believe I told you a couple of months ago that I should have had a parcel of writing material from Edie Tomlins, well I turned up in good order & condition last Saturday, & I received quite a shock when I saw the size of it, she told me she had sent on a diary book a bottle of ink & two writing blocks but she did not mention the extras she had put in, so I was somewhat surprised to find 2 writing pads (200 sheets in each) two note books that suited us to a.tra large bottle of ink besides chocolates & honey drops; We have had a chance of getting sweets since leaving Egypt & we soon made a hole in them, poor old Edie is a brick, she writes to me every week as regular as clockwork & often send along magazine's & novels which are always more than welcome as we have

(above)

The supply of writing materials was a common subject in soldiers' letters and diaries, as here. Fred Tomlins letters, MLMS5975/Box 1/ item 9.

COURTESY STATE LIBRARY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Route marches provided another kind of distraction, suggesting sightseeing was both a refuge and a consolation. Late in 1916 Archie Barwick's battalion was on the move. His diary entry records how he revelled in the beauty of the countryside, the physical act of 'climbing a rise' corresponding, perhaps, to a kind of transcendence, out of the war, into art, a picture, to the scene he calls a 'masterpiece':

We marched through beautiful country for hours & hours, & 2 places in particular I will never forget, one of them was when we climbed a long ridge & saw through the great gap between the clad hills, one of the loveliest panoramic views of the country as ever one could wish to see, as far as ever the eye could follow right away to the horizon which must have reached nearly to the coast, there stretched endless miles of lovely green country covered with trees & big towns & villages all over it, they showed up splendidly for the sun was shining brightly which set their white stone walls & red tiled roofs off to perfection but the 'masterpiece' was to follow for we were gradually climbing a rise, & at last we reached the top & nearly everyone was startled into an exclamation; for the scene that laid in front of us beggared description.²³

WRITING, TURNING INWARD

If sightseeing was a vital break or an escape from the rigours of war, so too was diary keeping itself. For diarists with momentum, the daily or weekly jottings were compulsive. Unlike a sublime patch of country or the awesome spectacles that took the soldier outside himself, a quiet time with the diary took him within, to that place where he connected with home, with the crimson web of affinities in his heart. Unstated questions stirred him to pen his 'observations and experiences'. What shall I tell them? What shall they know of me and my doings? I can picture them, can they picture me? I will give them the setting, the pen portrait. I will get it down, this narrative between letters and postcards (and sometimes photos too).

For many of the soldier-diarists, diary keeping became a cathartic ritual. The emotional dimension requires us to recast how we think about these treasured volumes. There is, undoubtedly, an element of bravado and big-noting in some of them. Look at me! But that element pales before a deeper purpose once the fighting was underway. The soldier diaries were more than military artefacts and more than mere travel journals. They were dutiful commitments to home. The words within them were threads across time and space; ties as strong as iron, as light as air. Soldiers took great care to evade the military censors, to put their diaries into the mail or the hands of a homeward bound convalescent. These diaries remind us of how love was magnified, exalted and enhanced by the perils of war, and how loved ones felt the heightened emotions of separation in such perilous times. The diaries sustained and consoled both the diarist and his imagined audience on the other side of the world. The author and his readership lived in hope.

WORDS AND PARCELS

Whatever the subject matter, war diaries are first and foremost about writing. The diaries in this collection, along with letters in some cases, contain a good deal of information about the writing itself — the ways and means of acquiring the materials, the difficulties of writing (fatigue, censorship), the necessity to write and, most importantly, the commitment to communicate with home.

In some instances this commitment is compulsive. In others it arises from the understanding that correspondence received requires a reply, an immediate reply in the form of a letter or a postcard, or the occasional diary mailed home, or both. The serial conversation is, ideally, circular. Thoughts of home, and of loved ones at home thinking of the soldier, are part of the imaginative life of these men at war. The practical detail of communicating with home is a prominent theme in the personal narratives of the Mitchell Library's First World War collection. The prolific diarist and letter writer Fred Tomlins wrote home from Palestine in 1915. The fragment quoted here is indicative of the way that many soldiers kept up a conversation on the subject of

writing materials received or otherwise acquired. Some kept detailed records of mail in and out. Tomlins writes of the importance and the pleasure of receiving a big parcel from 'old Edie':

I believe I told you a couple of months ago that I should have had a parcel of writing material from Edie Tomlins, well it turned up in good order and condition last Saturday and I received quite a shock when I saw the size of it, she told me she had sent on a diary book, a bottle of ink and two writing blocks but she did not mention the extras she had put in ... two note books that suited us to a T and a large bottle of ink besides chocolates, honey drops ... poor old Edie is a brick, she writes to me every week as regular as clockwork and often sends along magazines and novels which are always more than welcome ...²⁴

ANNE DONNELL

The Library's collection of First World War personal narratives contains the diary and letters of one nursing sister who served in Egypt, Lemnos and England, and on the front in France. Anne Donnell was thirty-nine-years old when, from Adelaide, she joined the AIF as a staff nurse in 1915.

In the course of her tour of duty she kept a private diary, a somewhat cryptic record for the

& medical matters to be of much value to us. They appear to be copied from entries in a diary ... £5?²⁵

Despite the unfavourable review, the acquisition was made and today we can recognise Donnell's papers as an intimate record of one woman's travels and work abroad and a valuable commentary on the way that travel, tourism and writing sustained her in the course of harrowing duties and testing times through years of war.

Donnell was, for the most part, careful to shield her readers at home from the worst of her nursing experiences. Her letters are primarily a chronicle of her indomitable will to see the world and a record of her travels in the intervals between her postings. But there is more than enough nursing experience here to provide a sense of her work with the sick and wounded. Donnell was both a devoted nursing sister and a tireless tourist. Her letters are rich with bright sketches of town and country, people and panoramas, historical sites and cultural institutions.

She was quietly egalitarian, proud of her nationality and of her 'Australian boys'; she was independent and brave and sometimes defiant, and she was determined to do her Christian duty right to the end of the war, at whatever cost to her health. That cost was clearly evident late in 1917 when it seems she was exhausted, sick, longing for home and perhaps suffering from shell shock.



'THE SUSPENSE WAS DREADFUL,' WROTE DONNELL DURING ONE BOMBARDMENT,
'BUT WHAT A QUIET COMFORT HUMAN SYMPATHY IS.'

most part, and also wrote long 'circular letters', sent home at intervals to be passed around family members and friends. The diary served as an aide-mémoire for her letters home and sometimes she copied text from the one to the other.

Only one volume of her diaries was made available to the Library, that for 1918, but an almost complete set of her letters was acquired. A staff note on the acquisition observes: 'Interesting letters but hardly enough of military

In this regard, the Library note was not very perceptive. Whoever wrote it was looking for stories about the wounded saved from the battlefield — presumably 'military and medical' stories about fighting men laid low in the service of their country or empire. The librarian failed to notice or to value the way that the letters evolve into a vivid (if unintended) record of Donnell's heroic service and the cost to her health long before that service came to an end.

She commented several times on the guilt she felt when on leave — the sense of deserting her post, abandoning her ‘boys’ — and yet she never hesitated to plunge into travel with enthusiasm. She readily accepted the quid pro quo of travel as a reward for duty done and her letters convey the sense of a woman abroad who is determined to maximise the cultural itinerary. When working she wants to be in a surgical ward for ‘one doesn’t like to be out of the excitement of things’, and otherwise she wants to be sightseeing: ‘Tis my afternoon off and 6 of us are felluccering on the Nile.’ She commits her every spare moment to travel and, periodically, to updating her long circular letters for the benefit of her readers at home.²⁶ And the readers wrote back. This is the dynamic that inspired and sustained her.

Donnell was an avid photographer, her ‘little camera’ always close to hand. She developed her own prints whenever possible and mailed them home so her readers might see something of the sites she had seen. In fact her camera work linked her nursing and tourism in a most intimate way. She liked to photograph her ‘boys’ and provide them with a print to send home to the family. She did this on Lemnos in time for the Christmas mail. ‘They were delighted,’ she wrote.²⁷

Finally, the ‘military and medical’ content of Donnell’s papers is equally consequential, particularly the letters (and diary) that cover her time in France. These jottings provide an intimate account of living on the edge. In the last quarter of 1917 Donnell was serving in hospitals and clearing stations that were continually imperilled by aerial bombardment and frequently shaken by artillery shells. And she was proud to be there. ‘To be at a CCS [Casualty Clearing Station],’ she writes in her diary, ‘I am envied by many. They say they get the real thing at a CCS. Yes, but one wants to be very strong to stand the strain — work has not ceased for me for two months — I do pray for strength.’²⁸

Nursing sisters stood by their charges as bombs shook the ground beneath their feet. They donned gas masks whenever gas threatened, slept under their beds and huddled in their freezing dugouts time and again waiting for the all clear. ‘The suspense was dreadful,’ wrote Donnell during one bombardment, ‘but what a quiet comfort human sympathy is.

We held each other’s hands and after a silence ... Mary said “Anne, say the 23rd Psalm, it’s so nice”.²⁹

Suffice to say, to précis Anne Donnell’s ordeal can never do justice to her strength or commitment, nor to the toll it took on her health, at least in the short term. In her diary, two days before she was put in an ambulance and shipped off for rest, Donnell wrote briefly of her most recent work at the CCS: ‘It has been two solid months of hard bending anxious work. Work to say nothing of the bombing and the shelling and then the sights of the poor battered men and the sick men that tear at your very heart strings. And the intense cold, hard, biting frost and snow.’³⁰

Donnell was repatriated to England for her recovery and once recovered she laboured on, mixing her nursing duties with remorseless travel and keeping up the record of her tours in her circular letters. She sailed for Australia on 19 January 1919. Somewhat revised, her letters were published by Angus and Robertson in 1920, entitled *Letters of an Australian Army Sister*.

CONCLUSION

In 1974 Bill Gammage’s classic *The Broken Years* was published, based on the diaries and letters of a thousand Australians who fought in the Great War that are now in the Australian War Memorial’s collection. Gammage rejected the label ‘military history’. He wrote the book, he said, ‘to show the horrors of war.’

His focus on suffering, in the discipline of Australian history at least, was way ahead of the curve. His study echoed a trend in British social history and anticipated much of what was to follow in its Australian counterpart — a social history practice that sought to recover the deeply personal experience of war, with an emphasis not only on the horrors of war itself but also the legacy of damage thereafter, to individuals, families and indeed entire societies.

Christina Twomey has argued in *History Australia* (December 2013) that we can see the influence of this perspective in the way we now talk about our military heritage — the replacement of words about heroism and valour and manhood with talk of suffering,

trauma in war and its enduring presence thereafter. Twomey sees these concerns coming out of a much wider shift that she calls ‘the rise to cultural prominence of the traumatised individual’, a rise that is not peculiar to Australia or even to the military sphere, but is evident throughout the western world.³¹ It is clearly evident in the history discipline in this country, with indicative titles such as *Living with the Aftermath: Trauma, Nostalgia and Grief in Post-War Australia* (2001), *The Cost of War: Australians Return* (1996), and *Shattered Anzacs. Living with the Scars of War* (2009).³²

The diaries collection at the State Library of New South Wales contains much raw material that will lend itself to the further study of traumatic experience in war. But the collection also provides a substantial foundation for the study of survival mechanisms in war, not so much physical as psychological.

The collection, as I noted earlier, is skewed in favour of survivors. It is also, of course, skewed in favour of writers. It invites a doctoral study by a student as bold as Bill Gammage, but with a different objective — not trauma but survival, not ruin but transcendence. Yet that formulation can be no more than hypothesis, to be refuted or confirmed by a detailed study of the diaries and perhaps a collective biography, following through to the postwar lives, where possible, of these dedicated soldier scribes. ¶



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Peter Cochrane (eds), **Griffith Review 48 Enduring Legacies**, (Autumn 2015), pp. 13–24.

1. *A Writer's Diary: Being Extracts from the Diary of Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Leonard Woolf (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), p. 7.
2. I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Elise Edmonds, Robynne Hayward and Richard Neville of the State Library of New South Wales, and of Suzanne Rickard, in the preparation of this paper.

3. *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed by Robert Latham (London: Harper Collins, 2000), p. cxvi.
4. William Ifould to H. H. Southwell, 26 March 1919, Mitchell Library Correspondence files.
5. Peter Cochrane, *Towards 2014. Showcasing the Treasures of the State Library of New South Wales. Report on the Personal Narratives of the World War One Collection* (unpublished report, State Library of New South Wales, 31 March 2011). This report prefigured a number of events that were held at the State Library to commemorate the centenary of the First World War. The first of these was the major exhibition, curated by Elise Edmonds, *Life Interrupted. Personal Diaries from World War I*.
6. W. E. Bendrey, Diary, 28 June 1915, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales (SLNSW) MLMSS 761.
7. Oscar Rhodes, Diary, 11 July 1915, MLMSS 1199.
8. John Thomas Hutton, Diary, 4 May 1917, MLMSS 1138.
9. Benjamin Arthur Cohen, Diary, 1917, MLMSS 1844.
10. Rudolph Cox, Diary, MLMSS 2759.
11. Donald P. Wells, Diary, 11 April 1917, MLMSS 2743; John Thomas Hutton, Diary, 25 August 1916, MLMSS 1138.
12. William Peterson, Diary, 4 June 1916, MLMSS 2942.
13. A. R. L. Wiltshire, Diary, 1 September 1915, MLMSS 3058.
14. Herbert W. Farrell, Diary, 4 March 1915, MLMSS 2761.
15. Thomas Ray Crooks, Diary, 18 April 1915, MLMSS 838.
16. Bendrey, 12 March 1916.
17. Bendrey, 21 June 1916.
18. Norman Thomas Gilroy, Diary, 25 April 1915, MLMSS 2247.
19. This transition to a new language of war was acutely observed and richly documented in Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975). Fussell's work focused on the new literary pantheon (poets, essayists and novelists) that came out of the Great War, but he did not fail to notice how the writings of ordinary British soldiers also changed — dramatically.
20. Herbert H. Harris, Diary, 17 July 1916, MLMSS 2772. It is of course possible to chart a similar shift in language on the Gallipoli peninsula in 1915, in the mid-year months of that winter and the fighting then and after.
21. Archie Barwick, Diary, 24 July 1916, MLMSS 1493.

22. Charles Vincent Monaghan, Diary, 22 July 1916, MLMSS 7478.
23. Barwick's extraordinary war diaries, sixteen volumes in all, were edited and published in an abridged edition as *In Great Spirits. The WWI Diary of Archie Barwick. From Gallipoli to the Western Front and Home Again* (Sydney: Harper Collins, 2013). Barwick's eulogy to the French countryside can be found in the diary entry for 16 October 1916 (p. 183).
24. Fred Tomlins, letter to 'All at Home', 23 August 1915, MLMSS 5975.
25. An undated Mitchell Library note from 1919 relating to the proposed purchase of Anne Donnell's letters and diary. Library file: E14/693. The note acknowledges content in the letters including 'with hospitals in France', 'in tents' and 'air raids on hospitals'.
26. Anne Donnell, letter to 'Darlings', 4 August 1916, Donnell Papers, Mitchell Library, MLMSS 1022. The letters are available online at: <<http://www.acmssearch.sl.nsw.gov.au/search/itemDetailPaged.cgi?itemID=843922>>.
27. Donnell, to 'Dear Friends', 1 November 1915.
28. Anne Donnell, Diary, 15 January 1918, MLMSS 1022/Item 2. The diary is online at: <<http://www.acmssearch.sl.nsw.gov.au/search/itemDetailPaged.cgi?itemID=843924>>.
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30. Donnell, Diary, 16 January 1918.
31. Chistina Twomey, 'Trauma and the Reinvigoration of Anzac', *History Australia*, 10, 3 (December 1990), pp. 85–108 (p. 91).
32. Joy Damousi, *Living with the Aftermath: Trauma, Nostalgia and Grief in Post-War Australia* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Stephen Garton, *The Cost of War: Australians Return* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996); Marina Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs. Living with the Scars of War* (Kensington, NSW: University of New South Wales Press, 2009).



AN
ARCHAEOLOGY
OF THE

Anzac Battlefield

» ANTONIO SAGONA

In a dispatch written on 2 December 1915, C. E. W. (Charles) Bean, the Australian Imperial Force's official correspondent, wrote that the chief occupation of soldiers at Gallipoli did not entail 'continuous bomb fighting, bayoneting and bombarding' but, rather, 'the digging of mile upon mile of endless trench, of sunken road ... the carrying of biscuit boxes and building timber.'¹ Despite the passage of one hundred years, many of the 'endless' trenches, the dugouts, the tunnels and other earthworks survive at Anzac. Scattered across this jagged labyrinth are countless artefacts — tin cans and ceramic jars, ordnance and tools, personal items and glass shards, to mention just a few — the remnants of the world's first industrialised conflict. This palimpsest of manufactured objects (artefacts) and structures constitutes the tangible and tactile expressions of the Anzac battlefield, which is without a doubt the best preserved First World War battleground. This paper explains the evolution of the Joint Historical and Archaeological Survey (JHAS), a five-year project (2010–2014) that was fully funded by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (Canberra), and presents a few key results.² In doing so, it draws heavily on a forthcoming book, *Anzac Battlefield: A Gallipoli Landscape of War and Memory*.³

The study of warfare has been forged into a sub-discipline of historical research. Military historians scan the bigger picture of battles and battlefields, before unravelling the strategies

deployed by those in command. Weak or strong, win or lose, underlying the campaigns are manoeuvres and tactics mapped out for the troops serving their respective countries. In recent times, such studies have turned to the human face of conflict, tracing the lasting impact of battles, not just on life and limb, but also in terms of the deeper scars left on the human psyche. Not forgotten are the civilian casualties, those left at home, and people caught up in battle zones and displaced from their land.⁴

Archaeology, too, with its emphasis on the physical record of human activity, has a role to play in the study of conflict. Material culture is everywhere on battlefields. In the case of the 1915 campaign, the vast quantity of ordnance, which was unprecedented in scale, is not surprising. But as Charles Bean noted, it only tells part of the story. Perhaps less conspicuous to the average observer are the other paraphernalia of the landscape of warfare — kitchens, sleeping quarters, medical posts, supply depots and many more features. In this regard, the exploration of the materiality of war, especially in the modern era, benefits from an anthropological approach.

In battlefield archaeology, or to use the more inclusive term, 'conflict archaeology',⁵ the original functions of weaponry and relics collected from the arena of war have been superseded. The artefacts assume new roles, standing as tangible reminders for the nations involved of the human cost of war, of life in

(above)

FULL DETAIL OF MONTAGE
IMAGES CAN BE FOUND
ON PP. 36, 42–3.

extreme conditions, and of regret. Objects collected from modern battlefields are curiously ambiguous because they were so recently in use. These objects float where oral history, military history and archaeology intersect, where family history and global history cross. Often contested, military articles evoke individual and collective memories and feelings. Such artefacts have, in a sense, their own life. Transported from the battlefield to peoples' homes, or to museums, they become part of family history, and their 'biography' is told and retold with each passing generation. There is no more important role in this process than that supplied by archaeology.⁶ Using methods and techniques developed in archaeology we can better understand how these objects relate to a battlefield and what the broad patterns mean. Despite the plethora of Gallipoli

Bean's investigations in 1919 reveal his deep understanding of the physical landscape and how it changed in the course of eight months of conflict. The only other survey conducted prior to the JHAS was that which accompanied the Gallipoli Peninsula Peace Park project throughout the 1980s.⁸ This wide-ranging and large-scale survey documented the monuments across the peninsula, as well as providing a number of demographic and historical overviews. A preliminary extensive archaeological survey — the first for the peninsula — was also conducted.⁹ Despite the immense value of the resulting Peace Park publication, a fine-grained archaeological analysis of the Anzac battlefield had yet to be undertaken.

In 2005, Turkish road-widening activities at Anzac Cove shaved the hillside behind the

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objects that fill museums both in Australia and abroad, few artefacts have a *precise* context. The analysis and interpretation of the exact spatial relationship between an artefact and the physical layout of a site is the contribution of archaeology.

THE PROJECT — JOINT HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

The first survey of the Anzac battlefield was carried out in early 1919, when Charles Bean returned to Turkey as leader of the Australian Historical Mission, a group of eight Australians, including a war artist (George Lambert) and photographer (Hubert Wilkins).⁷ The visit enabled Bean — assisted by Major Zeki Bey, a Turkish officer who had served through the campaign — to study the field of battle from the Turkish perspective and resolve, to his mind, 'riddles' of the 1915 campaign that remained unanswered. His purpose was to report to the Commonwealth Government on how the Australian cemeteries should be laid out and maintained, and his visit did not involve archaeology or cartography. Even so,

shoreline and exposed what was reported to be a human long bone, allegedly belonging to a soldier who died during the 1915 campaign. The nationality of the soldier is unknown: Australians, New Zealanders, English and Indians all fought and died in this Anzac area. But ethnicity was not the issue behind the swift and deeply felt reaction from Australia; rather, it was the disturbance of a site of special significance — a site embedded in the hearts and minds of many Australians.

Less than two months later, on 26 April 2005, the then prime ministers of Turkey and of Australia, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and John Howard, agreed to cooperate on the preservation of key sites from the 1915 campaign in the Anzac battlefield area. A subsequent Australian Senate committee report, *Matters Relating to the Gallipoli Peninsula* (2005), recommended a multidisciplinary project to identify and record sites of historical significance.¹⁰ The JHAS project was thus formed, with a team composed of members from countries on both sides of the 1915 conflict: Australia, New Zealand and Turkey. Nearly five years elapsed between the Senate recommendation and the first fieldwork season,



(above)

Fig. 1. Sheet 17 of the 43-sheet map series produced under Brigadier General Mehmet Şevki Pasha. This map, at a scale of 1:5,000, covers the Anburnu area of the Gallipoli peninsula and depicts the Allied and Ottoman battlefield features as they lay in 1916.

COURTESY MITHAT ATABAY

and it took another five years to complete the project (2010–2014).

No archaeological excavations were undertaken on the battlefield at Gallipoli during the JHAS project. Rather, non-invasive surface inspection was the primary mode of study. Field surveying is an archaeological method of information gathering with a long history, and it is uniquely placed to analyse and interpret evidence concerning the spatial dimensions of human behaviour. For JHAS, all finds — from the smallest scrap of rusty metal to a long and winding trench — were recorded with precision and described in detail. Their positions were noted using Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS) technology and measurements; issues of preservation, and any obvious spatial relationships between features, were recorded in bilingual notebooks (English and Turkish). This information about earthworks and artefacts was then digitised and integrated into the project's Geographic Information System

(GIS). Remote sensing methods, including ground penetrating radar and examination of aerial photographs and satellite imagery, were also used.

THE PREPARATION

In the planning stage leading up to fieldwork, the team was aware that, given the multidisciplinary nature of the exercise, evidence should not be compartmentalised. Instead, we needed to ensure the integration of landscape archaeology and artefact analysis with maps, plans, written accounts and photographs pertaining to both sides of the conflict. In this regard, access to Ottoman evidence to balance out the well-known Anzac sources was an important goal of the project.

Maps were a crucial part of the planning stage for the survey. We needed to know what level of cartographic detail was available to the military of both sides prior to the landing, throughout the campaign and in the years after the evacuation. In response to the strategic importance of the Dardanelles Straits — a conduit linking the Aegean Sea to Istanbul and beyond, to the Black Sea and the Crimea — the French mapped the Gallipoli Peninsula, albeit not in detail, before the First World War. French soldier-surveyors collected much of the data in 1854, during the Crimean War.¹¹ The Allies adopted the same topographical information in the months leading up to the Gallipoli campaign to produce 1:63,360 scale maps (using the British scale of one inch to one mile). These British maps were published by the Survey Department in Cairo and were used by the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force during the 1915 landings. Their shortcomings have been much debated, but their primary failing was one of scale. They were simply not detailed enough for the campaign, in particular because their unconventional contours understated the ruggedness of the terrain.

The Allies' replacement maps, drafted during the course of the campaign, helped the situation. But the peninsula was not mapped in detail until the Ottoman military charted the region from March 1914 to February 1916.¹² Instrumental in this project was Brigadier Mehmet Şevki (Ölçer) Pasha, an outstanding cartographer, whose maps remain an invaluable resource.¹³ Born in 1866



in Istanbul, Şevki Pasha graduated from several Ottoman military schools before attending the French War Academy in Paris (1890–1892), where he learned his mapping skills. Upon his return to Turkey in 1894, he was appointed to the Mapping Commission and, by 1909, he was producing intricate maps for the Ottoman Empire. With the onset of the First World War, the mapping of the Gallipoli Peninsula became imperative. Fifty-eight officers led by Şevki Pasha produced 1:25,000 scale maps that were later modified for a series at a scale of 1:5000. The seventeenth sheet of this significant set of maps covers the Arıburnu (Anzac) area. It depicts the complexity of Ottoman (printed in red) and Anzac (printed in blue) trench systems and the roughness of the physical terrain (fig. 1).

THE SETTING

The Anzac area, covering approximately 3.7 square kilometres, was defined by the Treaty of Lausanne, and included in the treaty as Map Three.¹⁴ Today the territory is delineated by a series of white, concrete boundary markers



(fig. 2). It lies between the broad coastal plain of Suvla (Anafarta) and the elevated plateau of Kilitbahir. The island of Gökçeada (formerly Imbros), thinly veiled in a sea haze in summer, is visible from most vantage points (fig. 3); further away is Samothrace. During the Gallipoli campaign, many Australian soldiers were enchanted by the sunsets over the islands. Sergeant Cyril Lawrence noted in his diary

Away about fifteen miles off our position are two mountainous islands, Imbros and Samothrace. The sun goes below the sea's horizon just off the northern end of the latter throwing them both, great jagged peaks, into silhouette on a crimson background. The sea is nearly always like oil and as the crimson path streams across the water the store ships, hospital ships, torpedo boats and mine sweepers stand out jet black. God, it's just magnificent!¹⁵ (fig. 4)



(left, upper)

Fig. 2. One of the concrete boundary markers that delineate the Anzac Battlefield.

COURTESY DEPT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS (DVA); PHOTO: A. SAGONA

(main photo)

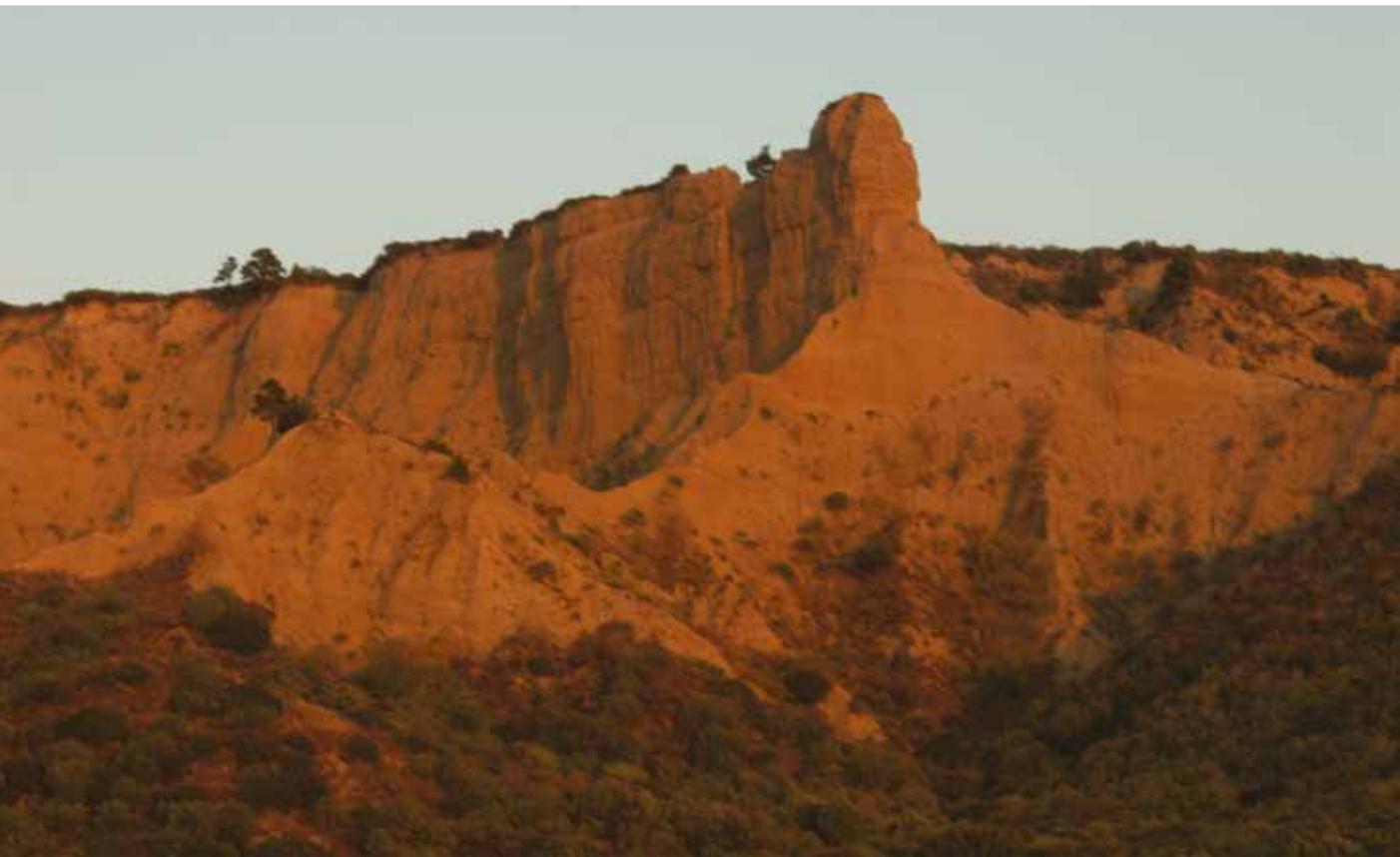
Fig. 3. View of Plugge's Plateau with the silhouette of the island of Gökçeada on the horizon.

COURTESY DVA; PHOTO: A. SAGONA

(left, lower)

Fig. 4. Sunset over the island of Gökçeada.

COURTESY DVA; PHOTO: A. SAGONA



(above)

Fig. 5. 'The Sphinx' at sunset.

COURTESY DVA;
PHOTO: A. SAGONA

The jagged terrain of the battlefield is well known — seasonal streams and seismic activity have etched into the limestone and sandstone terraces a confusing entanglement of deep valleys and precipitous peaks, such as the 'Sphinx' at Anzac Cove (fig. 5). Today this rugged ground is carpeted by thick vegetation. Trees such as the *Arbutus andrachne* (commonly called the Greek strawberry tree, but often mistaken for rhododendron by the Anzac soldiers), and shrubs, including thorn bushes, reduce visibility on the ground and add to the difficulty of a field survey. Owing to the nature of the terrain, the most effective and systematic approach was to ground search along narrow strips of land (transects), strategically placed across the battlefield, rather than walking in a straight line over grids measuring one hundred by one hundred metres, which are conventionally used in open ploughed areas. Intensive field walking in more accessible areas was also adopted.

For most Australians the Gallipoli Peninsula is inseparable from the 1915 campaign. Some might be aware that the celebrated ancient settlement of Troy is not far away, on the other side of the straits in north-western Turkey, but

on the whole the deep and rich history of this region is little known. This is due in part to an absence of eye-catching monuments, such as those that greet visitors at Ephesus or Pergamon, but the main reason is that, compared to other parts of Anatolia, archaeological investigations in this long, narrow finger of land (five kilometres wide at its narrowest point) are in their fledging stage. Even so, we can piece together some of the peninsula's history. It was settled around the mid-seventh millennium BC, when Neolithic farming communities inhabited the north-west of Anatolia around the Marmara Sea, their last destination before they went on to transmit their knowledge of cereal cultivation and animal domestication to south-east Europe.¹⁶

Many nameless cultures, known only by their material remains, populated the region in the Bronze and Iron ages. It is not until the fifth century BC and the ancient Greeks that we encounter informative literary texts that mention the region, although Homer's *Iliad*, composed around 700 BC, also makes a passing reference to the city of Sestos on the peninsula and a few other locations in the Dardanelles area.¹⁷ To the Greeks, the peninsula

was ‘Thracian Chersonese’, which harboured a number of important cities including ‘Kallipolis’ (Beautiful City), the Greek equivalent of Gallipoli, and the Turkish ‘Gelibolu’.¹⁸ The cities on the peninsula also feature in accounts of three ancient conflicts — the Trojan, Persian and Peloponnesian wars. After the Graeco-Roman period the peninsula, often viewed as the gateway between Europe and Asia, continued to play a prominent role in Byzantine, Crusader and Turkish history. Again its position was the crucial factor. Soon after he conquered Istanbul on 29 May 1453, Fatih Sultan Mehmet (Mehmet the Conqueror) moved to fortify the Dardanelles in order to secure the capital city. The impressive castles that he built still overlook the straits today, like mute sentinels guarding the entrance to the capital. One aspect has not changed in the history of the peninsula, namely its multicultural identity. From the earliest settlements through the medieval period to 1914, it has been a place where cultures intersect. There is no better indication of this than the demography of the Dardanelles prior to the Allied campaign, when the population comprised a mix of Greeks, Turks, Jews, Armenians and Bulgarians.

THE RESULTS

In its first four years, the JHAS recorded and documented 1769 features, of which 596 are earthworks (Anzac and Ottoman), including trenches (47%), dugouts (17%) and tunnels (13%).¹⁹ The survey focused on the terrain on either side of a narrow no-man’s-land between the Anzacs and the Ottomans, along the Second Ridge and along the coast fringe.

Approximately 16.5 kilometres of trenches spread across 4.2 square kilometres have been recorded. Both the Allies and the Ottomans dug deep and narrow linear trenches, which etched the presence of both camps into the landscape (fig. 6). As the Anzac trenches evolved, they formed a complex and interconnecting system of four levels. Defining the battlefield were sinuous or zigzagged trenches shaping the lines of opposing forces. Behind them were support trenches, from which supplies and new troops passed to the front. Next, reserve trenches located well away from the front line acted as depots for emergency supplies and soldiers.

Finally, communications flowed along important arterial trenches that linked focal points on the battlefield. In many respects, the nature of trench warfare, where the main aim is to dig below the ground surface to gain protection, limited the mobility of soldiers. At Anzac, the labyrinth of earthworks evolved as a three-stage process. The first stage, in the first few days after 25 April, was the shortest and most chaotic as confused and desperate soldiers feverishly dug themselves below ground.²⁰ Then, throughout May, the basic positions were consolidated. In the third stage, continuing over the next seven months, the formidable and elaborate trench system was extended and refined with the help of engineers.

Archival photographs and plans show that, on average, Anzac trenches were dug to a depth of two metres, deep enough so that a soldier could safely stand up, and were about 1–1.2 metres wide. Some trenches, however, such as the Big Sap, or the Ottoman trench at the Nek, were massive, being several metres deep and wide,

(below)

Fig. 6. Bolton’s Ridge. Well preserved Anzac trench nestled in thick vegetation (Feature 838). Note the Greek strawberry tree on the left hand side.

COURTESY DVA;
PHOTO: A. SAGONA



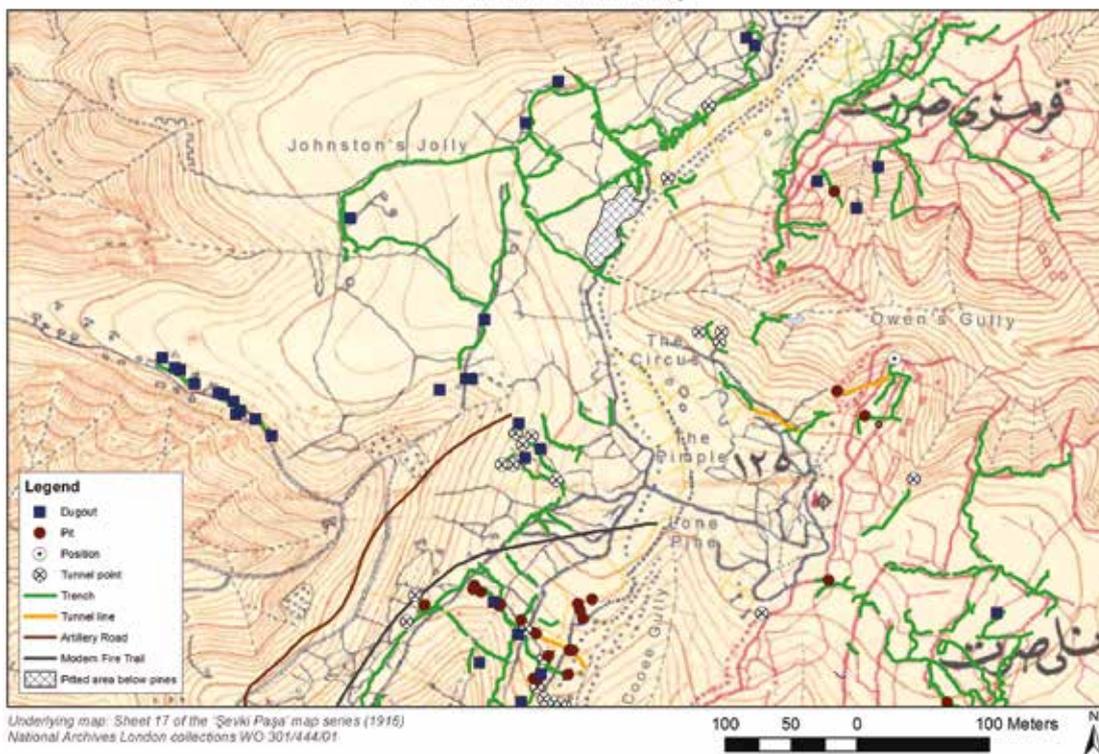
and would have required a huge investment of labour. A century on, most trenches average between eighty to ninety centimetres in depth, their walls clearly discernable and preserved by tree roots. When you stand in a trench today, you soon realise that beneath your feet is a substantial amount of eroded soil and leaf litter. This rich and deep deposit of soil has promoted the growth of *Arbutus andrachne*, so in many instances it is possible to follow the trench line by following the line of these trees. An example of the correlation between the JHAS findings and Şevki Pasha’s map can be seen in the map of Lone

Lone Pine and Johnston's Jolly

(right)

Fig. 7. Earthworks recorded during the JHAS project superimposed on Şevki Pasha's map.

COURTESY DVA;
CREATED BY
JESSIE-BIRKETT-REES



(below)

Fig. 8. Lone Pine. Well-formed, round tunnel opening, measuring 80 cm across the mouth (Feature 733).

COURTESY DVA;
PHOTO: A. SAGONA



dangerous locations. We recorded eighty-two tunnel openings, which hints at the existence of a tunnel system (fig. 8).

Dugouts are the third main form of earthworks. Usually positioned close to support and reserve trenches, these depressions were a safe haven for soldiers, where they rested from the stress of combat, or ate their meals. Their size varies from ninety centimetres to as large as five metres across, though most are today around 2.5 metres in diameter.

Terraces were also secure positions, but could accommodate a larger cohort of soldiers than a string of dugouts. Cut into the slope of a hill, terraces were levelled areas generally used as camps for food preparation. The most significant that we rediscovered was Malone's Terrace, situated behind Quinn's Post. In the first two months at Quinn's Post, soldiers had difficulty working and resting on the steep slope. When New Zealander Lieutenant-Colonel William George Malone took over the post with his Wellington Battalion on 9 June 1915, he made significant changes to improve security and make the location more comfortable for his men. Malone's contribution to the campaign is notable because Quinn's Post was a critical area, where some desperate fighting took place. No-man's-land was at its narrowest here with no more than

Pine and Johnston's Jolly (fig. 7). Even though slight divergence can be noted, it is clear that, in some instances, trenches correspond closely.

As the campaign progressed, the war went further underground, especially after the Ottomans exploded their tunnel on 29 May at Quinn's Post. Tunnelling was not new in warfare, but high explosives were. The Anzac forces burrowed in turn beneath enemy lines to detonate explosives and destroy above-ground enemy installations. Other tunnels were defensive for both forces and acted as passageways from one trench to another in



twenty-seven metres (little more than a cricket pitch) separating it from the Turkish frontline. The improved conditions no doubt helped in holding on to this position.

Artefacts comprise 1106 of the 1769 features recorded by JHAS, with 650 items found in the Anzac area and 456 in the Turkish regions. These items can be classified into thirteen categories, though for purposes of understanding life in the trenches they are best grouped into five themes: Barbed wire and bricks — the main means by which trench systems were fortified; Weapons, ordnance and tools; Food, water and drink; Communication and logistics; and Personal items (figs 9–18, overleaf).

Here I will present some of the results pertaining to food. There is no difference more marked than that between the food the two armies ate, owing largely to the fact that the Ottoman army had access to fresh food. In many ways the two ‘menus’ represent what nutritionists would consider extremes on the food spectrum. On the one hand, the Anzacs filled up on pre-packaged foods, such as corned beef and jam, supplemented by hard biscuits. Charles Bean gives a vivid account of this stomach-turning diet (fig. 19):

For a month it was possible to eat ‘bully beef’, onions, army biscuits, bacon, and jam, and drink tea with relish. But as month followed month; as heat and flies increased the troops ... had little appetite



(left)

Fig. 19. Russell's Top. Flattened can, heavily corroded (Artefact 392.2); Pope's Hill. Bully beef key and with part of winding still attached (Artefact 246).

COURTESY DVA;
PHOTO: A. SAGONA

for the over-salted ‘bully’, which, in the heat of midday or afternoon, slipped in its own fat across the platter or mess-tin, swamping stray flies as it went; or for the thin apricot jam on tasteless biscuit; or for the cheese, greasy from exposure to the sun and filling the dugout with an odour sickeningly reminiscent of that exhaling from the corpses in No-Man's Land.²¹

Turkish soldiers, on the other hand, were always served cooked foods. The meals were prepared in large cauldrons and carried in wide pans, tin buckets, or any other available container.²² Mobile kitchens ensured that food was never far away, and drew on provisions stored and organised by the Ottoman 5th Army Logistics Inspectorate at several points on the peninsula. Fresh bread was baked daily in Madytos (now Eceabat), and at the beginning of the campaign several abattoirs were established behind the battlefield. The food ration for an Ottoman soldier was 3000 calories per day.²³ Soup was served at breakfast (6–8 am), and officers had the added luxury of hot tea. During the day Ottoman soldiers snacked on dried grapes, figs, or nuts, which were kept in their kits.²⁴ Then, at lunch (11 am – 1 pm), grilled meatballs and soup were served with *pilaf* (rice). The main meal was dinner (6–8 pm) and included a dish of legumes (chickpeas, lentils and beans) served with meat (62 grams) and fresh vegetables in summer.²⁵ Green vegetables were particularly favoured as a preventive for scurvy.

Archaeological fieldwork confirms the documentary evidence on the food served to soldiers, as well as providing new insights on where it was consumed. While the Ottoman army were well served by fully-fledged kitchen installations, the artefacts associated with food and eating in the Anzac-held areas tell a different

CONSTANTINOPLÉ

Fig. 9. **Dead Man's Ridge.** An in situ fragment of German barbed wire, well camouflaged amongst the vegetation (Feature 505).



Fig. 10. **Turkish front-line trench at Dead Man's Ridge.** Pattern 1903 Ottoman bayonet (Artefact 300).



Fig. 11. **Holly Ridge between the Turkish and Anzac front lines.** The blade end of an iron entrenching tool (Artefact 962).



Fig. 12. **Turkish front line on Silt Spur.** Head stamp of a Mauser (written in Ottoman at the top) bullet cartridge case (Artefact 636); on the bottom is the Arabic date 1326 A.H. (1908 A.D.), and on either side are stamped a crescent moon and star, and another symbol; **Holly Ridge.** Cartridge case (Artefact 943). Bronze. Letters and numerals stamped onto the head stamp: 'CAC' (top), and '7', '12', and 'VI' (bottom); **German Officers'.** Nine expended bullets misshapen by impact (Artefact 102).



Fig. 13. **Outpost No. 2.** Ninety-five dark green glass shards from a single alcohol bottle (Artefact 861).



ALL IMAGES: COURTESY DVA; PHOTOS: A. SAGONA

Chateau Neuf d'Asie



14

Fig. 14. **Outpost No. 2.** Glass fragment (Artefact 1077), possibly from a whiskey bottle. Some moulded letters are partially preserved and read '...GLAND', most probably '[EN] GLAND'.



15

Fig. 15. **Bolton's Ridge.** Base sherd of SRD stoneware jar (Artefact 825). Stamped mark on the side reads: 'HUNTS PATENT LIVERPOO...'



16

Fig. 16. **Courtney's Post.** Anzac water bottle with blue enamel surface (A149). Kidney-shaped base and curved sides. Two holes, possibly bullet holes that have corroded.



17

Fig. 17. **The Nek.** Detail of rivets of a large water tank (Feature 562).



18

Fig. 18. **Johnston's Jolly.** Button with round surface and eye for thread on back (Artefact 19). The face is embossed with the crest of Edward Rex and surround by the words 'Australian Army Corps' around the circumference.

ALL IMAGES: COURTESY DVA; PHOTOS: A. SAGONA

Background image: 'Veue des Dardanelles de Constantinople c. 1700'. This French map shows Gallipoli on the left hand side and the perspective, with Constantinople on the horizon, emphasising the strategic importance of the Dardanelles.

SOURCE: THE RONALD & PAMELA WALKER COLLECTION OF MAPS OF CONSTANTINOPLE & SURROUNDS, 1493-1734, THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE MAP COLLECTIONS



(above, left)

Fig. 20. Turkish Quinn's. Arrangement of bricks in area known as Mutfak Dere (Kitchen Valley), possible part of an Ottoman kitchen structure (Feature 321).

COURTESY DVA;
PHOTO: A. SAGONA

(above, right)

Fig. 21. Ottoman soldiers lining up for a meal.

PHOTO: COURTESY
MITHAT ATABAY



story. The majority of these items (107 out of 1107 artefacts) are tin-plated steel cans, which were used as containers for pre-packaged food such as corned beef, jam and, occasionally, treats of condensed milk and cocoa. Like all material culture recorded where it is found, these tin cans are informative on several levels. The discard patterns across the battlefield, for instance, document the location of mess areas. Not surprisingly, many tin cans were recovered around dugouts and in the support trenches. A survey of Silt Spur (at Features 704, 715 and 716), however, revealed a more harrowing time at the front line. Evidence of sustained heavy conflict is everywhere — tunnel entrances, shrapnel, bullet fragments, and barbed wire segments — but pieces of metal cans and glass sherds also suggest that food was consumed in the heart of the conflict zone. To judge by the sherds of glass bottles that have also been found at Silt Spur, the bland palate of the Anzac rations was possibly improved with condiments and the nutritional value enhanced with tonics. A similar situation is found at the Anzac frontline on Holly Ridge where, between the barbed wire entanglements in no-man's-land, our survey recorded a rubbish dump. It appears that, in the thick of fighting, Anzac soldiers consumed food and threw the refuse from their meals into this patch of land — one of the outcomes of the survey that brings the day-to-day practices of the soldiers into sharper focus.

That we have few food-related items on the Turkish side is not surprising. Unlike the Anzacs, they had little in the way of inorganic refuse,

and most of their cooking and eating utensils would have been taken away at the end of the campaign. The most substantial evidence of their food supply lines are the remains of a Turkish brick oven behind German Officers' Ridge and relatively close to the front lines (figs. 20–21). Pressed bricks were found scattered across the Turkish trench system, but especially near the front line where they were used to reinforce earthworks. Many of the bricks have a *frog* — an indentation on the brick's widest sides — that bears the name of the brickworks. There is a variety of brick types from the peninsula, but the one most commonly documented during the survey had relief Greek letters reading ΜΑΔΥΤΟΣ, pointing to their manufacture at the Madytos (Eceabat) brickworks. Several slabs of sandstone, rounded at the edges, and reddened by fire, might have been used to bake flat bread.

CONCLUSION

So what has the JHAS project achieved? For the first time, the governments of three nations — Turkey, Australia and New Zealand — will have a baseline document that details sites of significance on the Anzac battlefield.

This battlefield, like other modern theatres of war, is witnessing a sharp rise in visitor numbers, reflecting the increase in specialist and public interest in twentieth-century conflict. Knowing what has survived on the Anzac battlefield will better meet the needs of the curious and individuals with family connections, heritage managers and fieldworkers. These and other

interest groups will now have a detailed record of the Anzac area.

On another level, the archaeological analysis of earthworks and their relationship to artefacts will broaden our understanding of the 1915 campaign. There is no question that the documentary record of Gallipoli is truly astounding, but it is only one source of evidence. Archaeology can now provide an independent body of data, which can be used for comparison or verification.

Thirdly, the recovery or identification of objects with precise contexts enables a high level of analysis of day-to-day behaviour of the individual soldier, which is sometimes difficult to find in the written sources. The intense psychological and physical experience of this first industrialised conflict deeply affected the soldiers. Their landscape was one of the senses — deafening noise from exploding artillery, pungent gas, and the sickening smell of death. The material culture left behind on the battlefield evokes their experiences. The spatial analysis of some of the food items, especially the discard patterns, for instance, both substantiates the documentary evidence and offers new insights into life in the frontline trenches.

Finally, the survey has utilised the notion of ‘place’. It has attempted to locate the 1915 campaign within the expansive historical context of the Gallipoli Peninsula, which extends through the Ottoman hegemony to the Graeco-Roman period and into remote prehistory. ¶



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Ancient Turkey (2009), co-authored with Paul Zimansky. Recently, his research interests have extended to conflict archaeology through his investigations of the Anzac battlefield. He is also editor of the journal **Ancient Near Eastern Studies** (Peeters Press, Leuven) and its monograph series.

1. Dispatch, Commonwealth of Australia Gazette, 2 December 1915, p. 3058.
2. The information presented in this article is based on the collective hard work of a team, listed here in alphabetical order, which I had the privilege to lead in the field during five years (2010–2014) of survey work: Gürsel Akingüç, Yağmur Arslan, İrem Aydilek, Jessie Birkett-Rees, Muhammet Erat, Simon Harrington, Murat Ufuk Kara, Ersümer Karanfil, Reyhan Körpe, Chris Mackie, Ian McGibbon, Sarah Midford, Guillermo Narsilio, Michelle Negus-Cleary, Cliff Ogleby, Richard Reid and Abby Robinson. I am grateful for their camaraderie, passion for research, and sense of purpose, which made the JHAS project both enjoyable and stimulating.

Many other people and institutions have made the JHAS project possible. Mentioned here are only the few who have seen this project through its five years. To the Turkish authorities in Ankara, including the T. C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı (Kültür Varlıkları ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü)/Ministry of Culture and Tourism, T. C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı/ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the T. C. Orman ve Su İşleri Bakanlığı/Ministry of Environments and Forests, we extend our thanks for granting us permission to carry out the field survey. The project owes a great debt of gratitude to the Department of Veterans' Affairs (Canberra), and the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, New Zealand, who provided support throughout the development of this project. I also wish to record my thanks to the various Governors/Valiler of Çanakkale, the District Governors/Kaymakamlar of Eceabat, three Australian Ambassadors to Turkey and their staff, two Australian Consuls at Çanakkale and their staff, the Rectors of Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi, Çanakkale, and the Commanders of the Naval Museum, Çanakkale, where the survey finds are stored.

3. *Anzac Battlefield: A Gallipoli Landscape of War and Memory*, ed. by A. Sagona, M. Atabay, C. Mackie, I. McGibbon and R. Reid (Cambridge & Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, in press). I thank my colleagues (see endnote 2, above) for allowing me to present some of our collective results. A detailed open-access catalogue will also be available online — ‘Gallipoli Battlefield Archaeological Database’ (GBAD): www.arts.unimelb.edu.au/gallipoli-battlefield (under construction). For preliminary results, see A. Sagona, M. Atabay, R. Reid, I. McGibbon, C. J. Mackie, M. Erat and J. Birkett-Rees, ‘The ANZAC [Arıburnu] Battlefield: New Perspectives and Methodologies in History and Archaeology’, *Australian Historical Studies* 42 (2011), pp. 313–37.
4. See, for instance, the early study by B. Gammage, *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War* (Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, 1975), who directed his attention to the experience

- of soldiers in the trenches rather than the strategies of officers. More recently, the role of civil society has been studied from a transnational perspective; see, *The Cambridge History of the First World War*, ed. by J. Winter, vol. 3 (Cambridge University Press, 2014).
5. On the anthropology of warfare see *Matters of Conflict, Material Culture, Memory and the First World War*, ed. by N. J. Saunders (London: Routledge, 2004); *Beyond the Dead Horizon: Studies in Modern Conflict Archaeology*, ed. by N. J. Saunders (Oxford: Oxbow, 2012); *Contested Objects: Material Memories of the Great War*, ed. by N. J. Saunders and P. Cornish (London: Routledge, 2008). Battlefield archaeology is well covered in D. D. Scott, R. A. Fox Jr., M. A. Connor and D. Harmon, *Archaeological Perspectives on the Battle of Little Bighorn* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989); *Fields of Conflict: Battlefield Archaeology from the Roman Empire to the Korean War*, ed. by D. D. Scott, L. Babits and C. Haecker, 2 vols (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007).
 6. J. Barrett, *Fragments from Antiquity: An Archaeology of Social Life in Britain 2900–1200 BC* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994); I. Hodder, *Reading the Past*, 2nd edn (Cambridge University Press, 1991); D. Miller, *The Comfort of Things* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008); D. Miller, *Stuff* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009).
 7. C. E. W. Bean, *Gallipoli Mission* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1948).
 8. R. Bademli, *Gallipoli Peninsula Peace Park International Ideas & Competition: The Book (I) and The Catalogue (II)* (Ankara: Middle East Technical University, 1997).
 9. M. Özdoğan, 'Prehistoric Sites in the Gelibolu Peninsula', *Anadolu Araştırmaları* 10 (1986), pp. 51–67.
 10. The Senate, Finances and Public Administration References Committee, *Matters Relating to the Gallipoli Peninsula* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2005), pp. xxvii–xxviii; Recommendation 3.
 11. For a detailed discussion of the mapping of Gallipoli, see J. Birkett-Rees, 'Capturing the Battlefield: The Story of Mapping and Air Photography', in 'Anzac Battlefield', Sagona et al.
 12. C. Ülkekel, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Haritacılık Tarihi* (Istanbul: Dönence Yayınevi, 1998), p. 29.
 13. E. Özkale and M. R. Şenler, *Haritacı Mehmet Şevki Paşa ve Türk Haritacılık Tarihi (1919 yılına kadar)* (Ankara: Harita Genel Müdürlüğü, 1980).
 14. Lausanne Peace Treaty Part V, Miscellaneous Provisions, 2. Graves, Article 129.
 15. Cyril Lawrence, *The Gallipoli Diary of Sergeant Lawrence of the Australian Engineers*, ed. by Sir Ronald East (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1983), p. 35.
 16. *The Neolithic in Turkey: New Excavations & New Research*, ed. by M. Özdoğan, N. Başgelen and P. Kuniholm, vol. 5, *Northwestern Turkey and Istanbul* (Istanbul: Archaeology & Art Publications, 2013).
 17. C. J. Mackie, 'Hell and Helle at the Dardanelles', in *Refashioning Myth*, ed. by J. L. Wilkinson, E. Parisot and D. McInnis (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2011), pp. 187–200.
 18. C. Mackie, 'Long Read: Gallipoli, the beautiful city', *The Conversation*, 1 August 2014, <<http://theconversation.com/long-read-gallipoli-the-beautiful-city-29581>>
 19. The team is still analysing the data from the fifth (2014) field season.
 20. For a detailed account of how the Anzac battlefield was formed, see R. Reid and I. McGibbon, 'Forming the Anzac Battlefield', in 'Anzac Battlefield', Sagona et al. (in press).
 21. C. E. W. Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, vol. II, *The Story of Anzac: From 4 May, 1915 to the Evacuation* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1924), p. 378.
 22. Genelkurmay Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Daire Başkanlığı (ATASE)/Turkish General Staff, *Birinci Dünya Harbi'nde Türk Harbi V. Cilt 3. Kitap, Çanakkale Cephesi Harekâtı (Haziran 1915 – Ocak 1916)* (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 1980), p. 530.
 23. Genelkurmay Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Daire Başkanlığı (ATASE)/Turkish General Staff, *Birinci Dünya Harbi'nde Türk Harbi V. Cilt Çanakkale Cephesi Harekâtı 1'nci, 2'nci ve 3'ncü Kitapların Özetlenmiş Tarihi (Haziran 1914–1919 Ocak 1916)* (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 2002), p. 239.
 24. An excellent example of a Turkish soldier's food ration bag is held in the AWM: RELAWM03972.004, <<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/RELAWM03972.004/>>.
 25. Genelkurmay Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Daire Başkanlığı (ATASE)/Turkish General Staff, 2002, p. 237.



Ah Xian

CHALLENGING THE SPATIAL LIMITATIONS OF SCULPTURAL ART

» MABEL LEE

Ah Xian was born Liu Jixian on 7 May 1960 in Beijing, six years before the beginning of the social engineering project in China known as the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). This grand-scale project was the culmination of successive political campaigns to remould the population into perfect socialist beings by eradicating human individuality. As an adolescent at the time that the Cultural Revolution ended, Ah Xian began to exert his intellectual potential to define a career path for himself as an artist, despite the lack of opportunities for formal art training. Through critical study of art publications as they gradually became accessible, he resolutely developed his own aesthetics and art practice. His first solo painting exhibition was held at the Old Observatory in Beijing in 1986, and he participated in a number of group exhibitions at the National Art Gallery of China during 1986 and 1987. Around the same time he also began to establish international credentials through being selected for group exhibitions: during 1987 at Salon d'Automne in Paris and at Harkness House in New York; during 1987–1989 at the Beijing–New York Art Exchange in New York and Boston; and during 1988 at the Salon du Grand Palais in Paris, an exhibition that afterwards toured France.

In early 1989 Ah Xian travelled to Australia to take up a two-month residency in the School of Art at the University of Tasmania in Hobart. Returning to Australia in September 1990 he

found lodgings in Sydney, and a month later was joined by his wife Mali. To provide for their daily needs, Mali worked in a factory cutting mounds of old sheeting into rags with a circular saw, and Ah Xian worked as a housepainter, kitchen hand, and at various other jobs. Though engaged in manual labour, his mind was focused on art. He made the time to create a new series of paintings, and then began to explore ways of resolving the complex practical issues associated with his idea to produce figurative sculptures based on plaster moulds of real people.

In 1998 he showed his first figurative sculptures to Richard Dunn, director of the Sydney College of the Arts (SCA) at the University of Sydney. Soon afterwards he was offered a two-semester residency at SCA during which he completed ten ceramic busts. In the following year he was awarded a grant from the Australia Council that enabled him to move to Jingdezhen in China where he completed forty figurative works. Suddenly his unique sculptures saw him launched as a significant presence in the Australian and the international art worlds. Since then his work has been showcased in solo exhibitions at public galleries and museums: once in China, five times in Australia, five times in Germany, once in the United States, and once in the Netherlands. At present his solo exhibition *Metaphysica* is on a 2013–2015 tour of fourteen Queensland regional galleries. His sculptures have been selected for group exhibitions at

(above)

Scales: 4 (reclining on the side)
Human, Human
2006–2007

See page 33 for source image and information.



(above)

Fig. 1. (SJ: IMAGE 89)

Bust 67

China, China 2002

Porcelain cast with applied decoration of kingfisher-blue feather design

41 x 40 x 22.5 cm
(h x w x d)

Made in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi Province, China.

COLLECTION AND COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

public galleries and museums in Australia, Germany, Korea, Canada, Japan, the Netherlands, United States, United Kingdom, and Switzerland.

In Australia, Ah Xian's sculptures have won two major national art prizes: in 2001 the National Sculpture Prize at the National Gallery of Australia and, in 2009, the Clemenger Contemporary Art Award at the National Gallery of Victoria. His sculptures have been collected by several Australian public institutions: the National Gallery of Australia and National Portrait Gallery (Canberra); the National Gallery of Victoria and RMIT Gallery (Melbourne); Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA) (Brisbane); the Powerhouse Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art and Art Gallery of New South Wales (Sydney); the Art Gallery of South Australia (Adelaide); and the University of Tasmania (Hobart). Overseas they

are part of collections at the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), the Asia Society Museum (New York), and the Kirishima Open-air Art Museum (Kagoshima, Japan).

* * *

For an artist talk at QAGOMA in Brisbane on 29 March 2014, Ah Xian prepared a PowerPoint file titled 'A Solitary Journey of Self-exile: Ah Xian's Art Practice from Early Times to the Present' that chronologically documents 200 images of representative pieces of his major works. 'Solitary journey' alludes to his solitary personality and also to the fact that he likes to be in a dream state, to drift away from crowds, to be silent and alone. The phrase also indicates his conscious avoidance of participation in political or social groups, or even any art group. In his art it is only his solitary self that arbitrates, and he sees himself as a reverent pilgrim prostrating himself in prayer as he travels along a road that will lead him to art.¹ The 200 images of 'A Solitary Journey' (SJ)² are the primary source material for the present study, with each image closely examined as artefacts of the aesthetics informing Ah Xian's art.

Ah Xian states in a matter-of-fact manner that he is a self-taught artist, who did not undertake formal study in an art college or university.³ While he does not declare himself to be free from obligation to any master artist or school of art, it is clearly the case. In other words, Ah Xian has been free to develop a unique brand of aesthetics and art practice. He states that he is a conceptual artist: he begins with a concept, and works out the exact details of every stage of the actualisation of that concept prior to engaging in the production of the artwork.⁴ The main concern of Ah Xian's art, however, is the human body, which is the opposite of what is generally considered as conceptual art with its geometric icons, machines, angles and lines, and scant reference to the human figure. Questioned about this, he asserts with conviction that he is a conceptual artist because the concept is decisive in each of his artworks. But he rejects outright the notion that he belongs to any trend or school of conceptual art. He regards his own art as 'characteristically personal and unique', and states categorically that 'the core

of art is about creation and soul', and that 'art' does not necessarily result if someone paints a painting. For him both the language and style of an artwork must be 'new, personal, special, unique, and creative'. Of equal importance is whether a work can 'touch and move people's hearts'.⁵ So, while a certain school of art may have appropriated the term 'conceptual art', Ah Xian has staked his own claim to the term, and authoritatively given it meaning.

Such an understanding of art has its roots deep in Ah Xian's love of art from early childhood. Even at kindergarten he was aware of his affinity for art. As a junior high school student he seized opportunities to attend the occasional art classes offered after school at the local cultural centre, where he took basic lessons in drawing, seal carving, calligraphy and ink brush painting. But his school years coincided with the Cultural Revolution, when all books that failed to promote socialism were considered reactionary or counter-revolutionary, and summarily seized and destroyed, or locked away in library basements. His parents obtained an art book that had been a textbook at the Central Academy of Fine Arts during the 1950s. It was about the drawing techniques of Russian portraitist Pavel Petrovich Chistiakov (1832–1919), and Ah Xian treasured it as a sacred text throughout his junior high school years. On reaching adolescence, Ah Xian's impulse for artistic expression intensified; frustrated by the lack of opportunities for art training, he lost interest in his senior high school studies, and his marks plummeted.⁶

Ah Xian graduated from high school in 1979 with mediocre grades, and afterwards trained for two years as a mechanical fitter at a state-run factory technical college. From childhood he was good at doing things with his hands: painting and calligraphy, making model planes and ships, constructing a beautifully designed steelyard for a physics project, and making wardrobes, cupboards and sofas. In his home there were several bicycles that he had pulled apart about ten times and put together again.⁷ Ah Xian had no inkling that such practical skills would later prove invaluable for his art creation.

At the time he simply rationalised that as a mechanical fitter he would be able to make a living to support his art. After classes he spent

virtually all his time reading about global art movements of the past century as art books and magazines became increasingly available; he also taught himself basic painting skills. His close friends were young artists, poets, playwrights, novelists, editors, critics and musicians who were united in their protests against government censorship. In making their demands for freedom of expression, they produced works that audaciously flaunted the official guidelines for cultural production. He found he could sell his paintings to scrape together a modest living, and so adopted 'Ah Xian' as his art name, and committed himself to a career in art.

Ah Xian's father, Liu Fengyi, was a cadre at Renmin University in Beijing and his mother, Wu Yuling, an associate professor of English at the Beijing Institute of Technology, which meant that the family lived in a university residential

(below)

Fig. 2. (SJ: IMAGE 143)

17: *Nelumbo nucifera* (Lotus)

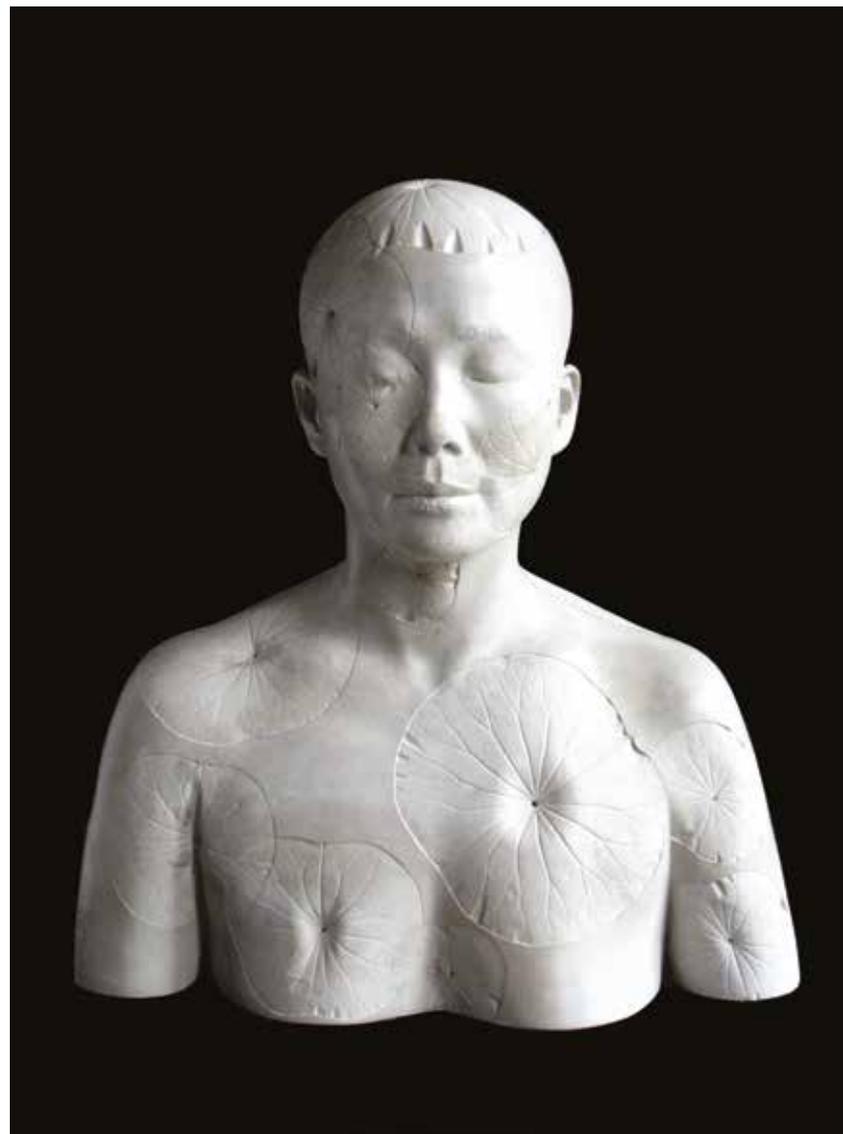
Concrete Forest
2008–2009

Concrete, wax

52 x 47.5 x 25 cm

Made in Beijing,
China.

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(right)

Fig. 3. (SJ: IMAGE 175)
13: Taihu Stone-1
Evolutionaura
2011–2013

Bronze, gold,
Taihu stone

72.2 x 53 x 26 cm

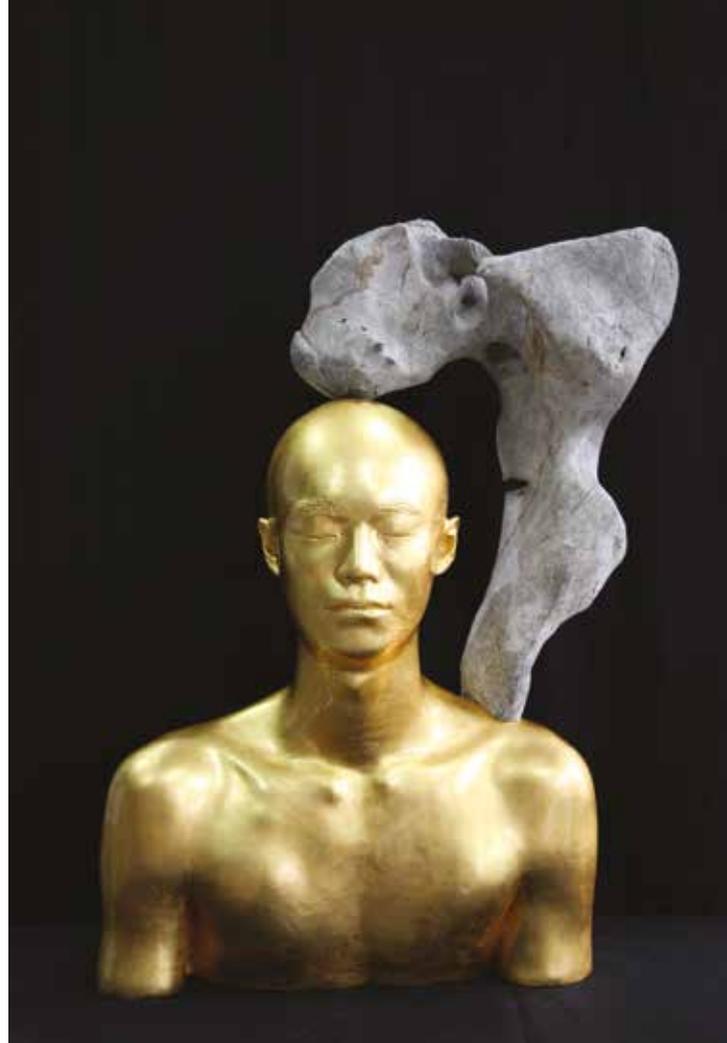
Made in Beijing,
China.

COLLECTION OF THE ART
GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH
WALES, SYDNEY, 2014

complex. Although there were no art books, they did have a splendid silk-bound hardcover first edition of *Arts and Crafts of China* at home, and Ah Xian notes that its high quality photographs of the finest examples of China's traditional artisan art left a deep and lasting impression on him.⁸ The impact of that book is clearly evident in his sculptural art although, while growing up, he could not have imagined how those images contributed to shaping his artistic sensibilities, or how he would later creatively appropriate those ancient crafts in his artworks.

The first image in 'A Solitary Journey' is a pencil sketch of the head of an ancient Greek statue, which was completed while Ah Xian was at high school; the second is an oil on canvas portrait of Mali, then his girlfriend, painted in 1980. The paintings that follow, however, suggest the directions to which his art would gravitate. In 1983 he painted a large three-panel work in oil on cotton titled *Daily. Beijing* that captures the colour and vibrancy of Beijing youth after the standard monotone grey and indigo garb of the Cultural Revolution had been abandoned. Lime-green flared trousers and floral shirts are in evidence. He shared the anger of his generation about the insidious forms of repression inflicted on the individual by the state, especially state interference in sexual relationships between men and women. Above all, his goal in art was the portrayal of the naked human body; his reasons for this are explained in the following paragraph. The fact that he was not enrolled in an art college, however, meant that he was unable to practise painting or making sculptures using nude models, and could only rely on images in magazines or in his imagination.⁹ His fascination with painting nudes led to his spending a night in police custody in early 1983 at the beginning of the Anti-Spiritual-Pollution Campaign that year.¹⁰

Two series of numbered paintings represent Ah Xian's first deep meditations on art. *Palace Lady Series* (1985–1987) and *The Wall Series* (1987–1989) are both anti-realist depictions of the human body, and register his reaction to state prohibitions on male–female sexual relationships. The *Palace Lady Series* are works in oil on canvas that portray nude women with big breasts and hips engaged in various chores



within the corridors and courtyards of ancient palace buildings. Secluded within the palace walls, women are off limits to men. In all cases their faces are turned away, obscured, or cut off at the edge of the canvas. Their nudity and the anonymity generated by their lack of facial features endow the women with the quality of abstractions: they are universal woman. Without any distinguishing facial features and clothing, the women are reduced to a state of equality in their predicament of being enclosed within forbidding palace walls, denied expression of the innate sexual instincts embodied in the fullness of their breasts and hips.

This anonymity of the person is retained in *The Wall Series*, works of ink on rice paper containing the shadowy figures of nude women. The setting for these works is distinctly urban. Deconstructed bright yellow traffic signs, iron grilles on window spaces, occasionally red grilles and red strips, stand in stark contrast to pale grey brick walls. White shadowy shapes of nude women are visible through the window grilles, or their shapes appear to have been etched into the walls.

As stated above, Ah Xian sees himself as a conceptual artist, something already

demonstrated in these early works. Even his 1980 portrait of his girlfriend Mali is anti-realist, and he has not deviated from this position. He maintains that realism has never been the objective of his art, that he has never depicted landscapes or real life scenes. He began making

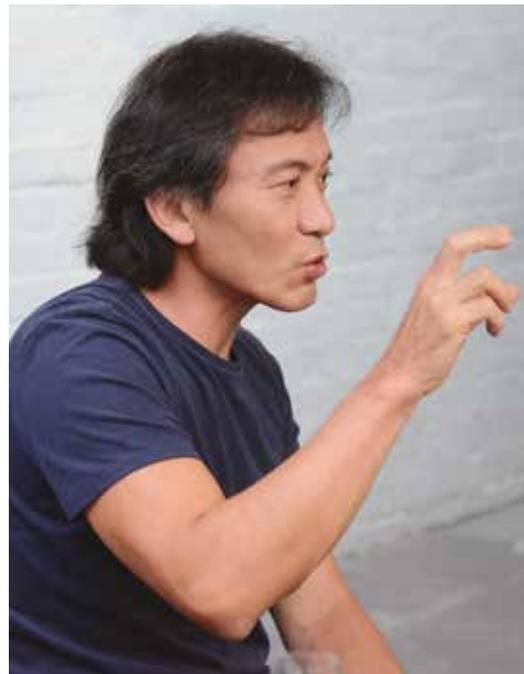
the back of the T-shirt is unmistakably a shadowy image of a PLA soldier with a rifle. By September 1990 Ah Xian had settled in Sydney. The events of 4 June still reverberated in his psyche, and resulted in a series of oils on canvas called *Heavy Wounds* (1991). These adopt

AH XIAN RETURNED TO BEIJING IN MAY 1989 AND WEEKS LATER ... WITNESSED THE MILITARY CRACKDOWN ON STUDENTS IN THE EARLY HOURS OF 4 JUNE.

friends with foreigners and attending parties held by the Western community. The locals in Beijing certainly had neither the money nor the inclination to buy art, but members of the foreign community were buying and collecting the work of local artists. Australian writer and academic Nicholas Jose¹¹ made many friends amongst Chinese artists and writers, including Ah Xian. When Jose was appointed cultural counsellor in the Australian Embassy in Beijing (1987–1990), Ah Xian and he had already been friends for a number of years. Geoff Parr, director of the School of Art at the University of Tasmania, happened to be in Beijing and was invited to Jose's residence for a party to celebrate an exhibition of paintings by a few of his Beijing artist friends. Parr saw paintings from *The Wall Series*, and this resulted in Ah Xian's residency at the University of Tasmania in early 1989.

Ah Xian returned to Beijing in May 1989 and weeks later, from his vantage point in the Muxidi area, he witnessed the military crackdown on students in the early hours of 4 June. He was immobilised with disbelief and sorrow for weeks, but then began to express his emotional state in a series of works in different media titled *Post June. 1989*. The first of these is a replica of his 1983 work *Daily. Beijing*. The colour and vibrancy of the original, however, is leached out in this stark black-and-white plywood woodcut. The other black-and-white woodcuts of the series graphically depict naked women in palace settings or against brick walls, or else the faces of national leaders emanating evil, and those of ordinary people etched with horror and anger. He also produced T-shirts printed on the front with an image of the legendary People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldier Lei Feng, who always unquestioningly obeyed his commanders:

the painting style of first-aid posters issued during the Cultural Revolution, and are clearly ironic statements about distorted reality. While purporting to demonstrate the procedure for wrapping bandages, Ah Xian describes the paintings as 'critical and cynical' indictments of the authorities: what they preached and what



(left)
Fig. 4.
Ah Xian
Profile by
David Goodman
COURTESY
DAVID GOODMAN

they did to people were completely the opposite. The faces of the people depicted are devoid of expression, and the eyes that look ahead are unseeing. The bandaged heads (SJ: images 53–56) could be interpreted as subliminal metaphors for lobotomy or imposed amnesia, despite Ah Xian's not having had this specific intention in mind. Following the paintings of *Heavy Wounds*, the PowerPoint presentation moves on to two photographs of an installation titled *Pervasive Spirit #2* (1992) (SJ: images 62 and 63) that, in



(above)

Fig. 5. (SJ: IMAGE 108)

Lotus Cloisonné-1
Human, Human
2000-2001

Hand-beaten copper,
finely enameled
cloisonné, lotus
design

158 x 55.5 x 32 cm

Made in Dachang
County, Hebei
Province, China.

COLLECTION OF
THE QUEENSLAND
ART GALLERY/GALLERY
OF MODERN ART,
BRISBANE, 2002

fact, belong to the separate series *Scattered Souls*, although this is not specified in 'A Solitary Journey'. The installation depicts an open black box full of plaster sculptures of severed hands with nametags attached to them. Ah Xian created six such works in the series, using genuine ammunition containers, plaster, lead, steel nails, wax and cotton bandages.¹²

Soon afterwards Ah Xian began to experiment with making plaster casts of the human body for the large-scale sculptural projects he had in mind. He initially practised on himself, and later on his brother and wife. One of his early experiments almost ended in disaster when he

decided to make a plaster cast of his torso while at home alone. He used liquid dishwashing detergent as a separator or buffer between his skin and the plaster, but as the plaster set it released heat, the detergent began to burn his chest, and he could barely move. When his wife Mali returned she had to use knives and scissors to free him. His burns required hospital treatment.¹³ Over the following years he developed a safe technique of making plaster casts and was able to produce figurative sculptures in the backyard of his home, and fire them in the kilns at the Sydney College of the Arts through the kind auspices of Richard Dunn. During his 1998 residency at the college he produced the first porcelain busts for his series *China, China*. Afterwards he progressively added to the series during 1999, 2002 and 2004 at the Jingdezhen kilns in China. The city of Jingdezhen had for many centuries produced the finest porcelains in the world, and Ah Xian enlisted the help of skilled craftsmen and artisans to assist in producing artworks according to his detailed specifications. He also enlisted local people to model for the plaster casts of human figures that he wanted to populate his installations.

To date the *China, China* series numbers eighty porcelain busts of male and female persons, including ten made at the Sydney College of the Arts in 1998, forty-three made at Jingdezhen in 1999, and another thirty pieces made during 2002 and 2004.¹⁴ Each of the busts is of an anonymous person, except for the bust of eminent Sydney paediatrician John Yu (SJ: image 96). As the busts are based on plaster casts of real people, the eyes and mouth are necessarily closed, hence stripping the face of expression and endowing it with an air of serenity or even transcendence. While the busts have different facial features, they are further differentiated by traditional Chinese decorative motifs that are painted, etched, attached to or wrapped around the busts, or else the bust itself is produced as cloisonné, sculptured lacquer, overlay, or cut-out porcelain items. In other words, each bust is unique as an art object. This being so, *China, China* can either constitute a single large installation of eighty items, or an endless number of installations using various selections of smaller numbers of busts. Alternatively, individual busts can be mounted on plinths, or



multiple busts can be displayed alongside one another on a bench (S): images 97–101).

Ah Xian's *China, China* series was an instant success. Exhibitions were held at the Art Gallery of the Beijing Teacher's University (2000), the RMIT Gallery (2000), Powerhouse Museum (2001), Brisbane City Gallery (2001), Museum für Angewandte Kunst Frankfurt, Germany (2002), the Asia Society Museum (2002), and the Queensland Art Gallery in Brisbane (2003). It was clear that his art career was finally on track, with his skills for working with various sculptural media taken to a higher level while working at the kilns of Jingdezhen. Also, his unique technique of working from plaster casts of the human body had been established as his signature.

lacquer busts, but it is the striking sculptures of the full female body that predominate.

The women are featured standing, walking, sitting with legs crossed, sitting on a chair, kneeling, or reclining in various positions. These creations of extraordinary beauty represent the starting point of his sculptural realisation of the nude figure.

His standing woman (S): image 108), which was created over several months during 2000–2001, won the 2001 National Sculpture Prize and Exhibition held at the National Gallery of Australia. The figure is a work in pale ivory cloisonné on hand-beaten copper, intricately patterned from the head to the feet with trailing lotus plants that include the roots, the leaves in various stages of growth, seed



(above)

Fig. 6. (S): IMAGE 111)

Scales: 4 (reclining on the side)

Human, Human
2006–2007

Ox-bone inlay on resin fibreglass body cast with dragon-scale design

33 x 150 x 50 cm

COLLECTION AND COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

THE LOTUS CAME TO BE REVERED AS A SYMBOL OF MORAL PURITY BY SCHOLARS, AND BECAME A POPULAR MOTIF IN TRADITIONAL ARTISAN ARTWORKS.

By 2000 Ah Xian had found the specialist artisans he needed, and immediately began on his new series of works *Human, Human* (S): images 102–117). The cloisonné work, as well as the jade, ox-bone and ox-horn inlay work was produced in Xianghe County in Hebei province; the carved-lacquer work at the Beijing Carved Lacquer Factory; and the bronzes in Xinjian County in Jiangxi province.¹⁵ At present the series contains some cloisonné and carved

pod, trailing stalks, buds and flowers. The Song dynasty philosopher Zhang Zai (1020–1077), renowned for his path-breaking metaphysical interpretation of the universe in terms of Qi-energy, had immortalised the lotus with his 'Ode to the Lotus': the lotus flower is unsullied by having grown out of mud. The lotus came to be revered as a symbol of moral purity by scholars, and became a popular motif in traditional artisan artworks. Importantly in a work of

(below)

Fig. 7. (S): IMAGE 110—
CONTAINING TWO WORKS)

Scales: 5 (sitting)
Human, Human
2006–2007

Ox-bone inlay on
resin fibreglass body
cast with dragon-
scale design

137 x 57 x 76 cm

Made in Xianghe
County, Hebei
Province, China.

COLLECTION AND
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Immortal on Deer
Metaphysica 2007

Bronze, brass

64 x 43.5 x 23.5 cm

Made in Beijing,
China.

COLLECTION OF THE
QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY/
GALLERY OF MODERN ART,
BRISBANE, 2009



contemporary art that extols the human body and the excellence of human endeavour and creation in the ancient art of cloisonné, Ah Xian's cloisonné work met the demanding standards of master craftsmen.¹⁶

The full body sculptures of *Human, Human* introduce significant innovations that expand the spatial limitations of the sculptured form. The three-dimensional sculpture of a woman kneeling acquires an additional dimension when executed as a work of carved-lacquer (S): image 104). Additional dimensions are also achieved when resin-fibreglass sculptures are covered with jade, ox-bone or ox-horn inlays (S): images 109–114). Furthermore, movement has clearly been captured in the sculpture of the woman walking (S): image 109).

Between 20 October 2007 and 7 September 2008 selections of Ah Xian's sculptures and busts toured Städtische Museen Heilbronn and Kunsthalle Recklinghausen in Germany, and then Gemeentemuseum Den Haag in the Netherlands.¹⁷ By this time Ah Xian had started

on his new series: *Metaphysica* (2007) (S): images 118–126). Produced in Beijing, these bronze busts of expressionless women are cast in lustrous ebony or have been artificially tarnished in green. Disrupting the serenity of these busts, however, is an icon of traditional folk culture perched on the head of each of the women. The icons include a bright red fish, a brass pagoda or a Buddha statue, a grey elephant, a rabbit, a crab, a rooster: replicas of mundane objects that can be purchased in the stalls of local markets and serve as powerful counterpoints to the uncluttered beauty of the sculptured human form. The location of these mundane objects on the head symbolises how such objects continue to exert an influence on people's minds, as indicated by the persistence of traditional folk customs and practices.

From 2008 Ah Xian began working on a new series titled *Concrete Forest*. Thirty-six concrete busts set on plinths (S): 127–165) from the series were exhibited as an installation at the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, where it received the 2009 Clemenger Contemporary Art Award. The busts are of both men and women, and each bears indentations made with different leaves, or occasionally the leaves are executed as bas-relief. Significantly, the leaves add multiple dimensions to the three-dimensional sculpted form, endowing the concrete with interesting and varied textures without disrupting the simplicity of the monotone concrete. While some have conjectured that the work represents the intrusion of concrete urban life on the forests, it is more likely that Ah Xian is merely pursuing his aim of using a wide range of media to explore further the potential of sculptural art to satisfy his aesthetic goals.

Since 2010 Ah Xian has been working on a series of bronze sculptures called *Evolutionaura* (S): 167–180). Eight works from the series were chosen for a group exhibition at the Art Gallery of South Australia as part of the 2014 Adelaide Biennial. To date twenty-seven busts have been completed, and more are nearing completion. He is also considering full-figure sculptures, but this will depend on whether he finds the appropriate natural rock materials for what he has in mind.¹⁸ The male and female busts mostly have a matt finish in shades of gold or ebony, sometimes a highly polished gold finish or a green rust finish.





The beauty of the human form, however, is disrupted by various protrusions or appendages. One gold bust of a woman is sparsely covered with walnut-size or slightly larger chunks of lapis lazuli (SJ: image 167), while another is densely

meditation on the place of the human in this ancient world we inhabit. As the title of the series suggests, the artworks of *Evolutionaura* are manifestations of Ah Xian's reflections on existential issues.

Since 1998 Ah Xian has created five series of sculptural works: *China, China*; *Human, Human*; *Metaphysica*; *Concrete Forest*; and, *Evolutionaura*. Each series is open-ended, and constitutes a continuing work in progress.²⁰ At the same time each artwork is uniquely different, and stands on its own as an object of beauty. Yet, when the works of a series are placed together in multiple variations they form independent and breathtaking installations. Created in the medium of concrete and exhibited first as an installation for the Clemenger Prize, his *Concrete Forest* brings to mind the Terracotta Warriors unearthed during the 1970s at the mausoleum of the First Emperor Qin Shi Huang (260–210 BC). For Ah Xian the Terracotta Warriors constituted an art installation, and informed by this concept he began developing concepts and strategies to create his own unique sculptures that, while emphasising the beauty of the human form, also significantly extend the spatial limitations of sculptural art.

Unlike many artists of his generation of Chinese origin, who slavishly imitate so-called modern or contemporary Western art theories and practices, and even take their works to obscene extremities of crass vulgarity

(left)

Fig. 8. (SJ: IMAGE 119)

Cicada on Leaf
Metaphysica 2007

Bronze, brass

57 x 43 x 21 cm

Made in Beijing,
China.

COLLECTION OF THE
QUEENSLAND ART
GALLERY/GALLERY OF
MODERN ART, BRISBANE,
2009

FOR AH XIAN THE TERRACOTTA WARRIORS CONSTITUTED AN ART INSTALLATION, AND INFORMED BY THIS CONCEPT HE BEGAN DEVELOPING CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES TO CREATE HIS OWN UNIQUE SCULPTURES...

covered with dark red stones of various sizes (SJ: image 170). Even more striking are the busts that make use of carefully chosen Scholar's Rocks (SJ: images 172–180).¹⁹ In traditional Chinese culture these ancient rock formations were admired because they provoked aesthetic and religious contemplation. Ah Xian's innovative use of such rocks as integral parts of his human sculptures inserts multiple meanings for artist and viewers to ponder. At a visual level the juxtaposition of the human and the ancient rocks produces a definite sense of beauty, yet at the same time also provokes intellectual and even religious

for the sake of self-promotion, Ah Xian's art, as delineated in 'A Solitary Journey', is clearly premised on the portrayal of beauty and the human. He affirms the high level of aesthetic excellence achieved in China's artisan craft, for such visual images had sustained him during his formative years when individual artistic expression was prohibited. Informed by his critical reading from the late 1970s and early 1980s of developments in Western modern art, he began to see himself as a conceptual artist, but not in the mould of Western conceptual art movements. The archaeological unearthing of

the Terracotta Warriors around the same time was a reminder of ancient China's aesthetic achievements, even by craftsmen: each anonymous warrior is different, and together they form a striking monolithic installation. Ah Xian's sculptures are clearly informed by this concept of a multitude of anonymous human figures. His busts or full-body figures, however, also emphasise the beauty of the human form. His paintings are also informed by traditional Chinese aesthetics. Traditional Chinese literati art has always been consciously aware of, and to some extent respected, the two-dimensionality of the painting surface. There was no attempt to replicate reality until artists encountered Western art in modern times. Literati aesthetics was reflected in various forms of artisan work, including in sculptural art as evident in religious sculptures or even in the Terracotta Warriors. As a self-taught artist who grew up during the Cultural Revolution, Ah Xian staunchly defends his sensibilities and perceptions as an artist who responds to art as a calling: he is the sole arbiter of his aesthetics and art practice. 🍷



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plays and art of 2000 Nobel Laureate Gao Xingjian, and the translator of his works, **Soul Mountain**, **One Man's Bible**, **Buying a Fishing Rod for My Grandfather**, **The Case for Literature, Aesthetics and Creation**, and **Song of the Night**. She has also written studies of the Australian artists Ah Xian, Zhou Xiaoping, Wang Lan, Vince Vozzo, Lin Chunyan and Hu Ming. AUTHOR PHOTO BY FU HONG.

1. Mabel Lee, interview with Ah Xian, 15 April 2014.
2. Images from 'A Solitary Journey' are referenced below with 'SJ' followed by the image number. I conducted numerous email interviews with Ah Xian between April 2013 and late September 2014.
3. Mabel Lee, interview with Ah Xian, 15–16 July 2013.
4. Mabel Lee, interviews with Ah Xian, 2013–2014.
5. Mabel Lee, interview with Ah Xian, 28 August 2014.

6. Mabel Lee, interviews with Ah Xian, 15–16 July 2013.
7. Lin Chen, interview with Ah Xian, 2 November 2013. Material from Chen's interview was subsequently used in the writing of 'The Transition of Cultural Identity: The Diasporic Presentation in Works of the Chinese Australian Contemporary Artists Guan Wei and Ah Xian' (unpublished masters thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, 2013).
8. Mabel Lee, interviews with Ah Xian, 15–16 July 2013.
9. Mabel Lee, interview with Ah Xian, 15 April 2014.
10. Rosemary Neill, 'The Face: Ah Xian', *Weekend Australian*, 21–22 March 2009, p. 3.
11. Jose first visited Beijing in 1983 while a teaching academic in the English Department of the Australian National University. During the visit he met Ah Xian as well as many other artists. In 1986 he was lecturer and writer-in-residence at the Beijing Foreign Studies University and, in 1987, at the East China Normal University in Shanghai. His account of the vibrant Beijing art scene and his connections with people involved in it is documented in 'My China Project', in *The China Project* (Brisbane: QAGOMA, 2009), pp. 57–63.
12. *Heavy Wounds* was donated to QAGOMA and is part of the permanent collection. *Scattered Souls* remains in the collection of the artist. Mabel Lee, interviews with Ah Xian, 15 April 2014 and 1 September 2014. See also the discussion of *Heavy Wounds* and other works in Russell Storer, 'Ah Xian: Healing the Wounds', *Broadsheet: Contemporary Visual Art and Culture*, 43, 1 (2014), pp. 39–41.
13. Neill, p. 3.
14. Mabel Lee, interview with Ah Xian, 1 September 2014.
15. Mabel Lee, interview with Ah Xian, 2 September 2014.
16. Cloisonné requires the filling of each cloisonné with mineral pigments, and involves multiple firings until each cloisonné has been filled. Afterwards there is hand-polishing, and a gilt finish to the entire work.
17. A joint museum edition was published as Ah Xian, *Skulpturen/Sculpture* (Bonn: Edition Braus, 2007).
18. Mabel Lee, interview with Ah Xian, 4 September 2014.
19. These are ancient natural rock formations that, for many centuries, have been admired by scholars for their beauty of form in China, and later Korea and Japan. Even today huge pieces continue to adorn traditional gardens and courtyards, while smaller pieces are used as interior decorations in palaces and mansions.
20. Mabel Lee, interview with Ah Xian, 4 September 2014.

Hospitality

» KATE GRENVILLE

Hawkesbury River.

On the rutted streets of Sydney, William Thornhill was just another felon with a pardon in his pocket that he could not read. Out of town on the river he was something better: a man about to make a new life.

He had sailed upriver all morning. Now he was among the cliffs, where the blacks attacked. Last week they had taken the *Industry*, speared the captain, bludgeoned the men. Thornhill had known them. Could have been on the *Industry* himself that day.

But the tide was about to turn. Blacks or no blacks, he would have to make fast somewhere.

Now the rain was coming on too, a grey curtain coming down the valley towards him, and at first it seemed just a branch twitching under it. Then he saw a black man on the shore, beckoning him in.

It was just the one, white-haired and spindly.

Thornhill got the knife and put it in his belt, under his hand. Then he pushed the tiller over. One old greybeard: he could handle that.

As Thornhill got a rope around a tree trunk the man began to speak with a sideways gesture of his hand. Then he waited.

Thornhill licked his lips.

I come in peace.

The words sounded false and preachy. He went on quickly.

The damn tide is turned, see.

The black man spoke again, pointing up into the bushes, making roof-over-head gestures.

He had a shelter, Thornhill realised. There'd be a cave up there.

You must think I'm green, Blackie!

He heard the shake of anger in his voice.

Think I'll walk into your little trap?

The old man began to move away, gesturing for Thornhill to follow.

He swung the axe to clear a space. It was sorry work. A branch heavy with rain whipped him full in the face, another knocked off his hat.

(above & following pages)

Hawkesbury River, NSW, 1889, by Charles Potter. Gelatin silver photograph; 13.8 x 18.9cm.

PHOTO: STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA

Awkward under the man's gaze, Thornhill finally got the patched old sail up over a rope: drooping at one end, flying up in the wind at the other.

Snug as you please!

He looked around. The black was gone.

Every bush dripped, but the thought of a long cold night made Thornhill ingenious. Under a fallen log he found eight dry leaves, and with his knife he scraped off some splinters of dry bark. Back under the canvas he struggled with the flint in his wet fingers. He crouched over the mess, enraged at this hopeless fiddling.

Then the black man was beside him. He touched Thornhill on the arm — gently, as you might a child — and signalled for him to come along, mimed *fire* and *food*.

Thornhill reminded himself of dead Turner, dead Sweetman, but at that moment a gust of wind lofted up the sail so it came away and collapsed on itself.

It would soon be night. The rain whipped down at them, the forest twisting under the blasts of wind.

All right then Blackie, Thornhill said.

He gestured with the knife that the other man must go first. If this was a trap, the old man would get the knife through the ribs.

The cave was big enough for ten men, but held only a small fire, beside it a dead possum. The old man scooped a pit in the ashes with the butt-end of his spear, laid the possum in it, scraped ash over. He signed to Thornhill: they would share it, it would be good.

Then he sat beside the fire, nothing more threatening than a man waiting for his dinner to cook. He was naked as a babe but for the string around his waist. Thornhill warmed himself too, seeing the steam rise out of his clothes.

Outside the trees strained against the wind, but in here it was as cosy as a parlour and the possum was sending out good smells.

Blackie, Thornhill said at last, I could half envy your life, no man your master and your tucker free for the taking.

Heard himself with surprise. Envy this naked savage with his bare backside on the ground?

But the man laughed, looking Thornhill up and down, and Thornhill could see the joke: these sodden boots, the britches gone hard with wet, the coat that was binding under the arms as it dried.

What's your damn game, Blackie, he said.

The man watched his mouth.

If I was you, be buggered if I'd cook a nice possum and share it out.

The two men stared at each other through the wavering air above the fire. Outside a stream of water pattered against rock.

Then the man leaned forward and Thornhill had the knife up.

I got my eye on you Blackie!

But he was only pulling the possum out of the fire, peeling away burned fur and skin. Thornhill ate the piece he was offered: succulent meat, rich juice.

But even sucking away at the bones, licking his fingers, Thornhill did not put the knife down.

When the old man packed the fire tight with wood, then stretched himself out beside it, Thornhill made a show of lying down too, slipping a palm under his cheek and curling in towards the fire.

But he was not going to sleep. That was what they would be waiting for, if there was a they out there. They would wait, and by the time he woke up he would be dead.

The fire burned slowly, crackling and fizzing. Outside in the great chilly darkness, the rain was easing, the night becoming quiet.

Thornhill looked at the man's face, but his features seemed to have disappeared into the flickering light. Were his eyes closed?

He felt the knife handle slippery with his sweat.

From down by the river the frogs started up, first one by one, then all together. A mosquito sang past his ear.

Thornhill lay watching the shape of the other body. It did not move, not by the smallest shift or twitch, but he thought its stillness might be like his own: false. Any second he would spring to his feet — Thornhill had seen how they did it uncoiling the body like a freed spring — and jam the spear into his entrails. *Now*. It would be *now*.

He leaped up, the knife in his hand.

You bugger, he shouted, you will not get me that easy!

But as he stood he saw the other man's face in the firelight, eyes closed, breath puffing serenely in and out. Thornhill's shout half-woke him: his eyes flickered open, he murmured something, then closed his eyes again in perfect trust.

Thornhill stood looking down at him. There was what he knew in his mind: Turner with his brains spilled out, Sweetman with a spear through him from back to front. And there was what he saw in front of his eyes: a man who had shared out a possum and laughed with him.

He went to the front of the cave and looked out into the night. A breeze caught hold of a tuft of leaves and shook a shower of drops down onto the ground below, the sound of each droplet distinct in the still night. The glow from the cave behind seemed very small in the largeness of the night. Beyond it he could feel the darkness going on, mile after mile: air sliding between the trees, leaves shifting quietly over each other, a world out there that made sense in some other way altogether from his own. ¶



KATE GRENVILLE FAHA is the author of nine books of fiction. **The Secret River** has won numerous awards and is an international best-seller. Her other books include **Sarah Thornhill** (the sequel to **The Secret River**), **The Lieutenant**, and **The Idea of Perfection**. All have been published in the UK and the US as well as Australia, and three have been filmed. Her latest book is **One Life: My Mother's Story**. AUTHOR PHOTO BY DARREN JAMES,

COURTESY OF TEXT PUBLISHING.

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The Atlantic, The United States & the Pacific:

HOW TO STRUCTURE BOOKS ON BIG THINGS

» SIMON WINCHESTER

Since the theme of the conference is ‘Look It Up’,¹ I want to begin with a short story related to the serendipitous joys of looking things up. This was something that happened to me in 1984 after I saw an exquisite and wonderful film called *Paris, Texas* by Wim Wenders. I wanted to look up where Paris, Texas was, so opened my new edition of *The Times Comprehensive Atlas of the World*. As I was looking down the columns, I noticed a great agglomeration under the ‘P-A ...’ of eighteen places in America all called Paradise and thought, ‘That is wonderful’. I immediately lost interest in where Paris, Texas was and switched three columns over to Paradise.

This was at a time when particular English magazine editors spent money like drunken sailors. I rang one almost immediately. I think he was at the *Illustrated London News*, a magazine which no longer exists presumably because they were spending money like drunken sailors, and told him, ‘This is Simon here in New York. I’ve just noticed that there are eighteen towns in America called Paradise’. I left it at that for a few seconds until he replied, ‘And I suppose you want to go and see them all and work out why they’re called Paradise and are they still Paradise?’ I said, ‘Yes, that’s the general idea.’ ‘It does sound a rather good story, doesn’t it?’ he said. ‘Why don’t you — how long do you think it will take?’ I said, ‘Oh, a couple of months’, and I got this assignment. I did indeed go to every single town in America called Paradise,

beginning with the most easterly, Paradise, Florida, which is a retirement community, more a gateway to Paradise, I think, than Paradise itself.

Then there’s Paradise, Pennsylvania, in Amish country, and right next to the town of Intercourse, Pennsylvania. Of course, for a prurient British audience who believes the way to paradise is through intercourse, this was absolute perfection. It turned out that all but one of these Paradises had been ruined by one or other aspect of modern American life. That one was Paradise, Kansas, a small wheat-growing town about fifty miles northwest of Salina, Kansas, and therefore almost exactly in the centre of the continental or the contiguous forty-eight states, so it had great symbolism for me. There, as always, I turned up at the post office and said, ‘Hello. I’m an English journalist and I’m writing about all the towns in America called Paradise’. The postmaster, who was a woman, because postmasters in America can be of either gender and are still called postmasters, said, ‘Oh, you must in that case go and stay with the patriarchs of this town who are, believe it or not, John and Mary Angel’. If you look in the Paradise phone book, they’re still there. But the most marvellous moment, and one of the many reasons that made me fall in love with the United States, occurred after I’d been staying with John and Mary for a couple of days. They had a cherry tree down the bottom of the garden and I’d

expressed some fondness for cherries, so Mary baked me a pie. I think the moment when I really believed that I was going to be eternally fond of the United States was the evening that I sat on the terrace, eating cherry pie with the Angels in Paradise. Nothing can get much better than that.

What I thought I would do this evening was talk about structure in these narrative nonfiction books I have been writing recently. My earlier books, like *The Surgeon of Crowthorne* (1998); the book on William Smith called *The Map that Changed the World* (2001); and *The Man Who Loved China* (2008), about an extraordinary character, Joseph Needham, had relatively simple narrative structure because they are biographies. The chap is born, does something extraordinary and then dies. But I have found it interesting to take on bigger topics and these present organisational problems. I will talk specifically about the three most recent, the Atlantic Ocean, the United States and the book I am working on now, the Pacific Ocean, which are going to be a trilogy, I think. I will briefly sketch how I went about writing these, trying to put a massive

three key elements to a readable, not necessarily successful, but a readable nonfiction book.

The first, the most important thing, is the idea. The idea behind the book has a natural sort of primacy to it. Fine writing is great. It is nice if you can write beautifully, and you strive to do so, but it is not the second most important thing.

The second most important thing is, in my view, the structure. You can write lyrically about a brilliant idea but if the structure is all to breakfast time, people will go to sleep. It is rather like the famous Stephen Hawking book, *A Brief History of Time* (1998), where people put a dollar bill on page 53 because no one ever got that far as the book was so hopelessly organised. So I had to try and come up with a structure for the Atlantic and I didn't really know how. One particular day I was flying from London back home to New York and reading an anthology of poetry compiled by David Owen, a former British foreign secretary, called *Seven Ages* (1992). He had organised all the poetry he had loved over his life according to the seven ages of man from Shakespeare's *As You Like It* — 'All the world's a stage. And all

THE FIRST, THE MOST IMPORTANT THING, IS THE IDEA.
THE IDEA BEHIND THE BOOK HAS A NATURAL SORT OF PRIMACY TO IT.

amount of information into a moderately coherent structure. The challenge was to present all this information in a form that is accessible and interesting, and perhaps somewhat different from the way such books — textbooks anyway — are normally structured.

With the Atlantic, I proposed to my publisher that the Mediterranean is the inland sea of the classical world, the Atlantic the inland sea of today's world and the Pacific the inland sea of tomorrow's world. I was not interested in or competent enough to do the Mediterranean, but I lived in America, so why not do the Atlantic, so hugely important in the construction of America. So I spent, as I normally do in this kind of process, a year or a year and a half travelling all around the ocean and getting heaps of books and atlases and admiralty charts and things like that. Then, when I had assembled all this information, there was the question of how exactly to write the book. I have always maintained that there are

the men and women merely players; They have their exits and their entrances, And one man in his time plays many parts', the number of acts 'being seven ages'. In a sort of epiphany on that plane journey, I thought that possibly could be the way to organise my book on the Atlantic Ocean. When I got back to New York and looked at all my notes, I found it would be possible. Taking those seven ages — the infant, the schoolboy, the lover, the soldier, the justice, the old man and return to childhood — it seemed legitimate to corral various bits of the Atlantic story into those seven categories. The infancy would be the geological infancy of the ocean; I would write about its creation and the moving of the continents and so forth. Schoolboy would involve the learning about the ocean via early expeditions like the Challenger expedition, to chart it and find out about it as a schoolchild would.

Then there was the lover. The lover was more difficult because it was slightly out of order in what I wanted to do if I had thought about it in a different way. That was humankind's romantic view of the Atlantic Ocean, the painting and the music and the architecture and so forth. I had to choose what I thought were architecturally emblematic cities that sat on the Atlantic, such as Rio and Cape Town and Liverpool. The most beautiful — to me the one that really represents man's romantic attraction to the Atlantic Ocean writ in stone — is the capital of the island of Saint Helena where Napoleon was exiled, Jamestown, a wonderful seventeenth-century confection of exquisite buildings, all reflecting the ocean in which it lies.

(below)

Main Street in
Jamestown,
St Helena Island

PHOTO: DAVID STANLEY.
FLICKR <WWW.FLICKR.
COM/PHOTOS/DAVID
STANLEYTRAVEL
/16212460138>, CREATIVE
COMMONS (CC BY 2.0)
<CREATIVECOMMONS.
ORG/LICENSES/BY/2.0/>



The soldier was a great deal easier because that is all about the development of warfare and how wooden-hulled ships gave way to the great sea battles first staged in the Atlantic, and then all the other violent things there such as

and all of that. So the whole thing actually held together pretty well. When I advanced the idea to my editor he was somewhat taken aback. To look at the Atlantic Ocean through the prism of a Shakespearean play was a little bit eccentric, but mercifully the reviewers were kind.

This gave me some leeway, I thought, when I came to write the next book, the one on the United States. I had become an American citizen on 4 July 2011 on the afterdeck of the USS *Constitution*, a nice sort of homage to the Atlantic Ocean. So I thought, 'Well, I'm in love with this country thanks to things like cherry pie and Paradise, Kansas, with the Angels. Let's write a book about it.' I did a lot of travelling and collected a lot of books, much as I had with Atlantic and, again, then had this challenge of how to organise the material. Initially, before the organisational structure came to mind, I had to decide what sort of book to write. One of the things I thought was, 'I love railway trains.' So I did think of crossing America from coast to coast on what are called Class III railroads, the little mom and pop freight lines on which you can go from Maine to California. But my editor reasonably enough said that that would end up being a book more about trains than about America. Then I thought that what I really was interested in was this notion of unity. How had an immense continental entity like the United States, despite being a huge mongrel collection of every race and every language and every religious persuasion and every kind of view imaginable, managed to hold itself together since 1766, leaving aside the unpleasantness in the 1860s, in a way that most other great continental

TO LOOK AT THE ATLANTIC OCEAN THROUGH THE PRISM OF A SHAKESPEAREAN PLAY
WAS A LITTLE BIT ECCENTRIC, BUT MERCIFULLY THE REVIEWERS WERE KIND.

piracy and the slave trade. Then justice could be all about trade and the law of the sea and material like that. The old man; well the old man gets careless and doesn't treat the sea properly, so it was pollution and overfishing and the degradation of the sea under man's poor invigilation. Then, return to childhood is the sea striking back, so involves bad weather generation, rising sea levels, climate change

entities had not? Europe is a classic example. Not everyone uses the Euro, people jabber away in a variety of different languages, constantly having wars with each other, and to use an electric razor in Stockholm requires a different plug to the one used in Madrid.

So clearly Europe is not as united as it should be. Mother Russia is certainly not united. Canada has this great block of grumpy, or occasionally



(left)

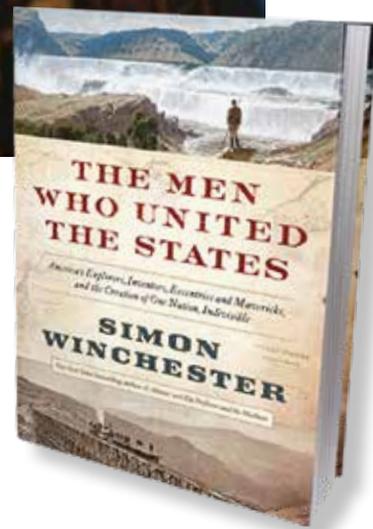
Author Simon Winchester presenting *The Pedant, the Precise and the Pacific* at the Academy's 45th Annual Symposium, 20 November 2014.

PHOTO: AAH / © GLEN BRAITHWAITE

(below)

Cover jacket of *The Men Who United The States* (HarperCollins Publishers Australia, 2013).

COURTESY OF S. WINCHESTER & HARPERCOLLINS PUBLISHERS AUSTRALIA



grumpy, francophone people in the middle, endlessly threatening to split the country into three. Australia, of course, is a great success but has a much smaller population. China obviously is united only by force of arms or force of the state. How has America done it? I thought it would be fascinating to write a book about how the connective tissue was created to bind the country into one.

So I was in my study creating a list of all the people who I thought had been involved in a big or a less important or forgotten way to help to knit the country together. My wife came in one day and asked, 'What are you doing?' I read her the names of the forty or fifty people I had come across and she said, 'Oh, so you're writing a book about the men who united the states?' I exclaimed, 'My God, what a brilliant title. I mean, honestly, thank you darling. You're so sweet.' But she said, 'You're going to get a lot of flak of course because it's only men.' And indeed, to forestall any hostile questions, the story of the physical uniting of the states does only involve men. Really the only woman is Sacagawea, the

Shoshone Indian guide who helped the Lewis and Clark Expedition, while Pocahontas makes a cameo appearance. Otherwise, in the physical uniting of the country, it is all men.

I kept assembling the list and eventually got to about 200 people. So then there was the question of how to organise all that. Obviously you could arrange them alphabetically but how boring would that be? You could do it chronologically but that would be incredibly complex because different achievements would appear in different eras. Then I was writing to a friend in Shanghai — I used to live in China for quite a long time — and we were talking about the elements of classical Chinese or Eastern civilisation. When you are in India there are four classical elements and as you go eastwards and cross the Mekong this generally becomes five.

In China they are nearly always the same five: wood, earth, water, fire and metal.

It suddenly seemed to me, in rather the same way as that epiphany I had on the transatlantic plane, that it would be possible to organise these 200 men with their various achievements along the lines of these five classical elements. I begin with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and Jefferson's decision to send Lewis out across

forgotten Mackenzie and only remembers Lewis and Clark, the great expedition. Lewis left Jefferson's magnificent garden, crossed the forests of the Blue Ridge, met his old friend Clark. They then sailed down the Ohio River, then up the Mississippi, turned left and went up the Missouri in wooden canoes. They built camps and surrounded them with wooden palisades and had wooden fires to keep out the animals and so

... IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO ORGANISE THESE 200 MEN WITH THEIR VARIOUS ACHIEVEMENTS ALONG THE LINES OF THESE FIVE CLASSICAL ELEMENTS.

America to see what he had just bought from the French. And it occurred to me that those early expeditions had a great deal to do with wood. Jefferson, for instance, was obsessed with many things, one of them being gardening and trees. He loved trees and four of those he planted himself were only felled in Monticello about three years ago. The legacy of his arboreal fascination is all around Monticello with its marvellous *allées* of oak and apple trees and all sorts of beautiful, beautiful trees.

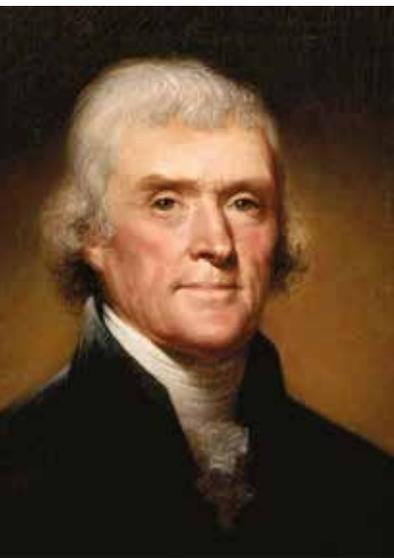
So I imagined Jefferson sitting on the west terrace of Monticello looking over the gardens he has created; in front of him is this enormous wall about 2000-feet high of the eastern spurs of the Blue Ridge Mountains over which he has never travelled. He has been across the Atlantic — he has been to Paris — but he has never been west. He was fascinated by what might lie across the Blue Ridge Mountains and had just read, to his enormous irritation, a book published in London in 1802 by Alexander Mackenzie. He was the first man ever to cross the North American

continent, who painted his name with a mixture of bear grease and vermilion powder on a rock outside what is now the town of Bella Coola in British Columbia. Jefferson writes in his diary about reading Mackenzie and feeling furious: 'How dare a Canadian cross this continent — it's an impertinence!' So he calls in his secretary, Meriwether Lewis, and says, 'Lewis, I want you to cross the country'. Now everyone has completely

forth. Wood is a constant feature of the earliest exploration of the United States. So it seemed reasonable to corral all that into a chapter under the heading of Wood.

Then Earth — well, once the topography of the country was established, as Lewis and Clark and other explorers did, where the Rockies were, where the Sierra were, where the great rivers and lakes were, then it was a question of what they're made of and what was the underpinning. Where was the gold in Sutter's Mill in California or the silver in Nevada, the farmlands in the Willamette Valley in Oregon? So the early geologists were hugely important, particularly those who worked in the west and lured, with stories of what they had found, settlers who went on the Mormon Trail, the Santa Fe Trail, the California Trail and populated the rest of America. I was a geologist at one time so this was relatively familiar territory. Incorporated into that section were the Four Great Surveys that discovered the Grand Canyon and Yellowstone. The most famous was the Fortieth Parallel Survey done by an extraordinary man called Clarence King, surveying the land between Sacramento and Cheyenne. So all of these people could be put under the category of Earth.

Then there was Water. Once again it seemed to work quite nicely because the early American settlers on the east coast ventured into the hinterland by going in canoes up the rivers, the Susquehanna and the James and the Potomac and the Hudson. After sixty or seventy miles of paddling, they would inevitably come to waterfalls and rapids where they would stop, because although they could carry their canoes



(above)
Portrait of
Thomas Jefferson by
Rembrandt Peale

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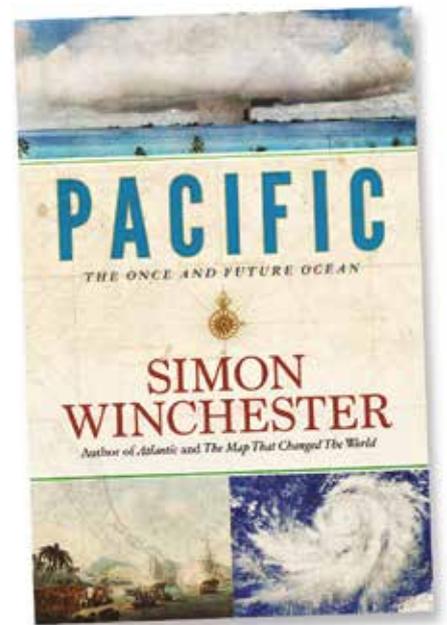
it would take them a long time. So they built little settlements that eventually would become towns, such as Fredericksburg and Washington, D.C. and Richmond and, on the Hudson, Albany. Once they had settled there and decided they wanted to begin trading with the people further upstream, to get around the rapids they built little canals and became quite good at learning how to do this. They then started to build larger canals that would change the face of America forever. The first of the big ones was the Manchester Canal that came down from New Hampshire to make Boston the big mercantile capital that it became. The most important of all, the Erie Canal, was constructed in the 1820s and brought trade goods down from the Great Lakes to a stripling city that then became of course the mightiest of all, New York. The not particularly elegantly named Chicago Sanitary Canal was built initially to move Chicago's sewage, that had been pumped eastwards into the lake and then in summer caused olfactory unpleasantness. So they decided to build a canal and send it westwards into the tributaries of the Mississippi. This linked Chicago via the Mississippi to the Gulf, which changed the character of both Chicago and the city of New Orleans at the southern end of the Mississippi. All of those stories could quite neatly go under Water.

Then Fire. It was all very well to conduct trade in the 1820s and 1830s by taking your goods on a canal behind a horse clip-clopping along, three or four miles an hour, pulling a barge. It was very economical, much better than it had been before, but then over in Scotland James Watt invented the steam engine. That technology was applied first to building steam-powered boats to go up the canals and the rivers, and then to power railway trains. Ultimately, different kinds of fire-breathing devices would be invented to power motor cars and aeroplanes. Faster — and of course America is all about speed — commerce relied initially, and probably still does to this day, on things related to fire. All of that could go under the category of Fire.

The final one, Metal, is self-explanatory when you think about it. The copper conducting wire of the telegraph and then the telephone; the distribution of electricity, and then radio and then television and then the internet.

So it all seemed quite neat and, mercifully, not only did these five categories allow me to fit the 200 or so names into them, but they were all in chronological order. Things related to Earth came after Wood, and things related to Metal came after Fire. I took the idea to my editor in New York and he gulped, much as he had done with the Atlantic, and said, 'I just don't know how Americans are going to like being seen through the prism of ancient Chinese philosophy but give it a whirl. Why not?' So that is how I wrote the book and fortunately the critics liked it and it sold extremely well in America.

Now I am doing the book on the Pacific. The Pacific is very complicated. It is so big, of course; you could put all the continents into the Pacific, it is so gigantic and all encompassing. From my perspective — and I know I will get shouted at by people who go on about Polynesian navigation, which I actually do write about — its human history, from a Western point of view, is perhaps not as rich and interesting as the history which gave us John Cabot and Leif Erikson and Christopher Columbus. So I decided not to write a book about the Pacific that began at the year dot. I wanted to begin it later as I thought the most interesting aspect was the modern Pacific. Then I had to decide when to start the story and thought, 'Well, postwar'. Perhaps with the surrender of the Japanese on the *Missouri* in September 1945, or perhaps the founding of the People's Republic of China in October 1949? But then there was another marvellous sort of serendipitous moment. I am sure you all know that it is now unfashionable to talk about things happening AD and BC because we are not all Christians. There was an attempt to re-form BC by turning it into BCE, Before Christian Era or Before Common Era, but the scientific community didn't much care for that either and came up with this notion of BP. You can talk about glaciation occurring 10,000 years BP, BP standing for Before Present. But the question



(above)
Cover of
Winchester's
forthcoming
book, *Pacific*
(HarperCollins
Publishers Australia,
forthcoming).

COURTESY OF
S. WINCHESTER &
HARPERCOLLINS
PUBLISHERS AUSTRALIA

was, when is Present? Well, Present was defined in 1965 by a group of radio-chemists who said that this was after 1 January 1950. Their reason for choosing that date was because before 1950 it was possible to conduct Carbon-14 dating tests that would be accurate. We knew how much Carbon-14 there was in the atmosphere. We knew it decayed — its half-life is 5730 years. So, knowing that baseline, it was possible to calculate the age of anything up to about 60,000 years. But after 1 January 1950 there was an enormous amount of atmospheric nuclear testing, most of it in the Pacific — the Americans on Bikini and Eniwetok, the British on Christmas Island, the French on Mururoa, the British again in Woomera — so the Pacific was hugely polluted. Nuclear weapons, as well as producing Strontium-90 and radioactive iodine, also produce a gigantic amount of Carbon-14. Hence the baseline of Carbon-14 was tremendously

beginning of the Sony Corporation; an amazingly clever man — not Akio Morita, everyone knows him but he was a nice, flamboyant salesman — a technical guy called Masaru Ibuka invented the Walkman and the Trinitron. The whole universe of Japanese or Asian consumer electronics began at that moment in 1955. Obviously later it moved from Japan to Korea and has moved now from Korea to China, because Samsung is in trouble, but that was the beginning of a massive onrush of container ships going from Yokohama to Seattle and San Francisco.

In Chapter 2, I am talking about events that brought all sorts of people into what one might call a pan-Pacific communion. It also begins with a Japanese story, relating to the wartime internment of American citizens of Japanese origin and what happened to them afterwards. But I also include things like Evonne Goolagong's appearance at Wimbledon when she beat

I MADE A BIG LIST OF EVERYTHING IMPORTANT & INTERESTING THAT HAPPENED IN THE PACIFIC FROM 1950 TO THE PRESENT AND SELECTED WHAT SEEMED TO ME THE BEST TWELVE OF THEM.

distorted from 1950 onwards; to get accurate measurements of anything's age you had to introduce a different algorithm almost every month because of the rate of nuclear testing. In the end they decided that dates should be counted backwards from 1 January 1950, so BP: Before Present or Before Physics or Before Purity was ended.

That became my starting point and I am now writing Chapter 4 of the book. What I decided to do was forget the seven ages of man, forget classical Chinese, and give it a somewhat more conventional structure. I made a big list of everything important and interesting that happened in the Pacific from 1950 to the present and selected what seemed to me the best twelve of them.

Chapter 1 was about an event — on 12 August 1955 electronics shops in Winnipeg and Minneapolis sold, for about US\$45.00 each, a small box-type thing, the TR-55, the first ever transistor radio. And if you looked at the tuning dial, it said Tokyo Tsushin Kogyo: Tokyo Telecommunications Corporation. But if you looked above this, in tiny little letters was a newly invented word and that was Sony. It was the

Margaret Court in, I think it was 1971, and talk about the North American Indians taking over the island of Alcatraz.

Chapter 3 begins in 1959, 23 August I think, with the release in America of the movie, *Gidget*. This might seem trivial but actually it had an enormous economic effect in making surfing a worldwide phenomenon. Twenty million people now surf and it has become a gigantic industry. Although surfing started in Tahiti, and then became popular among the very socially stratified in Hawaii, not until Jack London wrote about it in 1906 did it start to be practised in Redondo Beach in California. It remained a rather marginal sport until *Gidget* and then the formation of The Beach Boys in 1961 made it hugely popular. So that seemed another Pacific phenomenon.

Then Chapter 4 will be about the capture of the USS *Pueblo* in 1968, one of those episodes which marks North Korea as being a perpetual irritant in the Pacific. After that I very much want to write about Australia and how she has become such an important regional power in the Pacific. I thought that the two events, both in the 1970s, that I would use were the opening of the

Sydney Opera House and the sacking of Gough Whitlam. So it moves on.

The last chapter will be about the *Hokule'a*, a 62-foot long Hawaiian *wa'a*, or canoe. It was built in the 1970s under the tutelage of a man called Mau Piailug who lived in Satawal in the Caroline Islands. He was the last surviving Polynesian who knew non-instrumental navigation, how to get from A to B by using only the stars, the feeling of the swirl, the migration of birds. They took *Hokule'a* from Maui to Tahiti, in 1972 I think, and now they have learned to do it so well that they set out in May 2014 to go completely around the world. There is a crew of about thirty on it, which is changed every few weeks. They just raised the north cape, that is Cape Reinga I think, of New Zealand about a week ago. I think they should reach Australia by Christmas. Then they are going across the Indian Ocean. They have not yet decided whether to try and go through Suez or to go around the Wild Coast and Cape of Good Hope. Then across the Atlantic, where presumably they will stop in Jamestown, my favourite city in Saint Helena, and head up to the Chesapeake to see President Obama. That is probably the only piece of good news he will have for a while — that his own people, Hawaiian people, are obviously incredibly clever and skilled in using an old form of navigation. So then they will go around Cape Horn and up across the Pacific back home to Hawai'i. It will take about three and a half years. I urge you to go to the Polynesian Voyaging Society website and revel in the success of the wonderful young Hawaiian people who are doing this. And that is how this Pacific book — to be delivered by 31 March 2015 — will end.

Finally, I come to what I want to write about next, a history of precision. Precision I think is a fascinating aspect of modern human life. It really began in 1787 with a man called Henry Maudslay during the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. He produced what was, by the standards of his time anyway, the first piece of perfectly flat steel and a micrometre to measure its flatness, and then a perfectly spherical piece of steel. All that enabled the cutting of accurate gears and the making certain that the machinery of the Industrial Revolution was precise and efficient. That led to our current love affair with all things precise. Though I wonder, and I think



the book will ruminate on this, whether our love affair with machines and precision is altogether a good thing. The Polynesians in their little canoe are demonstrating that it is possible to achieve things in a very imprecise, a heuristic way, if you like. So ultimately I want to ask in this book, and I have not even thought about the structure yet, whether societies that worship titanium are necessarily happier, more content and satisfactory societies, than societies that, say, worship bamboo. So that will be the next book. As you can see, one book tends to lead organically into another, but the key to making them readable is the structure — nice writing is obviously an ambition but the structure is hugely important. ¶



(above)

The Hokule'a

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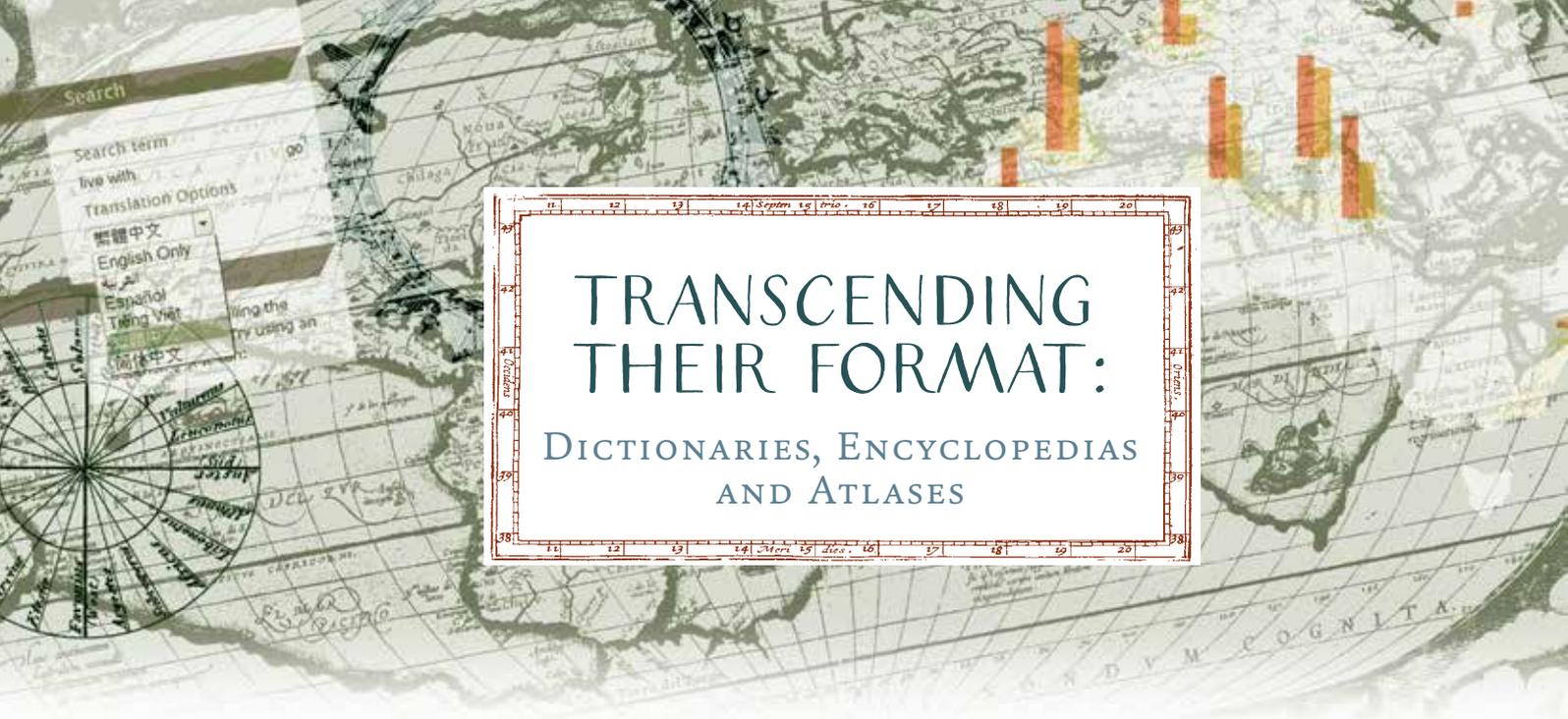


SIMON WINCHESTER OBE established his writing career as a foreign correspondent for **The Guardian** and the BBC, before becoming an independent writer and researcher of bestselling books in multiple fields of academic

and international interest. His skills as a writer of narrative nonfiction have led to his being highly acclaimed in fields as diverse as lexicography/dictionary-making (**The Surgeon of Crowthorne**, 1998); vulcanology (**Krakatoa**, 2003); geology (**The Map that Changed the World**, 2001); craniology (**Skulls**, 2012); and cognition (**The Man with the Electrified Brain**, 2013). He is an Honorary Fellow of St Catherine's College, Oxford.

AUTHOR PHOTO BY SETSUKO WINCHESTER.

1. This is an edited transcript of a public lecture given by Simon Winchester as part of the Academy of the Humanities 45th Annual Symposium, Canberra, 20 November 2014. A video of the lecture can be accessed from the Academy's website.



» PAM PETERS

Dictionaries, encyclopedias and atlases are age-old vehicles for itemised knowledge and eminently useful formats for those seeking a ready reference. At the same time, they are not always valued in the academic world, since they can be seen as recensions of the known rather than fresh inquiry, and limited by their respective formats — each constrained as to the kind of information it can contain.

So the dictionary — according to an older view of lexicography — concentrates on the common lexicon, and should not include proper names and encyclopedic information since that is not the ‘native’ content of the dictionary. Atlases should be geographical rather than political, although the mapping of continents inevitably raises inescapable questions about national borders — and the *not* small matter of the language of the placenames. Encyclopedias notionally contain ‘neutral’, culturally unbiased knowledge on the subjects they treat. Yet all three formats may be ethnocentric to some extent, and likely to project something of the identity and interests of their makers.

Looking at examples of all three, one finds that their content has not always been ‘pure’ in past applications — nor will it be as the twenty-first century unfolds. They must continue to evolve in digital media, which offers infinite combinations of the written word, speech and other types of sound, not to mention two- and three-dimensional still and moving

images. In the twenty-first century geographical information on the internet and associated apps can be optimised for the ‘user experience’ (UX). This itself is a new orientation in information delivery: that it can be varied online according to the consumer, as much as the overriding purposes of the provider. But either way, the three formats are always embedded in contemporary culture, reflecting both local and international sociocultural trends.

To explore these evolving aspects of information delivery, I look at ancient and modern examples of these formats, tracing significant stages in the evolution of each, and the ‘non-native’ elements that they incorporate. This will also show how productive the three formats are in supplying access to specialised information, integrating knowledge from different sources, and supporting interdisciplinary inquiry and reflection.

ATLASES AND THE APPLICATIONS OF CARTOGRAPHY

Cartography, the atlas and mapping offer the most striking examples of transcending their format, and thereby illuminate the other two types of reference material. Atlases present a variety of realisations because they show the steady expansion of geographical knowledge and improvements in cartography from medieval to modern times. They also reflect enormous

(above)

FULL DETAIL OF MONTAGE IMAGES CAN BE FOUND ON PP. 70, 72, 79.



cultural changes from a theocratic to secular-social view of the world. We might add that they are not necessarily 'disciplined' by the stringently geographical expectations of twentieth-century exemplars, such as the *Times World Atlas*.

The word *atlas* is an eponym from one of two possible Graeco-Roman sources. The better known one (noted in the *Oxford English Dictionary*) is that it invokes the name of the titan rebel condemned by Zeus to hold up the heavens. Atlas's burden is well known from the classical sculpture that has him stooping under the weight of the celestial globe — an image perpetuated at the front of Italian and earlier Dutch atlases of the sixteenth century. Later statues of Atlas have him bearing the weight of the *terrestrial* globe, confirming his association with the modern published atlas. An alternative eponym for the word *atlas* features on the frontispiece of Gerardus Mercator's (1595) posthumously published reflections on cartography: that it is the name of the legendary king Atlas of the ancient North African kingdom of Mauretania, bordering the straits of Gibraltar. King Atlas was a wise philosopher, astronomer and mathematician — and thus an appropriate symbol for Mercator's cylindrical projection

of the world. This was a considerable advance in mapping for practical navigation, at least in the middle sections of the globe between the arctic and antarctic circles. The eclipsing of the first eponymous Atlas by the second helps to symbolise the scientific revolution by which cartography was transformed in the modern era.

Cartographic advances were of course aligned with European explorations beyond the frontiers of the known world. Atlases facilitated access to new resources, mineral as well as animal and vegetable. But the most visible motive for exploration in early European maps was the missionary imperative of the Catholic Church. The evangelical impulse can be seen in Fra Mauro's upside down map of the world (c. 1450), and in the small fragment from it, shown here.

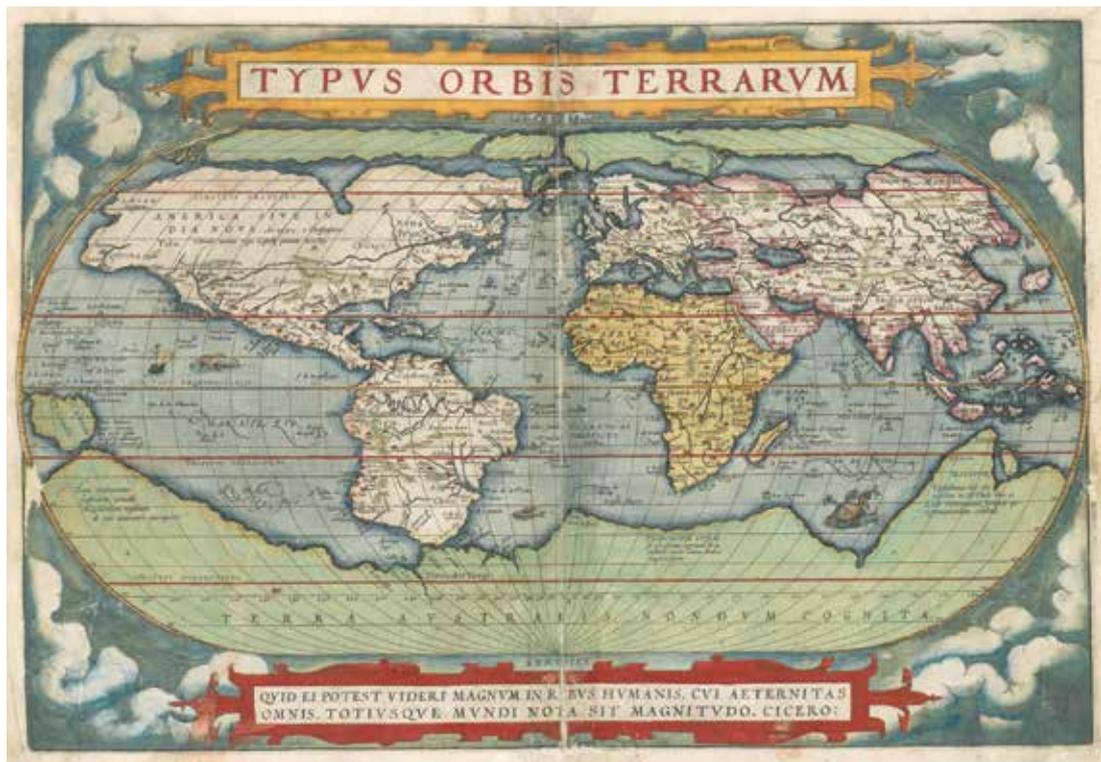
Fra Mauro depicts an island forming the southern section of Africa, which is labeled 'Diab' with the note '*Questo e el nome de la isola*', 'This is the name of the island.' It is no coincidence that *diab* is the Portuguese word for 'devil'.¹ Fra Mauro's map of the island is dotted with mosques and other Islamic architecture to indicate the scope for propagation of the faith. A note on the lower right hand side: '*Questa region fertillissima esta conquista ... circa el*

(above)
Fragment of Fra Mauro map (c. 1450)

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(right)
Ortelius map
*Theatrum Orbis
Terrarum*.

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001BR.JPG>



1430', points out that there is good agricultural land here. The map provides both religious and economic motives for venturing down to Diab, though to modern eyes the chances of reaching your destination with such a map are rather fanciful.

The first commercially published atlases available in sixteenth-century Italy were bundles of ten to twelve maps from different sources, drawn to different scales and bound together. They were sometimes called Lafreri atlases, after their leading publisher, or by their bibliographic acronym IATO = 'Italian assembled-to-order'. Not until Abraham Ortelius's *Theatrum Orbis*

Terrarum (1570) was there what we nowadays call an *atlas*; that is, a volume containing maps all drawn to the same scale. This significant step in the evolution of atlases emanated in northern Europe, although the maps themselves are still labelled in Latin, Europe's lingua franca for educated Europeans even from Protestant nations.

Ortelius's cartography reveals a big advance on Fra Mauro's, with far better mapping of Africa and the Indian Ocean. But its limitations are still to be seen in the western and southern hemispheres. The unknown continent in the south, 'incognita', assumes giant proportions with Australia merged with Antarctica, otherwise being only a pregnant bump south of Java (underwriting an earlier name for Australia as 'Java la grande', which was probably derived from Portuguese cartography).

Australia and Antarctica are also merged in a very curious map of Terra Australis that is held by the Vatican, prints of which were brought to Brisbane, Queensland, for the World Expo 88 in 1988. The map from the collection of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide is attributed to Fra Ricci, a Dominican missionary who was based in Manila, the Philippines, in the mid-seventeenth century. The map itself is dated 1676, but represents an earlier construction of

(below)
Fra Ricci's map
from the Vatican
collection
(Congregation de
Propaganda Fide)

PHOTO: P. PETERS



the missionary opportunities in the southern hemisphere, in line with papal dispensations of 1494 (Treaty of Tordesillas) and 1529 (Treaty of Zaragoza). Those treaties were put in place to balance the colonial interests of Spain and Portugal, and to divide between them the world that was available to be proselytised.

The Vatican map divides Australia into two for the propagation of the faith, along the meridian identified in the Treaty of Zaragoza, as if the western segment would be for the Portuguese, and the eastern segment for the Spanish. It shows Portuguese dominions in the western Atlantic (Brazil), and their passage via southern Africa into the Indian Ocean, up to Sumatra, Java, Borneo, from which islands *'haud difficilis est aditus ad terram Australem'*, 'it is not difficult to access the land of Australia'. Meanwhile Spanish dominion stretches down the west side of South America from Lima (Peru) to Chile and across the Pacific to the east coast of Australia. Most remarkably, Australia and Antarctica still form a single super-continent (*'quinta pars orbis'*, 'the fifth part of the globe'), with the South Pole located centrally on the junction between the eastern and western segments. Again this is not a map you could sail by, and the author acknowledges its minimalist cartography: *'in minimo puncto facta sit'*. The map is labelled in Latin, reflecting its alignment with the mission of the Church Universal. The message is clearly much bigger than the medium, though whether one would say it transcends its format depends on one's point of view.

Fra Ricci's elementary mapping contrasts with the fine cartography to be found decades earlier in explorers' maps from the Flemish/Dutch school, such as those contained in Petrus Plancius's *Atlas* (1594). Plancius's mapping of the 'spice islands' probably owed its detail to that of earlier Portuguese maps made by explorers and traders in the East Indies.

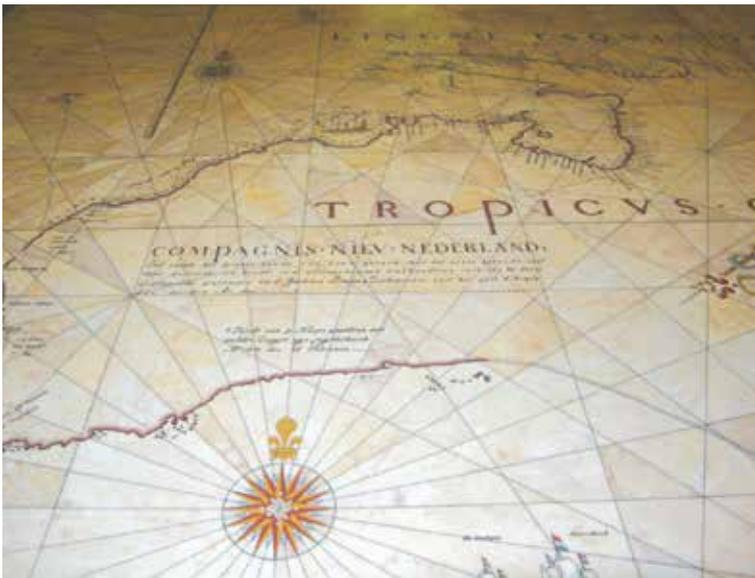
This fragment shows the myriad islands of the Melanesian archipelago north of New Guinea, with Borneo in the top left, and equatorial routes through to the Pacific and up to China. The motivation for venturing there is visible at the bottom of map, in botanical drawings of nutmeg (*nux myristica*), cloves (*caryophylorum arbor*) and sandalwood (*santalum fluvium*), the three key commodities of the spice trade. Their labelling is disproportionate with the map's placenames. Again, all labels and annotations are in Latin.

Latin ceased to be the dominant language of cartographic labels and annotations as the seventeenth century advanced, and European vernaculars were increasingly on the map, so to speak. Apart from their practical value for navigators and entrepreneurs, the vernacular could express the national identity of the explorers concerned and the colonial ambitions of the nations they represented. Seventeenth-century Dutch explorations of Western Australia have embedded the Dutch language in a string of Australian places, as can be seen on the 1644 'Tasman map'² that is held by the State Library of New South Wales. It has been reproduced



(left)
Plancius's map of spice islands, 1594.

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<[HTTP://COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG/WIKI/FILE:1592_INSULLAE_MOLUC_PLANCIUS.JPG](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1592_INSULLAE_MOLUC_PLANCIUS.JPG)>



(above)
‘Tasman’ map from atrium floor of the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney.

PHOTO: P. PETERS

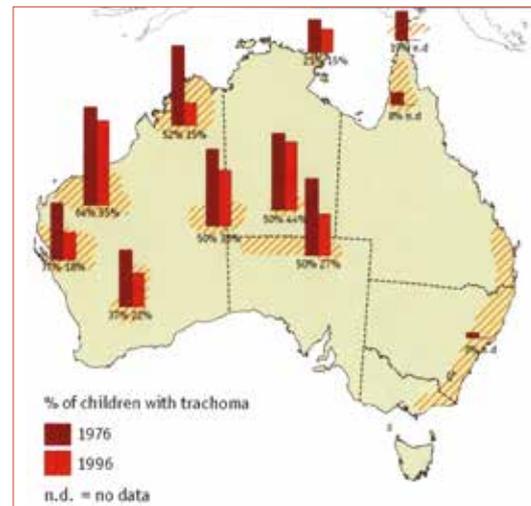
(right)
Map from the *Macquarie Atlas of Indigenous Australia* (Macquarie Library, 2005).

in a large marble mosaic on the floor of the library’s atrium.

The mix of Latin and Dutch labels on the Tasman map is of particular interest. While the common geographical labels, for example, TROPICUS CAPRICORNUS, are in Latin and block capitals, the placenames are in Dutch, in cursive/italic script. The same goes for the landings by Dutch explorers that are noted on the Western Australian coast; for example, ‘lant van de Leuwin anno 1622 angedean’ (‘land visited by van de Leuwin in the year 1622’) on the south-west corner, which is still known as Cape Leeuwin. The Dutch claim on Western Australia is headed in block capitals in the corporate reference to COMPAGNIS NIEV NEDERLAND, but the text underneath explaining the sources of information is again in Dutch italics. Mercator’s practice of labelling maps in cursive/italic lettering accords with the fact that italicised text had become ‘the language of knowledge.’³ So the pervasive italic Dutch lettering on the Tasman map serves the double purpose of affirming Dutch land claims and indicating new discoveries. Nicholas Crane’s comment that ‘the lettered line connect[s] the imagination of the reader with the intent of the author’ underscores the subtle way in which information presented on the map transcends the geographical medium with its broader semiotics.

Cartography has also served as an effective medium of expression for new science, both past and present — as the tool of intellectual

inquiry and confirmation of its findings. Simon Winchester finds an effective example in *The Map that Changed the World* (2001),⁴ detailing William Smith’s (1815) map of geological areas across Great Britain that established the foundations of modern geology. Other important examples can be found in maps used to document medical and epidemiological discoveries, such as John Snow’s map of the cases of cholera in the streets of London, and their proximity to an infected water pump. It is not the earliest example of significant medical mapping, since cases of the plague were mapped in London in 1665, and of yellow fever in New York in 1798.⁵ The map continues to be a powerful heuristic, as when showing the distribution of trachoma among Aboriginal children across Australia.



This map from the *Macquarie Atlas of Indigenous Australia* (2003) shows the concentrations of trachoma in the desert areas of central and western Australia, where sand-laden winds damage eyes. They are also areas where water supply and hygiene are difficult to maintain in Aboriginal communities. The histograms compare the incidence in 1976 and 1996, and happily the concerted efforts of health authorities and the Fred Hollows Foundation have reduced the incidence everywhere. But the map shows there is still work to be done, especially around Port Hedland, where the incidence affects over fifty per cent of the population.

So, over the centuries, maps have served purposes other than the strictly cartographic. They are not simply 'transparent' in Christian Jacob's terms, representing geographic realities, but serve as a framework for expressing other kinds of semiotic. Jacob notes also their value as a focus of humanistic scholarship, and of inquiries into 'political and social history, history of intellectual representations ... of technology ... of cultural practices and of science'.⁶

The new frontiers of cartography are of course in digital mapping and cyberatlases, where maps based on digital data are infinitely scalable. With the stroke of a mouse we can enlarge or shrink them on the computer screen, the GPS device or an app. On Google Maps they are multidimensional, so that we can obtain both horizontal and vertical projections of any location: the satellite view of the street from

provides a secure metaphor for intellectual inquiry, a spatial platform or framework for interdisciplinary connections.

ENCYCLOPEDIAS AND UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE

From their earliest conceptions, encyclopedias have always contained multidisciplinary material, as sanctioned by their very name and nature. The term *encyclopedia*⁹ is Late Latin, derived from what the *Oxford English Dictionary* online calls 'pseudo-Greek' *ἐγκυκλοπαιδεία*; that is, 'encyclical education', the circle of arts and sciences that was considered by the Greeks to be essential to a liberal education. In early modern English the word *encyclopedia* was still used to refer to 'the circle of learning' or a general course

THE NEW FRONTIERS OF CARTOGRAPHY ARE OF COURSE IN DIGITAL MAPPING AND CYBERATLASES, WHERE MAPS BASED ON DIGITAL DATA ARE INFINITELY SCALABLE.

outer space, and the neighbour's view of our house at street level. The Australian Bureau of Meteorology uses satellite data to animate the path of storms rolling across suburbia, showing its relative intensity in shades ranging from cool blue to intense red. Digital atlases transcend print media and their graphic formats with interactive features, like the geo-located elements of English from round the world that are illustrated in the linguistic eWAVE Atlas.⁷ Meanwhile the Canadian frontiers of cybercartography offer new dimensions of interactivity between map-makers and map users, so as to customise the most relevant cartographic information for the user and enhance the user experience.⁸

These examples of mapping in print and digital forms show how readily it can lend itself to projecting ideas and perspectives that transcend the geographical format and its 'native' content. The format provides firm two-dimensional grounding for adding whatever textual, graphic, acoustic and interactive embellishments you like, as the third, fourth, fifth and sixth dimension. Even in abstract realms of knowledge, mapping

of instruction. That meaning was gradually overtaken in the mid-seventeenth century by usage of the word to refer to a *publication* containing information on all branches of knowledge, with alphabetical ordering and indexing — which is still the essential format of the printed encyclopedia.

'Encircling' the knowledge of the times has always challenged the encyclopedia, and the accompanying aspiration to be a 'self-contained library of universal knowledge'.¹⁰ Containing the circle of learning in a single printed volume (like an atlas) would prove impossible even for the first English encyclopedia, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, which was published in three volumes between 1768 and 1771. Each new edition added extra volumes; by 1810 the fourth edition consisted of twenty volumes. Despite continual revisions to replace older material with new, the final printed version of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in 2010 had increased to thirty-two volumes. They were structured into two large subsets: the *macroaedia* (volumes 2–19) containing long articles giving discursive treatments of major topic areas, and the *microaedia* (volumes 20–30) containing

short articles (up to 750 words) to allow ready fact checking within circumscribed areas of knowledge. Topics and entities in *macropaedia* and *micropaedia* are both alphabetically indexed in volumes 31 and 32, and a conceptual (thesaurus-like) model of the topics covered is offered in the *propaedia* (volume 1), starting with ten high-level categories. The *propaedia* revives the schematic array of knowledge that is found in reference books of the eighteenth century, and serves to taxonomise the areas of knowledge contained in the 2010 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Despite all the well-motivated aspects of its design, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* could hardly claim to enshrine universal knowledge, even without its inescapably Anglo-Saxon world view.

The *cyclopedias* published before the first *Britannica* took a different approach to the encyclopedic challenge. These more modest reference works may owe something to the personal commonplace book,¹¹ in which the owner noted and collated significant sayings and summary facts distilled for personal reference. The first *cyclopedias* were in fact produced (written and published) by a single well-read

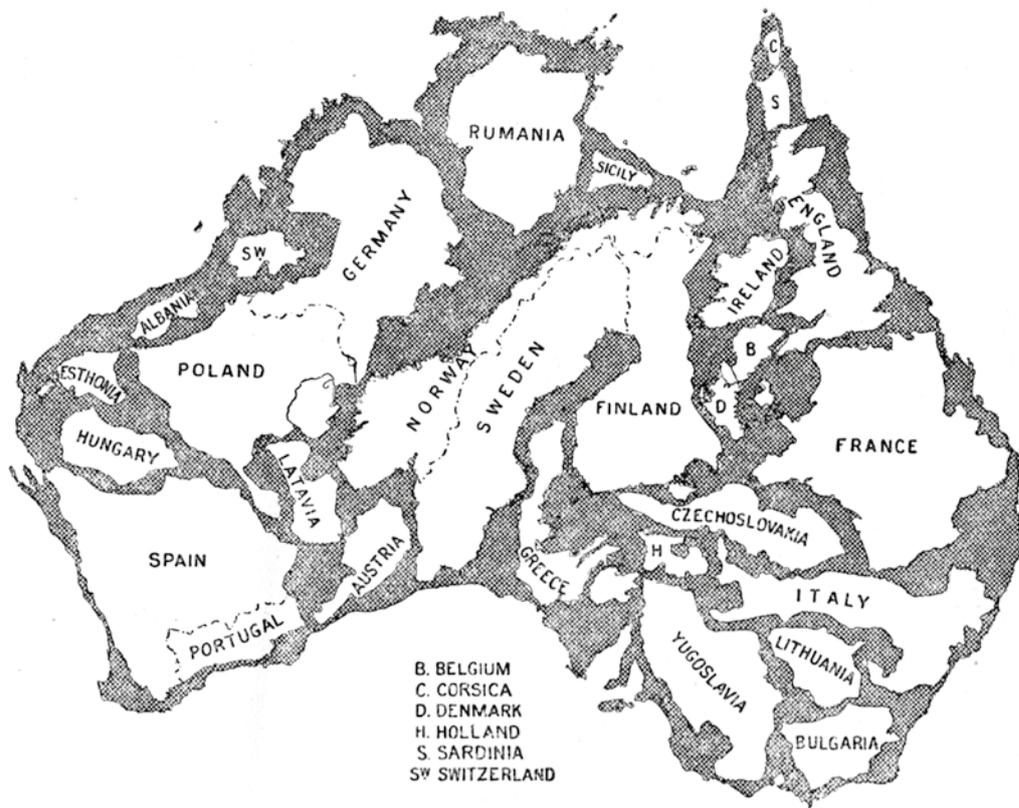
authors, as was practised in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. The distinction between the two encyclopedic genres was lost.

The true successor to Chambers's *Cyclopaedia* appeared at the other end of the nineteenth century, in the one-volume *Pears Cyclopaedia* or 'Pears Shilling Encyclopaedia' published in 1897. It was sponsored by a soap-maker and thus easily affordable, unlike the multivolume encyclopedia. Like Chambers's *Cyclopaedia*, the Pears volume offered encyclopedic information in concise dictionary-like entries, as well as a chronological list of events, a list of prominent people (past and present), and a compact atlas and gazetteer. Each edition also included around twelve more specialised entries on subjects such as cookery and classical mythology. The selection of these was rotated from year to year, so people could buy new editions relevant to their hobby/cottage industry. By keeping its entries concise, and with annual revisions and updates, *Pears Cyclopaedia* is still published today and has been able to control the relentless demands of encyclopedic information on space, remaining the most successful of its genre.

... THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA COULD HARDLY CLAIM TO ENSHRINE UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE, EVEN WITHOUT ITS INESCAPABLY ANGLO-SAXON WORLD VIEW.

person, Ephraim Chambers. The encyclopedic aspirations of his *Cyclopaedia* are set out in detail on its title page, along with its aim to be a 'universal dictionary of arts and sciences', as well as 'a course of antient and modern learning'. Chambers not-so-modestly dubbed it 'the best book in the universe'.¹² But, in writing about his *Cyclopaedia*, Chambers acknowledged the ever-increasing scope of 'universal knowledge', which called for its 'reduction ... into a lesser compass'.¹³ His practical strategy was to distill it into readable portions, focusing on 'the definitions of terms and accounts of the things signify'd thereby', as stated on the title page. In contrast, Abraham Rees, Chambers's partner and successor in the creation of cyclopedias, simply allowed his *New Cyclopaedia* to expand to forty-five volumes (published 1802–1819), with new articles on science and medicine as well as the mechanical trades written by numerous commissioned

Specialisation is an alternative way of managing the demands of information on limited space in the printed encyclopedia. The first edition of the *Australian Encyclopaedia*, published in two volumes in 1925–1926, included material unique or special to Australia; that is, large amounts of natural history, geology, flora and fauna, and the biographies of notable Australians. Apart from its limited content, the original *Australian Encyclopaedia* was not particularly balanced in its stance. A European reviewer was surprised by it 'waving the flag for Australia' in almost every article,¹⁴ making Australia superior in many unsuspected local specialisms. Australian breadmaking (in comparison with European) is: 'quicker and involves less handling; the flours used are of better quality so that they rise better, hold more water, and make a larger loaf from the same quantity of flour'.¹⁵ Nadine Hagen found



(left)
 'Mind map'
 from *Australian
 Encyclopaedia*,
 1st ed, vol. 2 (Angus
 & Robertson, 1926).

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the *Australian Encyclopaedia* offered a rather limited view of the world, where 'sharks are more important than tigers', as she put it in her subtitle. And while there was no entry on the poet Alfred Tennyson, Tennyson's son, who was the second governor-general of Australia (1903–4), did receive one. Particularly telling in terms of the *Encyclopaedia's* nationalistic message is the decorative map positioned at the start of the second volume, showing all the countries of Europe wedged inside Australia.

Whatever else it represents, this uncaptioned map is pure hubris, an expression of national pride and reverse imperialism. It makes explicit an ethnocentricity implicit in the selection of material, and uses it to promote rather than inform. The universal vision of encyclopedism is abandoned, subverted by special interests. But the *Australian Encyclopaedia* raises vital questions about the nature and content of a specialised encyclopedia. Its limited reference to things European reflects the encyclopedia's constant struggle with issues of size and content, and in this case the larger question of what is the 'circle of learning' for contemporary Australians?

How much information about Europe, America and Asia should an Australian encyclopedia be expected to contain; or should it simply be representing the priorities Down Under? It illustrates the particular challenge of a national encyclopedia, that of maintaining a larger world view through regional selections of material.

Fresh solutions to the world encyclopedia's problems of accommodating information came early in the 1990s with advances in digital technology. The first encyclopedia to take advantage of it was the *Encarta Multimedia Encyclopedia* published by Microsoft on CD-ROM. In what then seemed enormous numbers of megabytes, the CD-ROM lifted physical constraints on the volume of articles and graphics that an encyclopedia could contain, and added maps, audiofiles and videos to document sounds and moving images, such as birds singing. Its overall content was still circumscribed by editorial policy so as to make the work coherent in its range, and editorial management to make articles consistent in density and quality, using expert writers. Both *Encarta* (1993) and the first online release of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*

(1994) made the most of digital facilities while still containing the encyclopedia's scope.

The real paradigm shift came with the third millennium, as open-ended encyclopedias began to be 'born' and created on the internet. The first venture of this kind was Nupedia, which lasted less than three years between 2000 and 2003. Its output got bogged down in the refereeing process and editorial quality control, so that it could not keep pace with demands to build a new world-encompassing encyclopedia. It was overtaken by Wikipedia (*wiki* being the Hawaiian pidgin word for 'quick') in a major paradigm shift for the encyclopedia as a form.

to develop the entry. Sometimes the lack of references or the need for more is noted in entries, again to stimulate external input. How much does this open and sequential authorship jeopardise the quality of information provided by Wikipedia? Arguably there are sufficient incentives for experts not to delay publishing well-grounded knowledge, and to collaborate with their peers across the world in updating it. Research published in *Nature* in 2005 on a set of forty-two scientific articles from Wikipedia and *Encyclopaedia Britannica* found them more or less on a par in terms of accuracy (the numbers of factual errors).¹⁹ This suggests that

the scientific community takes seriously the need to collaborate in monitoring Wikipedia entries in their fields. It does not, however, guarantee the accuracy/factuality of entries dealing with popular culture, as one reviewer commented.²⁰

The twenty-first century online encyclopedia has been transformed by accepting the open-endedness of knowledge, and contributions from anyone and everyone. It has shaken off the



(right)
Wikipedia entry for
Pears Cyclopaedia.
PUBLIC DOMAIN VIA
WIKIPEDIA COMMONS.
<HTTP://EN.WIKIPEDIA.
ORG/WIKI/PEARS_
CYCLOPAEDIA>

Wikipedia differs from every encyclopedic venture before it in yielding editorial control of authoring to self-selected authors/contributors. Editorial management of content is in the hands of vast numbers of volunteer editors,¹⁶ whose generous input can be seen as part of the wider open source movement.¹⁷ Their work is framed by Wikipedia's detailed policy and editorial procedures,¹⁸ and monitoring of uploads to ensure that offensive and libellous content is rapidly removed. Although no-one is commissioned by Wikipedia to write entries, expert input is sometimes actively sought on particular topics, as in this unfinished entry on *Pears Cyclopaedia*.

The statement 'This article ... is a stub. You can help ... by expanding it' is the standard open invitation from Wikipedia's volunteer editors, asking readers with appropriate knowledge

original notion of representing knowledge within the 'circle of learning' and embraced something like H. G. Wells's 1936 idea of the collaborative world encyclopedia, though realised in a rather different way.²¹ Encyclopedic content can no longer be conceptualised in terms of fixed categories in an ontological structure, like that of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*'s propedia. While the circle of learning was always multidisciplinary, the online encyclopedia allows for *interdisciplinary* perspectives and approaches. Encyclopedic knowledge becomes centrifugal rather than centripetal. Fortunately it can still be located in standard Wikipedia templates, through alphabetical indexing — two elements of encyclopedic format that do persist. But other parameters in the design and construction of print encyclopedias have been transformed (or perhaps *transcended*) in the digital era.

DICTIONARIES AND THEIR USERS

Dictionaries (like encyclopedias and atlases) have continuously evolved in their content and orientation, with marked developments over the course of time. The first English dictionaries to be called by that name were ad hoc bilingual Latin/English glossaries, which were used for the education of children and clerics in the thirteenth century; in the sixteenth century dictionaries were printed to help English travellers to translate from French and Italian. The term *dictionary* was then applied to monolingual English word lists that concentrated on 'hard English words', such as Henry Cockeram's *English Dictionary; or An Interpreter of Hard English Words* (1623); or Thomas Blount's *Glossographia: or, A Dictionary Interpreting All Such Hard Words ... As Are Now Used in Our Refined English Tongue* (1656). Only in the eighteenth century was the word *dictionary* associated with a comprehensive

fully than any before, there were selectional restrictions on what was included, even within its two large (folio-sized) volumes, which became increasingly problematic as it was reprinted with little editorial change for decades.²³

The linguistic and cultural limitations of Johnson's dictionary were increasingly recognised in the 1850s by members of the Philological Society,²⁴ and action mobilised towards creating a totally different, historical dictionary of English. This culminated in the *New English Dictionary* (later called the *Oxford English Dictionary*), published successively in twelve volumes (1884–1928). The *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) traced the meanings of English words through historical evidence of their use across the centuries, and provided etymologies based on the latest philological scholarship. It included regionalisms emerging from the growing interest in dialectology. Words were documented from a much wider variety of nonfiction and fiction than Johnson had been

THE LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL LIMITATIONS OF JOHNSON'S DICTIONARY WERE INCREASINGLY RECOGNISED IN THE 1850s BY MEMBERS OF THE PHILOLOGICAL SOCIETY...

reference on the English lexicon, most notably Nathan Bailey's *Universal Etymological Dictionary* (1721), and Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755). Both left their mark on the dictionary microstructure (i.e., the format of the individual entries), by providing examples of word usage, and indicating the etymologies of words where they were known.

Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* quickly became the authoritative account of English vocabulary, with its systematic use of citations from English literary greats to validate the senses of words. His representation of usage was, however, conservative since he explicitly excluded living writers: 'I aimed to admit no testimony of living authors' ('Preface' to Johnson's *Dictionary*). Johnson also disclaimed responsibility for what he called 'fugitive cant', including colloquial expressions, which were hard to record and rarely listed. Spoken styles of English were not as highly valued as they had been a century before.²² So, although Johnson's dictionary covered the English lexicon more

able to consult. The *OED* included words of colonial English,²⁵ and evidence of lexical developments outside England, however deeply ethnocentric it remained.²⁶ The *OED* opened English lexicography up as a field of empirical inquiry, freeing it from a priori assumptions of correctness and the bonds of prescriptivism. In all these ways the *OED* transcended eighteenth-century models of the dictionary, making its scope far greater than any single-volume print dictionary then or since. It remains a monument to the English language at large.

In its greatness, the *Oxford English Dictionary* allowed smaller (one-volume) dictionaries to concentrate on particular segments of the English lexicon, and to innovate in other ways for particular readerships. Among these more specialised dictionaries, those designed for second-language learners of English (i.e., 'learners dictionaries') have embodied some remarkable innovations within the traditional print dictionary model. One such innovation in learners dictionaries of the late twentieth

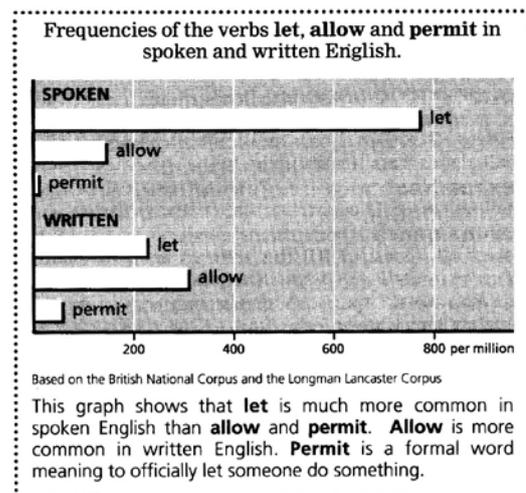
(right)
Diagram of frequencies of verbs 'let', 'permit', 'allow' in the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 3rd ed. (Pearson Education Ltd, © Longman Group Ltd, 1995).

century was the use of large computer corpora of spoken and written language to inform dictionary entries. The publisher's in-house corpus provided empirical information on the frequencies of words and phrases in spoken and written usage. This allowed them to construct their word list (the 'macrostructure') out of words that learners are most likely to encounter in their reading and listening. Corpus-based knowledge of word frequencies also allowed dictionary-makers to control their defining vocabularies to around the top three thousand words, and avoid definitions more challenging to the learner than the mysterious headword itself. The contrasting frequencies of near synonyms in different registers could also be used as evidence of stylistic differences, as with 'let', 'allow', and 'permit'.

Learners dictionaries sometimes supplement definitions with illustrations to explain the differences in denotation and connotation between words from the same semantic set or field. Although small line drawings were used in general American dictionaries, British pedagogical dictionaries were the first to use full colour pictures to help second-language learners with finer discriminations among related sets of words. The sample illustration below from the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1995) shows the set of words associated with different modes of walking.

Illustrations like these work better than a thousand words of paraphrase for the language learner. They also provide an alternative

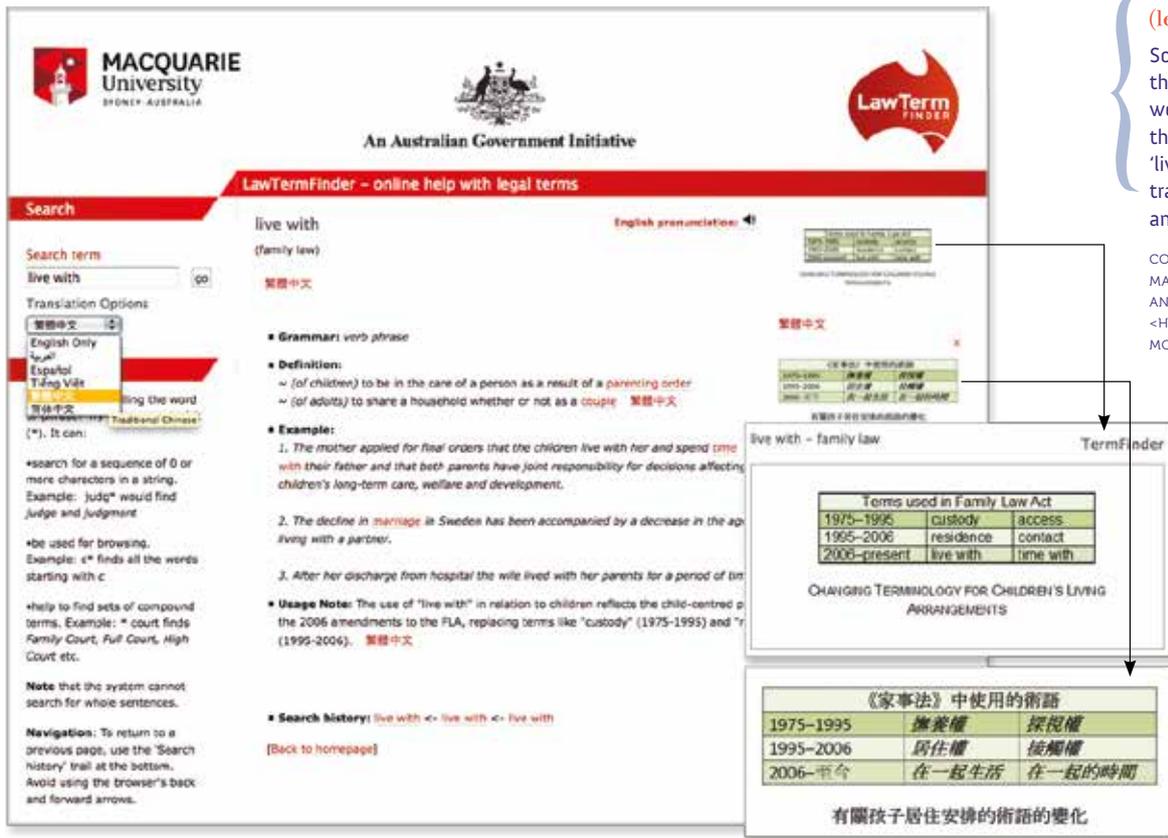
(below)
Diagram of 'Types of Walk' in the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 3rd ed. (Pearson Education Ltd, © Longman Group Ltd, 1995).



visual path to language learning for those with limited English.

In the digital era, learners dictionaries have continued to produce some of the most remarkable innovations in lexicography. The digital medium itself has supported hitherto unthinkable lexicographic developments, such as the computerisation of the twenty volumes of the second edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989), making it searchable online and integrated with the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary*. The interlinking of individual word histories from the *OED* with the semantic groupings of the thesaurus provides striking insights into the stylistic options available to writers at a given time, such as the mot juste for calling someone an idiot in early seventeenth-century English.²⁷ Elsewhere, the electronic integration of related dictionaries has generated so-called 'dynamic dictionaries' for learners in a specialised field — again an innovation in pedagogical lexicography. One example in the field of accounting is the bilingual *Diccionario Ingles-Espanol de Contabilidad*, designed by a team of Danish and Spanish lexicographers, which provides translation equivalents as well as access to monolingual specialised dictionaries, so as to meet different levels of need among accounting students who are foreign-language users of English.

The benefits of digital lexicography are evident in sign language lexicography, where the pioneering *Auslan Dictionary*²⁸ has been reconfigured as the online Auslan Signbank.²⁹ This solves many of the problems associated with the print medium, such as the difficulty of



(left) Screenshot of the LawTermFinder website showing the search term 'live with', including translation options and terminology table.

COURTESY MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY AND P. PETERS. <HTTP://LAWTERM.FINDER.MQ.EDU.AU/>

representing the motion and directionality of hand signs in small static line drawings on the printed page. For online users the video clips of hand signs are infinitely easier to understand and imitate. Individual signs are much easier to find among the 5500 that are contained in the Signbank through alphabetical indexing. In the printed dictionary they were arranged in a multi-faceted system based on relevant but non-intuitive aspects, such as the hands involved, position relative to body, and the directions of movement, to assist learners with sets of similar signs. But the alphabetical index of the signbank facilitates ready reference. It also accommodates idiomatic uses of Auslan signs, so that the page for the sign for 'think' can also show its use as a discourse marker to mean 'Just as I thought'/'I suspected that'.

There are online termbank projects underway at Macquarie University that are designed to explain specialised terminology to novices in the field. The TermFinder project began as a pedagogical aid to international students in units like accounting, but is now extending into the Australian community with termbanks of

specialised terminology that are designed to meet the layperson's needs. The first of these is LawTermFinder, which contains terms in family law and mediation.³⁰ These are presented wherever possible as members of sets and in their common collocations, not in isolation as in the conventional online glossary. So hyponymic diagrams help to discriminate word senses within clusters of terms, and examples of actual usage of each term show the kinds of words it collocates with, drawn from a specialised corpus of legal texts (illustrating various legal styles from formal legislation to legal help websites). LawTermFinder is also multilingual, with its key elements translated into major Australian community languages, including Chinese (both Traditional and Simplified scripts), Vietnamese, Spanish and Arabic, to be selected by the user.

This page from LawTermFinder shows the five translation selections available to users, as well as the use of a table to display the chronology of parallel terms associated with children's living arrangements since 1975. For those with less-advanced English reading skills, the table

complements the usage note at the bottom of the entry in explaining the changes in terminology since 1975. Though *custody/access* were officially superseded in 1995, the terms are still widely used in everyday talk, and continue to provide the parents' perspective (and handy nouns), while the new verb-centred phrases *live with/spend time with*, reflect the child-centred emphasis of the 2006 amendments to the *Family Law Act*.

With these examples of English dictionaries over three centuries, I hope to have demonstrated how they have indeed transcended their origins and the dictionary format itself, continuously enlarging its scope in print or online. Most of the recent innovations have emerged from the dictionary's concentration on the needs of the user, adapting and enriching the lexical content with multimodal and multilingual capacity. The needs of the user will continue to inform online dictionary content — and also constrain it,³¹ so that it does not become an expanding universe, as has occurred with the online encyclopedia. Lexicographical method has undoubtedly evolved along more empirical lines, from the systematic use of historical citations in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, to the use of corpus data in developing content for learners dictionaries. It underlies current discussions about the *science* of lexicography,³² which is separate to the 'art and craft' of it. The methodology of dictionaries is now multidisciplinary, as its content has long been.

CONCLUSION

All three formats discussed here were and are ready vehicles for the documentation and construction of complex knowledge. The centuries-old paper-based formats have all transitioned into the digital medium and found new purposes and functions that far transcend those of their original formats. Those who go to the internet to 'look it up' will find maps that are scalable and multidimensional, an encyclopedia that is open-ended and open-authored, and dictionaries that are multimodal and multilingual, to optimise support for the user. All are effective in underwriting interdisciplinary research and inquiry, and for expanding humanistic interpretations of the intellectual world. The ultimate value of

dictionaries, encyclopedias and atlases is their capacity for transformation, so that in principle nothing is alien. Their epigram is there for us in the Australian Academy of the Humanities own motto: *humani nihil alienum*. ¶



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2001 to 2007, and on the Editorial Committee of the Macquarie Dictionary from 1986 to 2006. She continues her research in lexicography and terminography as Director of the TermFinder project, developing multilingual online termbanks for tertiary education in the disciplines of accounting and statistics, and for community use in family law (LawTermFinder) and cancer treatment (HealthTermFinder).

1. The name Diab was earlier used in Capo di Diab, the Portuguese name for the Cape of Good Hope, <<http://www.namibiana.de/namibia-information/>> [accessed 26 March 2015].
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 14. Nadine Hagen, 'A Mind-Map of a Nation: The Australian Encyclopaedia', *Allgemeinwissen und Gesellschaft* (2007), <www.enzyklopaedie.ch/kongress/aufsaetze/hagen.pdf> [accessed 26 March 2015].
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Screen Rites:

Getting Close to Death and Dying

» TOM MURRAY

OBSERVING LOVE AND DEATH #1

The first funeral I attended was for a woman I knew only distantly, being there to support a friend who was much closer to her. It was a sad occasion, as funerals for young people generally are, and the experience was marked for me by the clumsiness of the priest, who knew so little about the dead woman that he mispronounced her name a number of times. He concluded his address by asking us to 'thank God for her leisure pursuits and other activities'. He was so awkward that I wondered if another priest had been caught in traffic or suddenly taken ill, leaving him with no time to glance at a curriculum vitae before being called upon to address those forlornly assembled.

As I was not close to the dead young woman, and it being my first funeral, I could (to an extent) watch the ceremony as a performance. I was struck by a sensation that it has taken me years to figure out, if only in imprecise language: the service suffocated expressions of love; it lacked *life force*.

There was no engaging articulation of the sublime or poetic, and nothing to link the worlds of the living and the dead. No invocation of the dream space that Gaston Bachelard described as 'intimate immensity',¹ nor a ceremonial nod to what Rainer-Maria Rilke called a 'communion with the universe'.² No forum in which we could come to terms with this death, and regain a

sense of joy in the world. As a congregation we were not encouraged 'to come together with others to share in moments of exuberant and at times irreverent exultation'.³ In short, the service provided little succour for our sorrow; my friend and I left with no more understanding of the trajectories that connect life and death than we had when we arrived.

So we went to the pub.

In *H is for Hawk* (2014), Helen Macdonald describes meeting the canon of a local church to discuss her father's memorial service. At some point he offers her a business card. The absurdity of this banal object becoming the focal point of a meeting about how they might best celebrate her father's life provokes Macdonald to laughter. This miniature of the clergy as clumsy, commercial and inept, an impediment to wilder, more 'natural' expressions of love and devotion, harks back to Gustave Flaubert's famous church rendezvous scene in *Madame Bovary* (1857). Here, a church official tours the would-be lovers Emma and Leon around inscriptions of historical significance, pointing out architectural features and important personages. The increasingly frustrated Leon notes that his love has become 'immobilized inside that church just like the stones'.⁴ Milan Kundera describes how this scene manages to capture 'the concreteness of the present ... the discovery of the perpetual

coexistence of the banal and the dramatic that underlies our lives'.⁵

What connects these examples is the church configured as banal (anti-spiritual), while the dramatic and sublime exist in secular and experiential domains: in sex, love, the experience of death, and the natural world (the goshawk in Helen Macdonald's book, for example). They provide an image of the church as a contrary guide in matters spiritual, while also illustrating the success of (late) modern society in the 'sequestration' (Anthony Giddens' term)⁶ of a fuller comprehension of the sublime, dramatic and banal truth of our mortality.

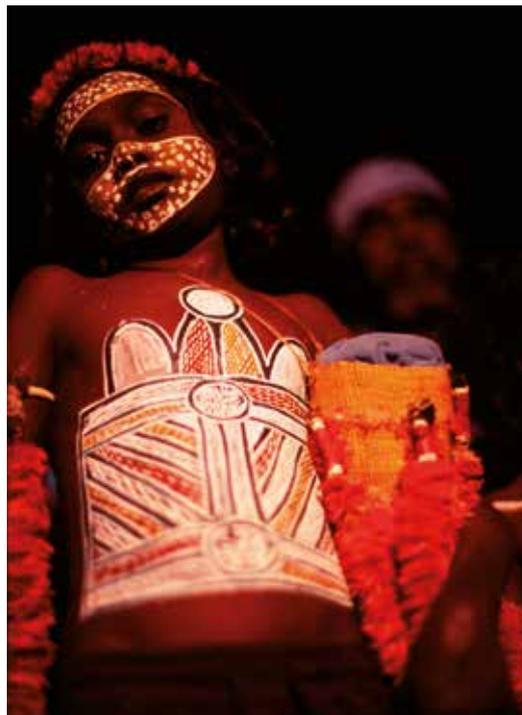
Facing the reality of her father's death, Helen Macdonald can only laugh. 'The laughter was because there was no way of incorporating these signs of life into the fact of death. I laughed because there was nothing else I could do.'⁷

The things we do *because there is nothing else we can do* are various and not always immediate. It is nearly twenty years since that first funeral and yet I am still processing it in this essay.

GETTING CLOSE #1

A few years ago I began making a documentary film that came to be called *Love in Our Own Time*.⁸ It was inspired as much by witnessing Yolngu (the Indigenous people of north-east Arnhem Land) funerary rites as by participating in their equivalents in my own community of urban Anglo-Australia. The contrast between these two approaches to death and dying could not have been more 'stark', as Frances and Howard Morphy have noted.⁹ Moving between these two societies, as I have for the last fifteen years, has only magnified this starkness.

In regard to Yolngu funerals, the Morphys have explained how spectacular, affective and aesthetic qualities ('analogous to an operatic performance'¹⁰) are integral to their perceived success. These qualities, and their attendant audio-visual and metaphorical richness, are understandably a boon to screen storytellers, and two of my documentary films — *Dhakiyarr vs the King* (2004) and *In My Father's Country* (2008) — feature sequences from Yolngu funeral and memorial ceremonies. But how does one go about documenting Anglo-Australian ceremonies and encounters with death and dying that have



(left, top to bottom)

Boy at a Dhapi (Initiation) Ceremony that followed a funeral at Dhuruputjpi, north east Arnhem Land.

IMAGE: © TOM MURRAY 2008

Filming a funeral at Dhuruputjpi Homeland for the film *Dhakiyarr vs the King*.

IMAGE: © TOM MURRAY 2003

Detail of Yolngu hollow log coffin (Larrakitj) painting by Wuyal Wirrpanda showing how human flesh is eaten from the bones by ants, from a sequence in *Dhakiyarr vs the King*.

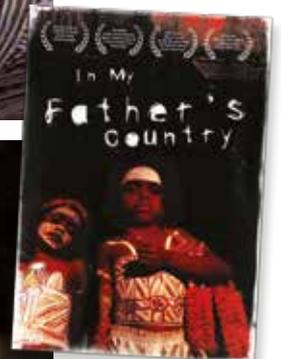
PHOTO: © TOM MURRAY 2003

Dance performed at Yolngu funeral ceremony, Dhuruputjpi Homeland, from a sequence in *In My Father's Country*.

IMAGE: © TOM MURRAY 2008

DVD cover, *In My Father's Country* (Mayfan Pty Ltd; Tarpaulin Films; Aust. Film Commission; NSW Film & Television Office, 2008).

COURTESY TOM MURRAY



limited spectacle and are 'routinely hidden from view'?¹¹ Here, if we are to believe the influential sociologist Norbert Elias, centuries of 'civilising processes'¹² have shamed us into viewing

Two initial points regarding screen intimacy and association are relevant. Orson Welles once said that 'the closer we are to the face the more universal it becomes.'¹⁵ Welles's point was in

SO WHAT MIGHT BE REVEALED IN GETTING CLOSE TO THE FACES AND BODIES OF THE DYING WITH A CAMERA?

social restraint and the 'control of emotions' as indicators of a successfully managed death.

Restraint. Lack of drama. These are significant challenges for a broadcast documentary.

So I decided to *get close* ...

The photojournalist Robert Capa was fond of saying 'if your pictures aren't good enough, you're not close enough',¹³ as if proximity was everything. But, if we set aside the danger faced by combat photographers like Capa, getting close to the action poses the more delicate problem of altering or inhibiting the very thing that you set out to capture. This dilemma is not unique to documentary, of course, and the debate about 'truth' in 'direct cinema' and 'observational-documentary' has covered territory traversed

relation to historical costume dramas, and the ability of audiences to see beyond the *otherness* of the historical figures. In short, close-ups of faces help us to identify with characters as people. This is an important consideration when dealing with subjects that are difficult or little known to audiences, whether that is 'death' or 'Indigenous person'.

Anthropologist/filmmaker David MacDougall has described the way that faces in film can become emblematic of bodies; in the 'quasi-tactility' that screen intimacy affords there can be 'liberation' from social constraint and conventional ways of seeing.¹⁶ This liberation can be revelatory, as Dudley Andrew enthusiastically explained in regard to the work of Jean Rouch, a pioneer of the French 'cinema verite' movement: 'Under the subtle pressure of this approach, relationships within reality become visible, bursting into the consciousness of the spectator as a revelation of a truth discovered'.¹⁷

So what might be revealed in getting close to the faces and bodies of the dying with a camera?

OBSERVING LOVE AND DEATH #2

Phillipe Aries, who is most famous for his work on the history of childhood, is also an important figure in the historical exploration of attitudes to death. His seminal 1977 book *L'Homme devant la mort (The Hour of Our Death)* argued that, since mediaeval times, death in Europe has become increasingly 'untamed'. Social pressures have 'banished' death into a private sphere of near invisibility, where it has begun to haunt our imaginations.¹⁸ Anthony Giddens, another sociologist, explained that, during late modernity, not only has death



(above)
Close-up of
John Walker.

IMAGE: © TOM MURRAY
2012

since Werner Heisenberg's reflection that the act of observation 'changes and transforms its object'.¹⁴ With an additional nod to methodological developments and debates around 'participant observation' and 'reflexivity' in fieldwork-based social sciences during the twentieth century, which are also highly relevant to documentary, I'll now return to getting close on screen.



(left)

Douglas and Royealeene Batho.

IMAGE: © TOM MURRAY 2012

(below)

DVD cover, *Love in Our Own Time* (Screen Australia & Tarpaulin Productions, 2012).

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become 'routinely hidden', it has also become a 'technical matter ... removed into the hands of the medical profession'.¹⁹ Clearly we also need to add here other professionals in the religion and funeral industries — a fact that the communally experienced and family-oriented death ministrations of Yolngu communities have made abundantly clear to me.

Before making the film *Love in Our Own Time*, my exposure to the reality of death and dying was limited. I was terrified by the idea of death, and disenchanted by the funerals I had attended. The modern secular and religious rites of my experience seemed incapable of the sublime task of connecting the states of life and death in any helpful or meaningful way. My last three grandparents had all recently died, and my experience of their funerals contrasted heavily with the Yolngu version of such ceremonies.²⁰

I became aware that contemporary 'death industries' — from hospitals and nursing homes, to funeral companies and religious organisations — all worked seamlessly to keep the fact of death away from public communities. And even when people came together to mark the fact of death, it seemed that the biggest challenge one faced as a participant was to exhibit civilised 'restraint' and a minimal expression of public emotion, as Norbert Elias notes.²¹ I felt a deep affinity with Phillipe Aries's observation that a 'life in which death was

removed to a prudent distance seems less loving of things and people than the life in which death was the center'.²²

As a result of these experiences I resolved to make a film that would get as close to death as possible. It has been an unforgettable experience.

Take the example of Wally. In his working life Wally had been a police prosecutor, travelling across rural New South Wales to appear in small-town courts where 'big orations weren't necessary'. I'd managed only a few superficial conversations with him before he'd plunged into what seemed like the 'final phase'. Family members had assembled in vigil during the preceding few days, and Wally appeared barely conscious of anything around him. His whole being seemed concentrated on rasping attempts to extract a life-sustaining quantity of oxygen from the faintly antiseptic hospital air.

One morning, outside the third floor window of Wally's wing in the palliative care hospice, an enormous rainbow was stretched from the middle of Botany Bay to somewhere near Mascot. Because I had started my round early, I had already filmed a number of patients responding to the rainbow; each had explained how they had drawn emotional sustenance from it. Now I approached Doug's bed with my camera. Doug was over eighty and battling terminal cancer with a sense of humour that had clearly served him well through life. He was

(right)

Wally King with his wife June, in the middle of his oration.

IMAGE: © TOM MURRAY 2013



directing his wife's attention to the rainbow: 'Remember how we used to look for the pot of gold when we were kids?' Royealeene answered: 'Never found it though, did we?' She had grown up in the country and didn't come across as a woman inclined to indulge fantasies.

Then, with impeccable timing, Wally — from across the far side of the ward — piped up: 'I've found my pot of gold!' It took everyone a moment to register that Wally had broken a spell that had plunged him into many days of silence. 'And she's right here!' Wally took his wife June's hand and squeezed it. Then began to describe how he had spent so much time close to death that he had not only lost his fear of it, but was beginning to feel some hope for the future. I was on the other side of the ward, but quickly reached Wally's bed and tracked the camera across lines that framed both Wally and his wife. 'I would not have been classed among the faithful', Wally addressed June (and the camera), 'but now I'm getting close to it my hope is rising in my heart, in my breast'.

I slowly zoomed in on Wally's pink and puffy face, a move that one would rarely consider during filming because it draws attention to the presence of the camera. In this case, the move is barely noticed. Wally, one puffy eye half-closed, explains that he hopes to find June in the afterlife and that together they will become the 'two happiest angels in the world'. I am aware that Wally's vision of a transcendental marital future

could sound faintly ridiculous here, but to see it in film is another matter. The absoluteness of his conviction and our visceral knowledge of his impending death combine to illustrate an undeniable *life force*. What he succeeded in communicating was stripped of ego, full of love.

In the viewfinder I could see that June was now light in her chair, floating in sentiments that were clearly delightful to her. Still recording, I slowly withdrew from them. Wally had invited me into this moment by raising his voice to the camera, but it felt right to now leave them alone. I was not conscious of how I had covered the scene with the camera, but felt satisfied that the movements had been in tune with what had happened.

The sensation of synchrony between self and subject has been described since the earliest days of mobile ethnographic film equipment. Jean Rouch saw the phenomenon as a 'cintrance', and its more ecstatic qualities have been described by pioneering ethnographic filmmakers, such as John Marshall ('You have this feeling, "I'm on; I'm on ... I'm getting it. It's happening. It's happening"') and Robert Gardner ('as close to cinematic orgasm as I'll get').²³

Filming bed-bound patients in the palliative care wing of a hospice does not readily yield ecstatic thought, but I was aware of a kind of 'condensing back to self' as I left the intimacy of Wally and June's moment.

If I could imagine myself as a molecule of water momentarily held in suspension, I was now aware that the air was rapidly cooling around me and, as if nothing more than a matter of physics, my suspended state of witness had ceased. I was returned to the olfactory realities of a palliative care hospice, to the artificial lights and metal-framed beds, and to the mercantile whine of daytime TV.

Across the corridor Wally and June were still holding hands.

It was only much later that I realised Wally had taken me on an expedition into the territory of my greatest fears, a journey to the furthest edge of life. He was reporting on the experience of leaning against the boundary

authorised him to say something he thought it was important for people (the world) to know.

Certainly it is clear to me that the camera can offer self-belief to 'social actors' (the people on camera) in a way that validates thoughts as being important enough to express. Perhaps there is no better example of this than the context of reality TV and celebrity culture. A camera validates the opinion-worthiness of a speaker and can also act as an agent provocateur. Two decades ago, prior to the flood of reality and 'factual' television, documentary theorist Brian Winston detailed how 'direct cinema' techniques provoked actuality (real life) when he noted Molly Haskell's claim that the titular couple of the documentary *A Married Couple* 'seem to have been catalysed by the camera into forcing the marriage to a showdown'.²⁴

(below)

Noelene Kennedy watches the rainbow – 'That's telling me something', Noelene said, pointing to the rainbow.

IMAGE: © TOM MURRAY 2013



BUT I OFTEN WONDER: WOULD WALLY'S 'REPORT FROM THE EDGE OF LIFE' HAVE HAPPENED WITHOUT MY CAMERA?

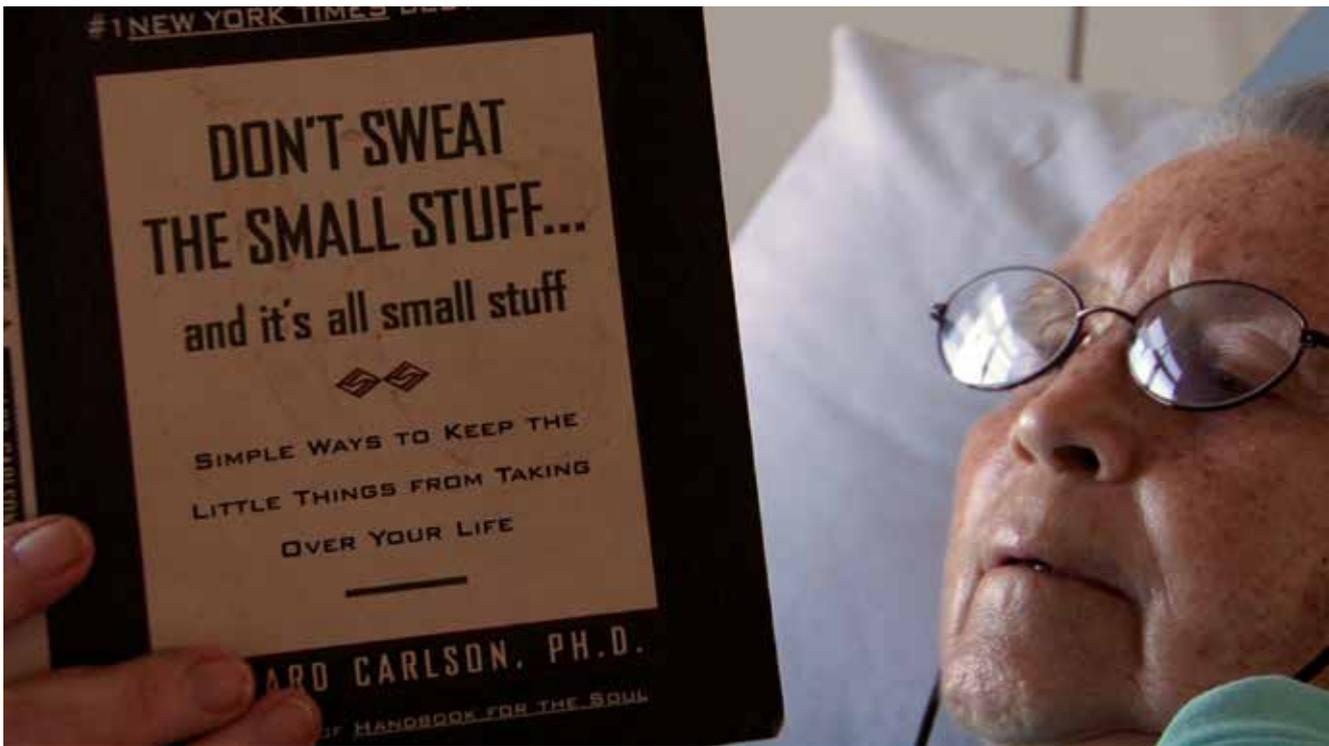
fence that separated his living and his dying, and he was telling me that he wasn't afraid. It was the first time anyone had taken me there, and I am thankful to him for having done so. I am certainly richer for it.

But I often wonder: would Wally's 'report from the edge of life' have happened without my camera? Would, for example, he have reported it quietly to June as they contemplated the rainbow? Would he have reported it to some other family member lucky enough to have arrived during this final window of Wally's lucidity? My honest, if perhaps self-serving feeling is 'no', for a number of reasons.

I think the camera offered Wally the appropriate platform for one last tilt on the stage of life. The camera allowed him to express something that in the course of ordinary life might have seemed, to Wally and others, like 'making a fuss' or, in Norbert Elias's terms, emotionally 'unrestrained'. Wally's understanding of my filmmaking task gave him contextual permission to express something that I believe would have remained unsaid, given the lack of appropriate social contexts in which to say it. In other words, the camera gave Wally the physical, emotional and practical power that

I have no doubt that the camera and my project was a catalyst for Wally's extraordinary oration. I don't believe, however, that it was about the camera per se but rather about the permissive space in which he felt authorised to express his thoughts and feelings.





(above)

Jutta Thomas, only weeks to live and reading *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff*.

IMAGE: © TOM MURRAY 2012

GETTING CLOSE #2

James Nachtwey, the celebrated American photojournalist, has described how much of his work is made at close range: 'I like to work in the same intimate space that the subjects inhabit. I want to give viewers the sense that they're sharing the same space with a photo's subject.'²⁵ The reverse of this is that as viewers we are, more literally, sharing the space of the image-maker. Leonard Retel Helmrich, a documentary filmmaking colleague,²⁶ argues that his own body is more deeply inscribed in the images he captures than it is in any image of him: 'You are what you see. When you say that you see me, you only see a projection of me. If you really want to see me then you should see what I see from the point in space where I am. In that case you are me.'²⁷

David MacDougall has argued that the body of the filmmaker is 'inscribed in the camera's vision', and that as viewers we 'respond to the filmmaker's body as we experience it through the decisions that guide the movements of the camera.'²⁸ The flow of communicated corporeality, between the embodied participant-observer (with a camera), the subject and viewer, has led ethnographer Sarah Pink to advocate the possibilities of

communicating 'empathetic co-presence' through audio-visual technologies.²⁹

There is a politics to this proposal, of course, in that we are asked (both as viewers and as image-makers) to consider how we comprehend and validate the other that is being represented. Further, as we come to terms with sentiments of 'fellow-feeling' toward this other, we must consider our relation to them. In this regard, we must account for the situational or socio-cultural distance that may exist between any of the agents in the matrix of representation. This may include gaps of context, process, media, represented, representer, viewer. If this gulf is wide, how can we be sure to not do 'violence' to the other? How can we ensure that our 'looking relations' (gendered, encultured, politicised) are compatible with communicating in good faith?

We can't. We try, and we submit to being judged, always understanding that our work is part of an ongoing conversation. As Paul Chaat Smith said at the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian (in the hope that the institution would become a site of 'national conversation'):

like any difficult conversation, it can be rough going, especially at first. Let's keep arguing, because at least it means we

are talking ... But we'll get better at this, because we have to. I mean, it's not like anyone's going anywhere, right?³⁰

Accepting that it is impossible to represent another with 'complete understanding', and that miscommunication is always possible, Davinia Thornley has written that collaborative acts of representation (acutely important in cross-cultural environments, but true of all acts of representation) revolve around 'process as practice': foregrounding the context of the representation and the production methods employed.³¹

James Nachtwey talks about approaching people with 'respect' and 'deference':

I do it slowly and gently and I think about the way I move, the way I speak and the way I use the camera. I let them know that I respect them and what they're going through ... They become a participant in the picture. I could not make these pictures without their acceptance and participation.³²

important reason why he declines to look through his camera view finder at eye-level, a practice he believes leads to the objectification of the subject (he does, however, use the LCD screen to see what he is capturing). Instead, he argues, 'I become [to them] one of the characters'; in this way he creates a form of participatory drama where the presence of the camera may act as a catalyst for certain actions but remains just another presence, merely 'a part of the whole'.³³ Additionally, through his use of shooting angles (high angle, low angle) and choice of subject and framing, Helmrich tries to communicate his 'emotional subjectivity' to the audience.

Helmrich has also spoken about 'directing' social actors through the movements of his camera. His preferred movement is an orbit around key characters which he believes best communicates interrelationships between subjects. By shifting his camera orbit to foreground one person or another, he manages to communicate his perspective with regard to the subjects, indicating what (and whom) he



(left)

Scene from *Love in Our Own Time*.

IMAGE: © TOM MURRAY
2012

Leonard Retel Helmrich speaks about entering the 'aura' (less poetically: the close personal space) of a film subject as a way of forging a mutual pact with them in the production of images. Helmrich understands this as a relationship of complicity that refuses the objectification of the subject. This is an

considers most dramatically significant in a scene at any given point.

In briefly describing Helmrich and Nachtwey's techniques and motivations, I don't want to claim that the exercise of negotiated proximity solves ethical issues in either documentary practice or viewership. There are critiques of

(right)
John and Veronica
Walker at church.

IMAGE: © TOM MURRAY
2013



(above, left)
Veronica Walker says
goodbye to her dead
husband John.

(above, right)
Priest prays over the
body of John Walker.

BOTH IMAGES: © TOM
MURRAY 2013

both of their photographic projects. What I wish to explore are some of my considerations when filming subjects for *Love in Our Own Time*. It is clear that the close scrutiny and presence of a camera (and myself) certainly provoked and shaped 'actuality' in a range of subtle ways.

Audiences who have seen this film respond to the subject matter and the obvious proximity of the camera, often remarking: 'the families must have really trusted you.' And, in exposing their lives to such obvious scrutiny, they most certainly did. But beyond that, what they appeared to trust most was a conviction that their stories might help others to navigate the vast distance between health and sickness, living and dying.

OBSERVING LOVE AND DEATH #3

John Walker lay dead in his hospital cot, a towel tucked beneath his chin to prevent his mouth from sagging open. He had been alive, if

barely, just a few minutes earlier. I filmed him: this is what death looks like — disorienting, inscrutable, not quite serene, but certainly still.

My life experience had not prepared me for this, and I am relieved that the camera preserves a distance between me and John's dead body. It was hard not to like John, and I liked him very much, so I kept recording and captured Veronica, John's wife, quietly stroking his face and wishing him the best of journeys. As Veronica moved away her son whispered a plea into John's ear: 'Look after mum.' John's brother, less-at-ease than the others, introduced himself as if the body he addressed was perhaps just temporarily blinded: 'John, it's your brother', he said. They were speaking to his spirit in the room, to the possibility of a consciousness nearby.

In this moment I am choosing not to think except in camera terms: where should I stand next? What additional angle will I need for the edit? And yet I know that if it were not for the camera I would drown here. As an outsider I am

not free to submit to grief, or to the relief that all is now over. So I keep filming until everyone leaves the room.

GETTING CLOSE #3

Why did I need to witness and broadcast these images? Our work always comes back to self. Hans-Georg Gadamer explained that ‘when something other or different is understood, then we must also concede something, yield — in certain limits — to the truth of the other’.³⁴ And for those of us in fieldwork disciplines who explore the limits of our own knowledge as we grasp at the understanding of others, the process of yielding becomes a secondary part of our nature: as initially uncomfortable as it may later be liberating.

In *The Ethnographer’s Eye*, Anna Grimshaw argues that personal transformation and experiential knowledge have been at the heart of documentary endeavour since at least Robert Flaherty’s (1922) *Nanook of the North*:

The filmmaker must not be just separated from his familiar world and relationships; he must, in addition, be prepared to submit himself to the experience of disorientation, vulnerability and ignorance.³⁵

I often feel that, as filmmakers traversing numerous scholarly territories, the most important skill we bring to a subject is the experience of *yielding*. Of yielding to an acceptance of the flaws of assumption, yielding to the delights of new learning, and so delivering the yield we are ultimately responsible for: production. As scholarly explorers, although not alone amongst fieldworkers, we have been trained to accept disorientation and allow ourselves to be reoriented through encounter, but only so long as we remain able to communicate the experience. Perhaps this is what Scott MacDonald means when he infectiously describes how cinema can be employed as a mode of exploration for ‘sensuous learning and interchange’.³⁶

Screen media is a naturally inquisitive form. We examine the interplay between *self* (the viewer/witness) and *other* (as represented on screen) precisely because of the sensuality

Scott MacDonald describes: the audio-visual encounter draws us into an unavoidable dialogue with the subjectivity of the other. This is why I wanted to film close-ups of John and Wally and all of the other subjects in *Love in Our Own Time*. I wanted audience members to witness their own humanity in these dying men and women. And if that sounds idealistic, it is. The civilised ‘deskilling’ of late modernist communities³⁷ with regard to death, and the lack of any strongly shared ritual and purpose in our approach to it, have taken such a toll on our understanding of life that there is something radical about even the most modest undertaking that seeks to shed light on dying.

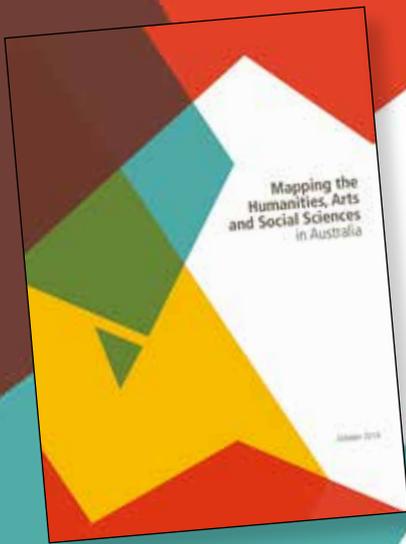
In terms of my own fear of death, I believe that psychologists describe what I have been through as ‘exposure therapy’. It is one of the legacies of John and Wally and the others in the film, their gift to me, that I live with less mortal fear. And I am more capable of grasping the wonder of life in the face of my own mortality. ¶



TOM MURRAY has a PhD in media/history; his research and teaching have focused on screen storytelling, documentary and Indigenous history. His screen works have won numerous Australian awards and been selected for many international film festivals. Tom has extensive experience in teaching screen production and facilitating screen research and storytelling in indigenous communities in Australia and the Pacific. His ongoing research interests are in the capacity of screen media to open new ways of understanding in cross-cultural environments, and to help investigate ideas of memory, history, colonialism and place. He is a Senior Lecturer in Screen Media in the Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies at Macquarie University. In 2014 Tom was awarded the Academy’s prestigious Max Crawford Medal.

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32. Cruickshank, 'Interview with James Nachtwey'.
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Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia

DATA FOR THE FUTURE

» GRAEME TURNER

In 2014, with Kylie Brass from the Australian Academy of the Humanities (AAH), I co-authored the report, *Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia*.¹ The proposal for such a report was originally put to the then Minister for the Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCSRTE), Senator Chris Evans, by the then President of the Academy, Emeritus Professor Lesley Johnson AM FAHA. It was inspired by the Chief Scientist, Professor Ian Chubb AC's 2012 report on the health of the sciences. This report provided a baseline of information and analysis for policy and planning for the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines, and highlighted, by example, the need for a similar baseline to be set for the humanities, arts and social science (HASS) disciplines. Though initially aimed at mapping only the humanities disciplines, the AAH proposal was funded by the government on the condition that it extended its reach into the arts and social sciences. Accordingly, the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia (ASSA) became partners with the AAH in this enterprise; it was managed through the Secretariat of the AAH and overseen by a steering committee of AAH and ASSA Fellows.² As a result, much of what is outlined below relates to the HASS sector as a whole, although at some points I have disaggregated the findings and focus on the humanities disciplines separately. Finally,

it is important to note that, in addition to the funding provided by DIICCSRTE and the two Academies, the project received generous in-kind support from the Office of the Chief Scientist and from the Australian Research Council (ARC); without this support we would not have been able to provide a report of such scale and complexity.

Typically, some would say almost pathologically, the HASS sector feels it does not get the attention and support it deserves. There are often good reasons for that feeling. On the one hand, people can undervalue the knowledge these disciplines generate because the focus of their work is so directly related to people's everyday lives; at its best, in fact, the results can just seem like common sense rather than specialised expertise. On the other hand, when these disciplines get a little too sophisticated and develop technical terminology (routine and acceptable for the sciences but not apparently for HASS!), the media in particular tend to bolt for the exits, screaming 'Postmodernism! Run for your lives!'. More seriously, and regrettably, those wishing to make the case for the sector have long been hampered by the lack of comprehensive empirical evidence of what they do, the value it brings to the nation, and the conditions in which they do it.

The *Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* report sets out to put an end to that. What it provides is evidence, in abundance, of what the HASS sector contributes to the nation,

(right)

Professor
Ian Chubb AC,
Australia's Chief
Scientist, launching
the *Mapping the
Humanities, Arts
and Social Sciences
in Australia* report
at the National
Press Club of
Australia, Canberra,
28 October 2014.

PHOTO: COURTESY
NATIONAL PRESS CLUB
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while also pointing to issues that are critical to its future. If the nation wants to maintain a strong and vibrant HASS sector, the evidence contained in the report is vital to the planning and commitment that this will require. It cannot be stated too often, in my view, that the HASS disciplines are fundamental components of every comprehensive national university system around the globe. I am not a supporter of those who feel that the humanities, in particular, need to remake themselves so that they more closely resemble the sciences — emphasising their applied capacities and their vocational value. Nor is it an issue of communication — as in we need to be better communicators

provides the HASS sector with a body of evidence to help it respond to that opportunity.

Regrettably, to date, Australia's approach to generating and maintaining our national capacity in the HASS disciplines has been contingent upon short-term strategic policy settings, relatively autonomous institutional and sector-level funding decisions, and short-term responses to fluctuations in student demand and study preferences. Often strategic decisions that serve the purposes of governments have had unforeseen and deleterious knock-on effects for the HASS disciplines; their exclusion from the tax concessions to business for research investment is one, particularly egregious, example of this. While the need to properly plan the national capacities in research and higher education is now being recognised in higher education and research policy discussions, so far government has only concerned itself (and then, only after much effort from the Chief Scientist) with STEM.

A nation of Australia's size has no option but to be strategic in how it invests its resources, and to plan its futures. For this to happen, decision-makers at all levels need authoritative information on our current capacities in order to plan for the future. Until now, the information that would make this possible for the HASS

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about our work. In my view, the way to defend these disciplines is to continually demonstrate to the community not only that the particular knowledges and understandings these disciplines generate are intrinsically valuable in themselves but also that they are especially valuable in the complex environment we face today. Responding to today's social, cultural and economic challenges requires specialist knowledge of the peoples, societies, regions and cultures that underpin, fuel or react to these challenges. The HASS disciplines are integral to achieving this fine-tuned understanding. In some quarters, there is a greater acceptance of that position now than ever before, and the HASS community should see this as a moment of opportunity. *Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*

sector has not been available in an accessible form. *Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* is a major first step towards a more informed understanding of the current health of the sector. Those who prepared and funded the project want the report to be used — by academic staff, by academic planners and administrators, by departments, schools, faculties and universities, and by policy-makers within government. The report is detailed and contains an impressive collection of data, information that has never been aggregated before, and the benefits it offers to us, by becoming available, are considerable.

The project, which surveyed the period from 2002 to 2012, set out to address the following research questions:



(left)

Cover and spreads from **Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia** report (Australian Academy of the Humanities, 2014).

- * What are the major areas of research and teaching strength in HASS in Australia?
- * What is Australia's public investment in teaching and research in the HASS disciplines?
- * What are the current trends in HASS enrolments in Australian universities?
- * Where are the gaps in research capabilities and research infrastructure now and in the future?
- * What is the current profile and capacity of the academic workforce in HASS?

Addressing these questions involved dealing with a range of data sources that are not necessarily interoperable, with material being collected under different categories for different purposes. Activity in teaching, for instance, is collected under the Australian Bureau of Statistics' categories of Fields of Education (FoE), while activity in research is collected using the Australian Research Council's Fields of Research (FoR) categories. It is not possible to aggregate these to produce a body of information that combines them.³

THE CURRENT CONDITION OF THE HASS DISCIPLINES

So, what have we found? Unfortunately, perhaps, for those who might want to use *Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* as an argument for significant increases in overall government funding for these disciplines, we found that the HASS disciplines are currently in good health and making a substantial

contribution to the nation's education, research, training and employment. Of course, this does not necessarily refute arguments that the sector is poorly funded, but it does point to its high levels of productivity (on these figures, the best in the sector) and its resilience within a climate of (at best) flat-lining funding and escalating workloads in teaching and research as student load grew dramatically over the life of the Labor governments led by Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard.

In research, the HASS disciplines are among the highest performing FoRs nationally. In the 2010 Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) assessment round, of those FoRs with the highest numbers of units of assessment at the top ranking of five, two are from the humanities: History and Archaeology, and Language, Literature and Communication. Against the ERA's Discipline Growth Index, of the sixty-two disciplines returning above average growth (that is, above 12%), thirty-two are HASS disciplines. They are impressively productive: although they generate only 16% of the nation's research income, and receive 28% of research and development investment, they are responsible for 34% of the nation's research outputs; they also contributed 44% of the total number of units of evaluation in ERA.

As one would expect, most of the HASS research income is derived from the ARC's National Competitive Grants Programme; the humanities and creative arts field of research received 9.7% of the programme's funding. History and Archaeology is the standout humanities FoR with a 12% share of that funding. A notable figure, given how often the HASS disciplines are accused of having little to do with

the ‘real world’ of government or business, is the 22% of total HASS research funding that comes from the ARC’s Linkage Projects scheme. HASS research is dominated by project rather than programme funding, a limitation it shares with the rest of the sector, but which is particularly affected by the fact that the HASS disciplines have had restricted access to many of those strategic initiatives that do generate programme funding. While much of the research in these FoRs is undertaken by a sole researcher, the average number of researchers per Discovery project is two.

There are two primary areas of concern that need flagging, although I will return to such issues later. The first is the overwhelming dominance of the metropolitan universities and, in particular, the Group of Eight (Go8), in the area of research funding. For the Discovery project scheme, 68% of ARC funds went to the Go8 universities; only 4% went to regional institutions. The other area is the relatively poor record of both participation and success in some of the capacity-building programs offered by government. HASS has not done well in the Centres of Excellence (CoE) programme, securing only three out of the thirty-two CoEs established in the survey period.⁴ There is a similar story with the Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities (LIEF) scheme, where the HASS disciplines have extremely low levels of application and correspondingly low levels of success.

In teaching, there is continuing demand, high levels of student satisfaction, and the long-term value of generalist degrees such as HASS offer, like those in science, is emerging as a significant social benefit for the kind of future we face. The sector carries more than its share of undergraduate and postgraduate teaching: HASS teaches 65% of Australia’s students with 52% of the staff. Over 2002–2012, the average staff–student ratio (SSR) in HASS was 22.6, while in the STEM disciplines it was 16.8. This was preceded by an increase in HASS SSRs over the previous decade of between 27% and 35%. The positive way of seeing this is as a substantial gain in productivity — but it is also clear evidence of a significantly increased workload for those teaching in these disciplines. On the other hand, demand for the Bachelor of

Arts (BA) degree has declined slightly. Between 2001 and 2010, despite an increase in the number of students enrolling in the broader Society and Culture FoE, the number of students enrolled in a BA degree, as a proportion of enrolments in the Society and Culture FoE, dropped from 32% to 26%.⁵ There was a reduction in course offerings over this period, especially in tagged degrees, but a significant increase in dual degree enrolments. While language teaching expanded overall, there was a worrying trend in the declining provision of teaching of certain language groups, most notably Southeast Asian Languages and Australian Indigenous Languages. There is also reason for concern about the range of HASS options, again especially in the languages, available in regional universities. The *Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* report contains detailed analysis of the enrolments and other data for each of the HASS FoRs.

In terms of the HASS sector’s contribution to the Australian workforce, while it is commonplace for government and media to spruik the value of professional training programs, thus implying that a generalist HASS degree may not offer the same employment outcomes, around 60% of tertiary-educated Australians have a HASS degree. This would imply that something around that percentage of those currently in the workforce are HASS trained. HASS graduates have proven to be employable, across a wide range of occupations. For instance, four years out from graduation, 90% of those graduates from the Society and Culture FoE who are available for employment have found full-time employment.

So, despite the rhetoric we increasingly hear from the United States and the United Kingdom, the HASS fields in Australia are not accurately described as being ‘in crisis’. There are, however, critical issues which demand attention if the sector is to remain strong and competitive into the future.

ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE

First, the introduction of the demand-driven system has led to market failures that have significant implications for the national interest. Fluctuations in student demand have put pressure on areas of low enrolment, risking the

loss of expertise in areas of national or strategic importance. Expertise in regional languages and cultures is the example cited most often, but there are more. The condition of less commonly taught languages (LCTL), including Cantonese, Hindi and Thai, is of particular concern; there are thirty-two LCTL programs nationally, but half of these are at the Australian National University; in total only nine out of thirty-eight universities in Australia have accepted the responsibility to support the offering of the LCTL.⁶

As a result of the higher education sector's response to fluctuations in demand, HASS offerings are increasingly concentrated in the metropolitan universities, thus significantly limiting the opportunities for students wishing to study HASS disciplines in regional Australia. Important disciplines, such as history, are not taught as majors in the regional universities at all, and in one or two cases (anthropology, for instance) they are not taught outside the Go8. Worryingly, this replicates the trend in research funding that is also shifting resources to the metropolitan universities and the Go8. The government's current patterns of cluster funding for disciplines plays a part in this, having significant ramifications for course offerings and research expertise in the medium to long term that are not necessarily evident in the short term. In combination with the operation of a demand-driven system, the cluster funding arrangements risk making the disciplines that the nation needs appear to be non-viable in the short term, and thus highly vulnerable in the long term.

Second, there are systemic impediments to the participation of HASS disciplines in the sector as a whole. Examples here include the exclusion from the tax concession for research noted earlier, the exclusion of HASS from some strategic research initiatives such as the Super Science Fellowships, the manner in which the design of some sector-wide initiatives implicitly or even systemically privileges STEM research, and the minimal levels of research infrastructure spending on HASS-related capabilities through central government programs and by the universities. Although there have been repeated attempts within the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy to redress this last issue, the fact is that all such attempts have



failed. As a result the record of governments of both persuasions on research infrastructure spending for the humanities, arts and social sciences is scandalously poor. This is one area where the shortsightedness of adopting policies which explicitly exclude half the research sector is damaging the whole of the research and innovation system, and government needs to seriously commit to addressing it in the national interest.

Third, our research has revealed significant challenges to the HASS academic workforce for the future. The academic workforce overall is ageing faster than the rest of the workforce; while baby boomers make up 42% of the national workforce, they constitute 56% of the academic workforce. The situation is particularly bad in HASS: 50% of the HASS Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) academic workforce is over 50 and the figures for some of our disciplines are alarming (the details for each discipline are available in the report). The trend is for the average age of the academic workforce to increase. There are also questions about who is being positioned to replace them. The supply of replacement staff is challenged by the trend towards the casualisation of the workforce, and by unbalanced staff profiles which often involve high levels of junior appointments. In some HASS disciplines, there has been a 43% increase in casual staff, as opposed to a 13% increase in FTE. The increase in casual staff and the aging FTE cohort carry risks and challenges for succession planning, curriculum development, future leadership and the renewal of the workforce.



(above)

The report's co-authors, Graeme Turner and Kylie Brass, presenting their findings at the Academy's 45th Annual Symposium, 'Look it Up: Dictionaries, Encyclopedias and Atlases', Canberra, November 2014.

PHOTO: M. WILSON

The shift towards casual staff can be seen as a direct response to funding pressures caused by the combination of cluster funding and the rising staff student ratios. Over 2002–2012, student load for the HASS sector grew by 44% while the growth in staff numbers was exactly half that, at 22%. Given the expansion in other aspects of the academic workload, such as managing students' online access to teaching staff, this is an unsustainable trend that is likely not only to affect the quality of the education provided, but also the capacity of the academic workforce to find time for research. Already there are worrying signs of disenchantment among younger members of the workforce, with

closely at how universities have allocated funding to the HASS disciplines, and the degree to which it can be claimed that there has been a pattern of institutional disinvestment in HASS by at least some universities. Within what is framed overwhelmingly as a competitive system, there is currently no systemic mechanism to assist universities to respond to market failure in ways that protect the national interest, rather than just the commercial interest of the institution. And there are few incentives for universities to behave (individually and in general) in a way that manages their national responsibility for these capabilities. In order to demonstrate what can be done, however, and within the current

MAPPING HASS UNDERLINES THE NEED FOR A GREATER NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO THE OVERSIGHT AND PLANNING OF THE HASS SECTOR ITSELF.

one survey finding that 40% of those under 30 are planning to leave the sector within the next five to ten years.⁷ There is a genuine risk that we are burning out a whole generation of young academics by employing them on multiple short-term contracts with high teaching loads, not providing them with mentoring or opportunities for career development, and then expecting them to generate a research career in their spare time. Without the prospect of a continuing teaching and research position, there is no reason for these staff to stay in the system.

Finally, those who are advocating a better deal for the HASS disciplines need to recognise the importance of the role played by an individual university's institutional investment in the health and future of the HASS disciplines. While we are prone to, and indeed are often encouraged to, blame our governments for failures in education funding, the universities themselves must bear much of that responsibility as well. Both government and the universities are the custodians of our national capacities in these fields, and their maintenance in the national interest. The evidence in the report indicates that individual institutional investments play a major role, and that their decisions are driven as much by concerns internal to each university as by the national funding environment. Consequently, there is good reason to look more

funding parameters, this report does cite current examples of positive steps in this direction; there are consortia of universities, for instance, that have collaborated to maintain quality and capacity in areas of fluctuating demand, such as the teaching of classics and languages, and there are affirmative action initiatives around language teaching through the Go8 to privilege those students enrolling with a high school background in a foreign language.

CONCLUSION

The current condition of the HASS disciplines provides grounds for congratulating those who have produced such strong outcomes in a context of declining funding, increasing workloads, and a volatile policy environment. The outlook for the future, though, is less rosy as the situation mapped in this report is not sustainable without being the subject of greater attention and better planning. The current condition of HASS in Australia is greatly influenced by the effects of policy settings that have in some cases handed over the responsibility of planning to the operation of the market or, in other cases, have left the responsibility for the maintenance of our national resources to the internal consideration of individual universities. The evidence in

this report suggests that this is an operating environment that, unmoderated, will not serve Australia well in the long term. As Ian Chubb has argued in relation to STEM, Australia is not big enough to just let the market do the job; we need to make strategic decisions and to plan what we can and should do as a nation. He has outlined a national research strategy to this end, and it is pleasing to see the recent establishment of the Commonwealth Science Council as a first step towards such a strategy, even though that should not be the only step. The HASS sector demands a similar commitment to a programme of national strategic planning. Many issues of national importance, which are not about science or indeed about commercialisation, also require long-term planning.

Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences underlines the need for a greater national commitment to the oversight and planning of the HASS sector itself. It is important that we do not lose sight of the fact that the humanities, arts and social sciences have a unique contribution to make to the nation. The work of these disciplines is fundamental to a modern, civilised society and they feed directly into the quality of that society — not only as providers of training and innovation, but also as generators of knowledge and understanding, which is a public good that is of value to every Australian. ¶



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a Federation Fellow (2006–11), convenor of the ARC Cultural Research Network (2006–10), and a member of the Prime Minister’s Science, Innovation and Engineering Council (2008–13), Emeritus Professor Turner is one of the leading figures in the humanities in Australia. He has published 24 books with national and international academic publishers, and his work has been translated into ten languages. He is a co-author of **Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia**.

1. Graeme Turner and Kylie Brass, *Mapping the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences in Australia* (Canberra: Australian Academy of the Humanities, 2014), <http://humanities.org.au/Portals/o/documents/Policy/Research/MappingProject/txt/Mapping_HASS_Aust_FinalReport_All_Oct2014.pdf>.
2. The composition of the steering committee was Professor Graeme Turner FAHA (chair), Professor Mark Western FASSA (deputy chair), Professor Joy Damousi FAHA FASSA, Professor Stephen Garton FAHA FASSA and Professor Sue Richardson AM FASSA. The project also employed a research assistant, Dr Rebecca Coates, who was responsible for the preparation and analysis of the statistics gathered.
3. The primary data sources include: Australian Bureau of Statistics Research & Development data; the ARC’s data on National Competitive Grant Programmes and the ERA National Reports 2010 and 2012; Departments of Industry/Education: Higher Education Staff and Student Statistical Collections; and the Graduate Careers: *Graduate Destinations* and *Beyond Graduation* surveys.
4. Figures obtained from the ARC exclude the CoEs in Policing and Security awarded in 2007 and in Cultural and Media Industries in 2005
5. D. Gannaway and K. Shepherd, *Benchmarking the Australian Bachelor of Arts* (Teaching & Educational Development Institute, University of Queensland, 2012), <http://dassh.edu.au/resources/uploads/publications/project_reports/1._Benchmarking_the_Australian_BA_-_Trends_Report_.pdf>.
6. K. Dunne and M. Pavlyshyn, ‘Swings and Roundabouts: Changes in Language Offerings at Australian Universities 2005–11’, in *The Next Step: Introducing the Languages and Cultures Network for Australian Universities: Selected Proceedings of LCNAU’s Inaugural Colloquium in 2011*, ed. by J. Hajek, C. Nettelbeck and A. Woods (Australia: LCNAU), pp. 9–19, <http://www.lcnau.org/pdfs/lcnau_2011_dunne_pavlyshyn.pdf>.
7. E. Bexley, R. James and S. Arkoudis, *The Australian Academic Workforce in Transition* (Report prepared for the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations by the Centre for the Study of Higher Education, The University of Melbourne, 2011), <http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/people/bexley_docs/The_Academic_Profession_in_Transition_Sept2011.pdf>.

» LES MURRAY



(above)

so many stories...

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The Care

Carers are fifteen years younger
than you. They stop in for your boy,
they shower your mother not looking,
they unpeg and bring in the laundry.

Carers have learned the bad-smelling
jobs, and soak them as they chat.
Brown pivot stains shame a veteran—
Old age is eventually a cat

which starts on the brain of its prey
so the words come with a delay
and finally hardly at all.
Children, years younger again

always knew the nuance of the words,
the scratchy pants, and the Latin.
Grown ups twist as the modern
Approaches down gravel, down the flight-plan,

the airy and the arch,
the judgemental in starch
ampoule-filled as their hatches open.
More friends of mine now face that one

so glory to Nurse Cavell, to Nurse Kenny,
Doctor Flynn, and the sans-frontiersmen:
I brace for my turn of white cotton
and my headstone POET SO FAR then.

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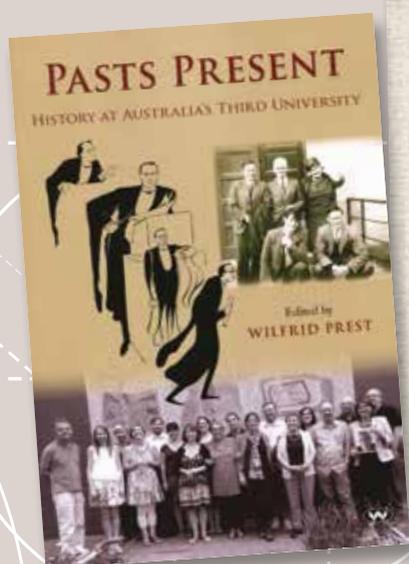
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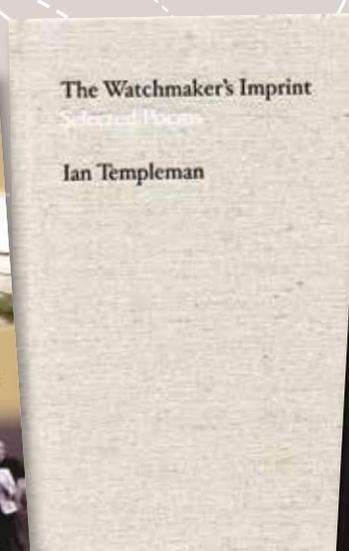
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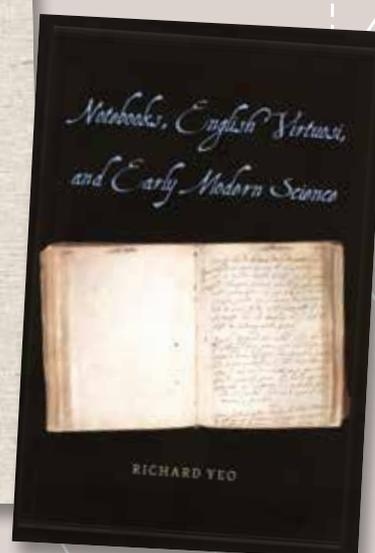
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