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» JANE LYDON » PETER McNEIL

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Welcome

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the eighth issue of the Australian Academy of the Humanities' flagship publication, *Humanities Australia*, edited by Emeritus Professors Elizabeth Webby AM FAHA and Graham Tulloch FAHA. This publication is one of the many ways in which our Academy supports excellence in the humanities and communicates their value to the public. It showcases some of the most exciting current work of humanities researchers throughout Australia.

For almost fifty years, the Academy has been dedicated to advancing scholarship and promoting understanding of the humanities across our education and research sectors, and in the broader community. Founded by Royal Charter in 1969, the Academy now comprises close to six hundred Fellows elected on the basis of the excellence and impact of their scholarship. Our Fellows have been recognised nationally and internationally for outstanding work in the disciplines of archaeology, art, Asian and European studies, classical and modern literature, cultural and communication studies, language and linguistics, philosophy, musicology, history and religion.

Humanities Australia draws on the ideas and inspiration of its Fellows and others in the community with an interest in the humanities. It aims to demonstrate that an understanding of cultures and communities, of how people experience the world and their place in it, have a major role to play in discussions about Australia and its future.

We hope you enjoy the selection of essays, stories and poems presented here – a small taste of the quality, range and depth of research currently under way in the humanities in Australia. ¶



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

Humanities Australia

- 04 ELIZABETH WEBBY & GRAHAM TULLOCH
Editors' Introduction
- 06 CHRIS ANDREWS
Pacific Rim
- 08 JOHN FITZGERALD
Academic Freedom and the Contemporary University:
Lessons from China
- 23 IEN ANG
Smart Engagement with Asia
- 34 NICHOLAS EVANS
Ngúrrahmalkwonawoniyan: Listening Here
- 45 JANE LYDON
Empathy and the Myall Creek Massacre:
Images, Humanitarianism and Empire
- 57 PETER McNEIL
Macaroni Men and Eighteenth-Century Fashion Culture:
'The Vulgar Tongue'
- 72 JOY DAMOUSI
Australian League of Nations Union and War Refugees:
Internationalism and Humanitarianism, 1930–39
- 80 PETER ANSTEY
A Very Principled Project
- 86 CHRIS ANDREWS
Two Bridges



Editors' Introduction

» ELIZABETH WEBBY & GRAHAM TULLOCH

Once again it is a pleasure to welcome readers to a new issue of *Humanities Australia* and a sample of the outstanding research and writing being carried out by Australian humanities scholars. While the contributors to this issue come from a broad range of the disciplines represented in the Academy, including linguistics, philosophy, the arts, history and Asian studies, some common themes have emerged, especially in relation to questions of human rights, both in the past and today.

Those who attended the Academy's 2016 symposium, 'Asia Australia: Transnational Connections', at the State Library Victoria, greatly appreciated the annual Academy Lecture given by our current President, John Fitzgerald. We present an expanded version of his lecture here, under the title 'Academic Freedom and the Contemporary University: Lessons from China'. Fitzgerald draws attention to the Western concept of academic freedom, noting that this 'sits uneasily alongside the immense resources invested in contemporary universities charged with driving innovation, industry, and business in highly competitive national and international markets.' As a leading scholar of contemporary China, he stresses in particular the limitations placed on academic freedom in China, arguing that this has implications for Australian universities as their links with China increase. In concluding, he reiterates our 'need to talk about values': 'We have a duty to speak out about contemporary risks to academic freedom, in

the knowledge that the liberties we enjoy in the academy play an important role in the life of the community at large.'

The second day of the symposium was largely devoted to highlighting three interdisciplinary reports produced under the Academy's auspices as part of the Securing Australia's Future (SAF) program, a multidisciplinary research initiative of the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA), funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC). We include here Ien Ang's outline of the report produced by the expert working group she chaired, *Smart Engagement with Asia: Leveraging Language, Research and Culture* (2015). As she notes, this report 'was a unique opportunity for humanities scholars to work together with other researchers — scientists and social scientists — on a topic of crucial importance for Australia's future prosperity and security, allowing them to conduct evidence-based research and generate interdisciplinary findings to support policy development.' The report focuses on three areas — 'languages and linguistic competencies, research and research collaboration, and cultural diplomacy and relations' — highlighting problems in all of them that urgently need addressing.

If Australians know less than is desirable of Asian languages and cultures, their knowledge of Australia's indigenous languages and cultures is even smaller. Nicholas Evans draws attention to this in discussing his current ARC Australian Laureate Fellowship project, 'The Wellsprings of Linguistic Diversity'. As he notes, over thousands

(above)
Academy
Secretariat,
Canberra, Australia.

PHOTO: AAH ARCHIVES

of years our 'indigenous cultures developed a diverse mosaic of over three hundred languages', but, today, these languages are 'invisible and inaudible in the public sphere'. His essay gives an account of some of the links between language, culture and country as well as showing how indigenous cultures were fascinated by language, as seen in the metalinguistic terms, practices and products they developed. While deploring the loss of so many indigenous languages since 1788, he is optimistic about the ways in which new technologies are aiding language recording and retrieval.

For those colonising Australia, indigenous linguistic achievements were certainly invisible; many saw Aboriginal peoples as no better than animals and treated them accordingly. In 'Empathy and the Myall Creek Massacre: Images, Humanitarianism and Empire', Jane Lydon discusses reports of this 1838 massacre, looking in particular at an engraving by 'Phiz', 'Australian Aborigines Slaughtered by Convicts', published in the 1841 edition of a highly popular work, *The Chronicles of Crime; or, The New Newgate Calendar*. She notes the links between humanitarian reactions to Myall Creek and the British antislavery movement, pointing out similarities between 'Phiz's' representation of the 'upraised, shackled hands of the Aboriginal people' and Josiah Wedgwood's widely circulated antislavery logo. Both, as she says, stress 'the innocence and vulnerability of the victims — but also their passivity and need to be helped by the white humanitarian.'

Today, when a striking image can achieve world-wide circulation in a matter of minutes, it is fascinating to see evidence of how such images circulated internationally in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Like the Wedgwood logo, an image satirising fashionable hairstyles appeared in many different countries in different forms. This is only one of the insights to be found in Peter McNeil's 'Macaroni Men and Eighteenth-Century Fashion Culture: "The Vulgar Tongue"'. If you have ever been puzzled why the term 'macaroni' appears in the well-known rhyme 'Yankee Doodle', McNeil provides the answer, as well as explaining the seeming incongruity of the same word being used for both a type of pasta and a mode of dress. He even finds an Australian link, since Sir Joseph Banks was apparently one of the 'macaroni' men.

Humanitarian issues return in Joy Damousi's essay, 'Australian League of Nations Union and War Refugees: Internationalism and Humanitarianism, 1930–39', which focuses on the activities of local branches of this Union, formed to promote the values and aims of the League of Nations, in response to the growing number of international refugees. As she argues, members aimed 'to foster within Australia an international and humanitarian outlook towards the plight of war refugees during the interwar years'. In doing so, they put pressure on the Australian government 'to change its international policy and accept more refugees from Europe', pushing it 'into a sphere of independent international diplomacy and relations — one less governed by Imperial interests — a move which was required if a more open immigration policy was to develop.'

In 'A Very Principled Project', philosopher Peter Anstey takes us back to the early modern period, 'the age of the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment', a time when 'almost everyone was talking about principles, arguing for them, arguing from them, assuming them, and using them.' His essay draws on research carried out from 2012 to 2016 for his ARC Future Fellowship project, 'The Nature and Status of Principles in Early Modern Philosophy', and reminds us of how fundamental the notion of principles is to a period that laid the foundations of our modern way of thinking.

We are also delighted to include in this issue two new poems by one of our newer Fellows, Chris Andrews, who is a widely published poet as well as an internationally-known researcher and translator. ¶



ELIZABETH WEBBY AM FAHA
Editor, Australian Academy
of the Humanities, 2009–16



GRAHAM TULLOCH FAHA
Editor, Australian Academy
of the Humanities, 2016–

» CHRIS ANDREWS



(above)

Shipping containers

PHOTO: CC0 1.0
UNIVERSAL, PIXABAY.



CHRIS ANDREWS FAHA teaches at Western Sydney University. He has published two books of poems: *Cut Lunch* (Indigo 2002) and *Lime Green Chair* (Waywiser 2012). He has also translated books of Latin American fiction, most recently César Aira's *Ema, the Captive* (New Directions, 2016).

Pacific Rim

To a lone tourist at a loose end
in this city of funiculars
a sprayed wall says: *Lift your head Princess,
your crown's about to fall.* There's a dog
asleep in a thicket of footsteps,
a boarded-up Palace of Rubber,
and a well-presented man who rides
the minibuses tenaciously
expounding the merits of a comb.

It's the evening of the holiday,
and the people, whether built for pain
or giggles, crowd the foreshore to watch
the gold sovereign drop into the slot
and bring on the slow train of starlight.
A bath toy famously lost at sea
fetches up bleached and incognito.
Lavish foam of the swash comes seething
in over the ragged backwash foam.

There's a stack of Hanjin containers
painted a red that goes on glowing
deep into dusk, an almost empty
artspace in a disappearing jail,
a fuchsia riot, a hummingbird's
precision sipping, and a mother
of infant twins who used to be glad
of her gift for deep sleep downloading
a seismograph app for her smartphone.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND THE CONTEMPORARY UNIVERSITY

Lessons from China



» JOHN FITZGERALD

INTRODUCTION

It's time we started talking about values. In the Academy of the Humanities we need to be clear about what our values are and whether they still matter in order to recognise and respond to the challenges they face in the present era.

It is not immediately clear, for example, that academic freedom carries the weight it once carried in our universities. The inherited Western ideal of the solitary mendicant scholar, free to roam without interference and speak truth to the prelate and the prince, sits uneasily alongside the immense resources invested in contemporary universities charged with driving innovation, industry, and business in highly competitive national and international markets. Still, while the roles of universities are more diverse and the challenges to freedom more diffuse in the twenty-first century, the Academy's commitment to free and open critical inquiry in the arts and humanities remains no less important today than in the mid-twelfth century when the *Constitutio Habita* was drafted in Bologna.

The inherited values of the Academy are thrown into sharp relief by the rise of China and the growing impact of an academic model in which freedom plays little part. Awareness of the values embedded in China's academic system is essential for gaining clarity about our own. It is not clear that Australia's university

administrators are aware of the war-like language that university administrators in China resort to when they condemn the kind of free and open critical inquiry that we take for granted in the humanities and social sciences in Australia. Nor is it clear that Australian administrators are aware of the constraints under which humanities and social science disciplines operate in that country or of the performance appraisal systems used to police them.

So it falls to the Academy to identify the values that we consider important, and to discover the values that others proclaim and practice in their national higher education systems, in order to stress-test our academic institutions to ensure they are sufficiently robust and resilient to uphold the values that we consider important when they deal with systems erected on values different from our own.

In the case of China, we need to start talking about values in order to draw attention to what it is that distinguishes the university sector from other national players in the Australia-China relationship. For some decades now, Australia's relations with China have been conducted through an informal compact under which each side agrees to leave its values at the door. Australians value freedom, equality and the rule of law. The Government of China values proletarian dictatorship, authoritarian hierarchy, and rule by the Party rather than by law. Under the compact, Australia and China agree to

(above)
Montage using
image of statue of
Confucius (p. 16).

PATTERN VIA FREEPIK:
<WWW.FREEPIK.
COM/FREE-VECTOR/
ABSTRACT-GEOMETRIC-
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respect and to set aside the others' professed values in order to focus on shared interests in expanding trade and investment.¹

Generally speaking, the agreement to set values aside for the sake of trade and investment presents few problems. Miners, farmers, investors, lawyers, architects, tourism operators and so on go about their business trading in goods and services for mutual profit as they do with many other countries that do not share the same values. And so it has always been.

Unlike mining companies or agribusinesses, however, universities deal in values and one of their core values is academic freedom. China does not permit free and open critical inquiry in its higher education system. In fact China's education and research systems are arms of government and the Government of China is openly hostile to the idea of academic freedom. Australian universities are independent bodies

Institutes in Australian universities.⁴ A lot of money is at stake.

Academic freedom is also at stake. Our universities' institutional arrangements with universities in authoritarian states such as China place academic freedom at risk both as an ideal and as a set of institutional practices. In the past these risks were negligible. In transitional moments such as the present, when China is asserting its values globally and the United States appears to be retreating into its shell, risks to the freedoms that we take for granted are real, pressing, and substantial.

My argument is laid out in five parts: first, touching on the meaning and the institutional foundations of academic freedom; second, considering the transformations that Australian universities have undergone as institutions over the past three decades and what these mean for academic freedom; third, arguing that

AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES THAT LEAVE THEIR VALUES AT THE DOOR ARGUABLY
NEGLECT THEIR DUTIES AND PLACE THEIR REPUTATIONS AT RISK.

that highlight academic freedom in their charters and their routine practices. These differences are not trivial ones when university partners from Australia and China come together to transact agreements for mutual benefit. Academic freedom carries duties, including the 'duty to speak out for what one believes to be true' and an accompanying recognition that it is fundamentally 'wrong to remain silent' in face of assaults on freedom.² Australian universities that leave their values at the door arguably neglect their duties and place their reputations at risk.

Australian university councils and executives often transact business with China as if there were little to distinguish their dealings from those involving agribusiness or the resources industry. The results have been impressive. China accounts for more international students in Australia than any other country in an industry that contributes twenty billion dollars to national GDP each year.³ The People's Republic is also partner to hundreds of discrete research collaborations in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths disciplines across Australia and is the focus of ten specialist research centres and a dozen Confucius

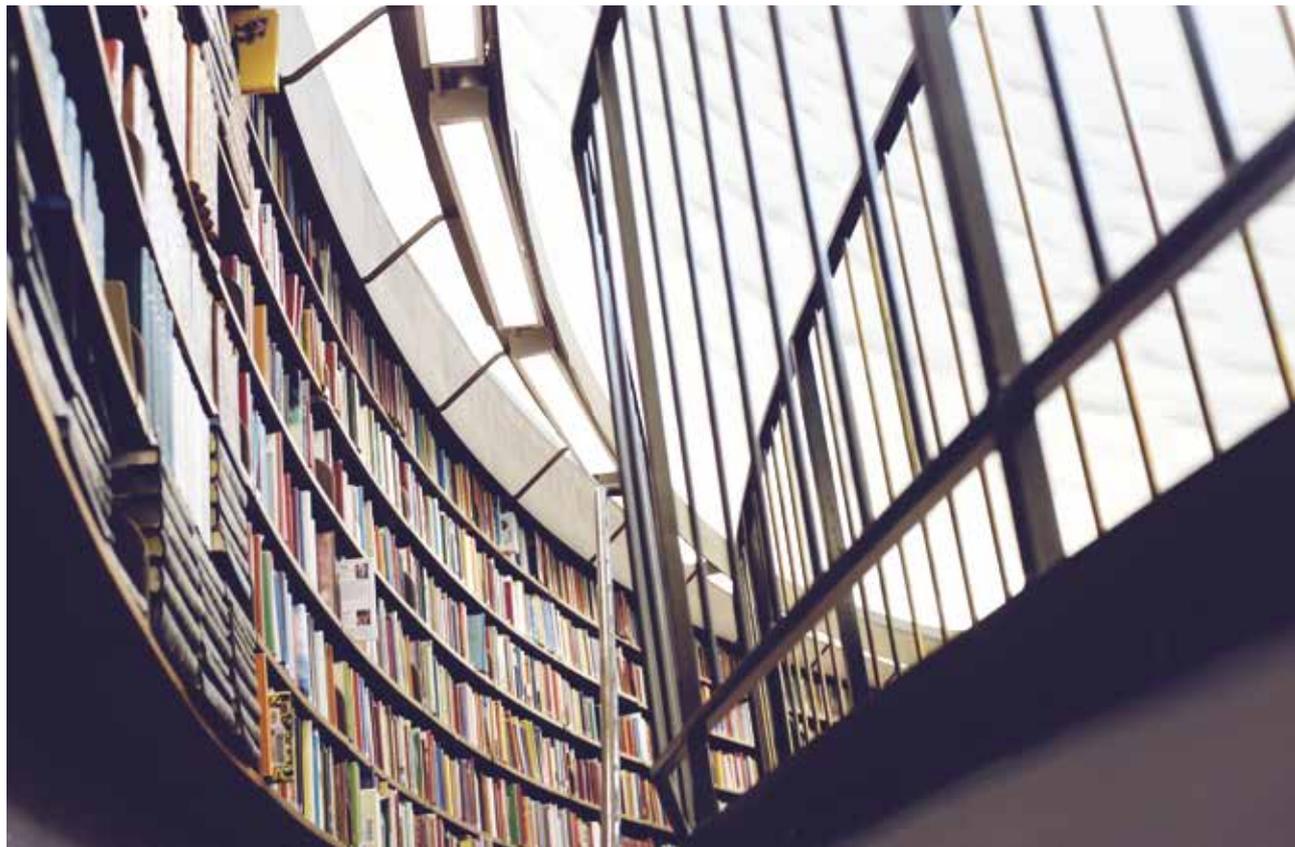
these institutional developments have reduced our capacity to identify and manage risks in international engagements involving teaching and research with authoritarian states such as China; fourth, identifying the risks associated with housing Confucius Institutes on Australian campuses; and, in conclusion, proposing a number of mitigating strategies.

THE MEANING AND INSTITUTIONAL
FOUNDATIONS OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Academic freedom is a variant of wider freedoms associated with the liberal democratic order, including freedom of thought and expression, freedom of religious belief, and freedom of assembly.⁵ The particular history of academic freedom is bound up with the history of the academy no less than with the genealogy of freedom. From the self-governing *studia* erected on the model of corporate guilds, in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Europe, to the twenty-first-century university fashioned on the commercial corporation, the practice of academic freedom has been inseparable from the institutions in which it is embedded. There has

(right)
Library shelving
on a curved wall.

PHOTO: CC0 1.0
UNIVERSAL, PIXABAY.



never been a time when the corporate powers of the university have not lived in tension with the freedom of individual scholars to teach and to discover. As a corporate entity, the university is both an enabling condition for freedom of expression and discovery, and an institutional restraint on the exercise of that freedom. Within this tension lies the dynamic value that we call academic freedom.

Similarly, institutional constraints on academic freedom are as old as the university. In medieval and early modern Europe, the exercise of corporate discipline over scholarly fellows was considered essential for resolving quarrels with local authorities in defence of university autonomy, itself a condition of freedom. In early universities, historian Richard Hofstadter records, masters were expected to take oaths of loyalty to their institution and to keep university secrets. Senior masters regulated and restricted the teaching and scholarship of their fellows more often than ecclesiastical authorities ever did. And many universities 'adopted statutes and ordinances affecting almost every conceivable facet of academic life, from trivial details of dress to the subjects and methods of lectures and disputations.' Still, masters would periodically

exhort their colleagues to shun silence and be bold 'in speaking truth' in recognition that a freedom rarely exercised was a freedom readily surrendered.⁶

In the tension between the corporate powers of the university and the freedom of scholars to speak truth to power we find the European origins of the two 'levels of insulation' that Ronald Dworkin associates with academic freedom in the contemporary university: the insulation of the university from external political authority and economic power, on the one hand, and the insulation of teachers and researchers from undue interference by university administrators on the other. Echoing findings of US Supreme Court rulings, Dworkin argues that maintaining these two structural barriers, or layers of insulation, not only preserves academic freedom but serves freedom more broadly: 'academic freedom plays an important ethical role not just in the lives of the few people it protects, but in the life of the community more generally.' It establishes and supports the 'duty to speak out for what one believes to be true' and the associated ethical belief that it is 'wrong to remain silent.' The imperative to speak out on matters of scholarly

expertise, and to speak out particularly where freedom itself is at issue, nourishes respect for wider freedoms in a liberal-democratic community.⁷

Writing in the 1950s on the development of academic freedom from twelfth-century Europe to mid-twentieth-century America, Richard Hofstadter associated its ideas and practices with the struggles of the independent scholar in the face of challenges from ecclesiastical and state authority. More recent scholarship has drawn attention to a different set of challenges arising from the corporatisation of the university itself.

Ellen Schrecker presents a sustained critique of the 'assault on academic freedom' presented by the corporatisation of the university in our time:

The academy has always had to fend off external challenges from politicians and others who want to eliminate unpopular professors or censor the curriculum.

Those pressures have not abated. But now the nation's colleges and universities are also confronting demands for so-called reforms that would substitute economic considerations of productivity and cost-effectiveness for the traditional values of enlightenment and individual growth.⁸

Vice chancellors and presidents apply market principles to university management, they expand administrative budgets and introduce business-friendly priorities into the life of the university, they expand the casual workforce, and they promote competition for resources among individual scholars and competition for status among institutions. Taken together, Schrecker argues, these incremental developments have transformed the mission of the university, reduced its autonomy, and limited the time and inclination of individual academic faculty to participate in collegial decisions bearing on appointments, curricula, research, and peer review which underpin the everyday practices of academic freedom and independence.

Whether or not we credit these developments with limiting academic freedom, many of them would be familiar to observers of Australia's higher education system. Australia arguably moved earlier and more uniformly toward adopting the corporate methods of the

enterprise university than the American higher education system. Writing only a few years ago, Ellen Schrecker remains hopeful that traditional academic freedoms would be maintained in American higher education 'by virtue of two practices that protect the job security and institutional authority of college and university teachers: tenure and faculty governance.'⁹ These last remaining pillars of 'traditional' academic freedom were long ago demolished in Australia, where universities moved from tenure, in the traditional sense, to enterprise practices of workplace employment, and where faculty governance is no longer practiced to any meaningful degree.

In Australia, however, it is by no means clear that the managerial university poses graver threats to traditional freedoms than the system that preceded it. In 1974, the Whitlam government's abolition of tuition fees made universities uniformly and wholly dependent on Commonwealth funding for operating and capital expenditure for over a decade. I recall senior academics of the old school highlighting at that time the threats to academic freedom likely to flow from universities' growing dependence on government. The late Professor A.R. ('Bertie') Davis, Professor of Oriental Studies at the University of Sydney, would rail in private conversation and protest in public over the loss of university autonomy arising from his university's financial dependence on Commonwealth funding. He had little patience with the Whitlam government but his concern went deeper, to the longer-term systemic threats to an academic freedom that he associated with institutional autonomy.

A decade later, similar concerns about excessive dependence on the Commonwealth were aired among university vice chancellors, although in this case with less concern for academic freedom than for the state of their university finances. From the mid-1970s to the late-1980s universities were made to feel their dependence on Commonwealth funding through a withering process of attrition — known as 'steady state' funding — that reduced their budgets to a parlous state by the end of that decade. Commonwealth funding failed to keep pace with operating expenses. Capital stock deteriorated as older buildings were

not maintained and new construction was postponed for years. It is said that the University of Sydney went without a new building for almost two decades.

Dependence on Commonwealth funding made universities especially vulnerable to managerial innovation. In the mid-1980s, the national economy was harnessed to the fortunes of the world economy following tariff reductions and the floating of the dollar. Vice chancellors and university councils then anticipated further shocks, including reductions in Commonwealth funding and greater demands for accountability to government agencies in relation to their enrolments, the courses they offered, their staff performance, and their financial accounting. Peter Karmel at the Australian National University and David Pennington at the University of Melbourne began to develop their own internal change-agendas that anticipated key features of what was to be called the Dawkins model.

In 1987 John Dawkins took advantage of the Commonwealth's dominance of the system to reduce dependence on Commonwealth funding and at the same time sharpen the tools of public administration to reshape the provision of higher education in Australia. With the introduction of the Unified National System, followed by a decade of institutional amalgamations and Quality Assurance rounds, virtually every Australian university had come to embrace the enterprise model of corporate governance.¹⁰

After Dawkins, the Commonwealth government shifted from rowing the boat to steering it, as the saying goes. The Commonwealth exchanged direct control for a dashboard of buttons and levers through which to shape higher education and research. In the early years these included rewards for institutional amalgamations and for shifting student load from generalist degrees toward skills development in areas identified by government (IT, engineering, business, and so on). The Commonwealth also reintroduced fees as well as funding incentives for expanding undergraduate enrolments along with incentives for linking competitive research funding with national research priorities.¹¹ It made improved corporate governance a condition for university entry to the Unified National System. Among

other things, improved governance involved redefining the role of vice chancellor from *primus inter pares* to CEO of the university enterprise, and led to reduced staff and student representation and greater business and government representation on governing university councils.¹²

We live with the consequences of these reforms. Decision-making powers over curricula and research have been transferred from participatory department and faculty committees to line management. Academic personnel policies have been redrafted to align the performance of individual academics with overarching corporate missions — translating corporate strategic goals into individual academic targets covering research, education, scholarship and engagement. On other fronts, university managers adjust their internal reward and punishment mechanisms to lift their university standings in global rankings, to hold academics accountable for burnishing the university's brand in public correspondence, and to encourage academic participation in both formally-structured engagement with corporate end-users and international cooperation in research and teaching. In the wake of these reforms, a team of American researchers visiting Australia in the 1990s found Australian universities were arguably ahead of US universities in implementing market mechanisms in support of research. Had they explored teaching programs, Stuart Macintyre remarks, they would have found that Australia's recrafting of university priorities, planning and management around international student recruitment was no less advanced in its embrace of the market.¹³

Whether the trend to corporate management of the enterprise university has, in itself, compromised freedom of expression among academic members of staff is for others to judge. Here I would draw attention to one incidental effect of corporatisation that surfaces at the point where Australian universities align their strategies and partnerships with universities overseas that do not share respect for academic freedom or tolerate the wider liberties in which this freedom is nested. The coincidental convergence of strategic planning styles and line-management methodologies in China and



(far left)
Image of
Barbarossa with
his sons Henry and
Frederick, from the
Constitutio Habita.

PUBLIC DOMAIN VIA
WIKIPEDIA COMMONS.

has risen from under 1% to around 25% of the current age cohort, in a population one third larger today than it was three decades ago. This achievement can be attributed in part to a model of higher education that Simon Marginson has termed ‘The Confucian Model’, a term referring to national university systems extending from the People’s Republic of China to Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, countries that have all been influenced by Confucian educational traditions. Each of these national systems converges with the others in an education system designed around four key elements:

- A strong central state shaping the structures, funding, and priorities of national higher education systems
- A trend to universal participation, driven by popular commitment embedded in cultural values
- The adoption of ‘one chance’ national competitive examination systems, highlighting and reinforcing hierarchy, discipline, meritocracy
- Accelerated public investment in education, research, and the attainment of ‘world-class’ status for universities.¹⁴

the West masks the incommensurability and ultimately *non-convertibility* of the values of the liberal university and the militant Leninist values underpinning the Chinese university system. When corporate managers do deals without regard to values they place values at risk.

THE CASE OF CHINA

My concern is not just with China. In universities that manage off-shore programs or campuses in southeast Asia, for example, how many academic staff feel free to come forward and acknowledge that colleagues are obliged to sign agreements to refrain from publishing research outcomes that might offend the host government? How many line-managers pressure academic researchers who have not signed on to these agreements to refrain from publishing material that might place their partner university agreements at risk? We could ask further questions, or ask similar questions of other countries. Here I propose to ask questions about Australian universities and their relations with China.

Domestically, higher education is one of China’s many success stories. Over the past three decades the national tertiary participation rate

As a rule, systems that hold higher education and research accountable to the principles, goals, and needs of the national state are prone to state interference in their executive autonomy and academic discovery and innovation.¹⁵ Nevertheless the degree of state interference varies significantly from one nation to another. The Confucian hierarchical model of education found in Singapore, Japan, and South Korea makes provision for academic freedom commensurable with the greater or lesser degrees of freedom tolerated in each country, including freedom of expression and of the press, and freedom of religion and assembly. China eschews such civic freedoms and shows commensurably little respect for the principles derived from those freedoms, including academic freedom. In the case of China, the convergence of Confucian and Leninist models of strategic management presents challenges for free and open critical inquiry of the highest order.

The strategies through which the Chinese Communist Party and Chinese Government guides and controls teaching, research and publication in higher education are embedded not in the principles of civic life, East or West, but in strategies for waging war. The old wartime United Front Department works to win the loyalty of non-party elements including ethnic Chinese overseas and students studying abroad.¹⁶ China's students overseas are exhorted, for example, to serve their country by helping to build scientific and technological capacity for heightened military preparedness, not least to prepare to take by force islands and sea-lanes in the South China Seas currently held or contested by other countries in the region.¹⁷

China's battle strategy for higher education is set out in formal state documents. The ruling State Council's guidelines for higher education, issued in 2015, present the higher education sector as a 'battlefield' between China and its enemies in the liberal West:

Higher education is a forward battlefield in ideological work, and shoulders the important tasks of studying, researching and propagating Marxism, fostering and carrying forward the Socialist core value system, and providing talent guarantees and intelligent support for the realization of the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Doing higher education propaganda and ideology work well and strengthening the construction of the higher education ideological battlefields are strategic projects... and have an extremely important and profound significance for consolidating the guiding position of Marxism in the ideological area and consolidating a common ideological basis for the united struggle of the entire Party, the entire country and all the people.¹⁸

At the institutional level, individual academics are accountable to university and national strategies through their university's performance appraisal system, as in Australia, although in this case under explicit direction from the Ministry of Education to measure compliance with Communist Party ideology and policy in joining battle with 'harmful ideas.' The Ministry's

guidelines on academic staff performance appraisal issued in August 2016 include the following criterion for performance appraisal (clause 10):

10. *Strengthen assessment of discipline in the classroom.* By taking adherence to the basic line of the Party as a basic requirement for teaching, and adhering to a correct educational orientation and strict discipline in University classroom teaching, strengthen supervision of teachers' educational activities in the classroom and actual teaching practices. The illegal spread of harmful ideas and expressions in the classroom will be dealt with severely according to regulation and law.¹⁹

The 'harmful ideas and expressions' to be banished from university classrooms were set out in another Party communiqué issued in April 2013, and forwarded to university presidents and party secretaries as a prescribed list of 'Seven Prohibitions' governing university teaching and research. The seven topical areas banned from university classrooms, research seminars and publications all fall within the domain of the humanities and social sciences. They include constitutional democracy, civil society, economic liberalisation, freedom of the press, historical critiques of the Communist Party, challenges to socialism with Chinese characteristics, and discussion of 'universal values' (local code for human rights and freedoms, including academic freedom).²⁰ Not only are these topics banned from the classroom and the seminar, the Party communiqué banning them was designated a secret state document, partly out of habit, partly to avoid embarrassing overseas universities partnering with Chinese ones that are compelled to comply with the 'Seven Prohibitions.' A seventy-year-old journalist, Gao Yu, was found guilty of leaking state secrets for allegedly sharing the communiqué with a foreign journalist. She was sentenced to seven years in gaol, subsequently commuted to five years under house arrest in deference to her age.

Finally, in December 2016 Xi Jinping placed his presidential seal of approval on the tightening of political controls over higher education in a widely-publicised speech

about placing ‘ideological work’ and ‘political work’ at the heart of university education and management. Among other things, he proclaimed that all science was based on Marx’s scientific socialism, and that the duty of university managers and academics is to believe and inculcate the ‘scientific theory of Marxism’:

Proper management of higher education requires perseverance in thoroughly implementing Party education policies guided by Marxism. It means persevering without fail in making students appreciate throughout their lives, by grasping Marxist theoretical education, that the intellectual foundation of science is the scientific theory of Marxism.... All teachers and students must become firm believers in the core values of socialism.

pioneered locally by education theorists of the pre-Communist era, such as Cai Yuanpei and Tao Xingzhi, and in others was embedded deeply in their originating DNA as American missionary colleges.

In most of China’s 2,400 universities, however, serious scholars revert to practices once favoured by medieval European philosophers when faced with the ecclesiastical authority of the Roman Catholic Church. Some get on with their studies quietly, ignoring restrictions as best they can without publishing or teaching anything that would directly challenge the authorities. Others defer to the right of higher authorities to correct their errors and oversights when they publish their research findings. Some seek refuge in one of a number of less restrictive urban jurisdictions where a particular university

THE SEVEN TOPICAL AREAS BANNED FROM UNIVERSITY CLASSROOMS, RESEARCH SEMINARS AND PUBLICATIONS ALL FALL WITHIN THE DOMAIN OF THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES.

At the classroom level, no classes or disciplines were to be spared these explicit political interventions:

We must fully utilise the important channel of the classroom by improving and strengthening classes on the theory of thought work and political work... and integrate classes on thought work and political work with other classes.²¹

Further, President Xi raised what he called the ‘basic question’ of who it was that could be entrusted to bear the ‘sacred mission of engineering human souls’ as academic teachers, and implied that academics were not only to be monitored for compliance but selected for appointment on the basis of prior demonstrated compliance with Party directives.

Directives such as these, designed to ‘strengthen management of the ideological battlefield’,²² are applied vigorously in all of China’s higher education institutions apart from a handful of prestigious universities such as Peking and Tsinghua universities along with Wuhan, Nankai, Nanjing, Sun Yatsen, Fudan and a number of other elite institutions. These relatively exclusive universities preserve an ethic of critical inquiry that was in some cases

president or local Party Secretary is known to provide protection from over-weening central authority — assuming, that is, they are permitted to transfer their personal ‘dossiers’ from one jurisdiction to another, which is often forbidden. In a country where state and ideological authority are one and the same, at every level of government, interstitial spaces allowing scholarly refuge are relatively few compared with those in medieval and early modern Europe.²³

AUSTRALIA’S CHINA CHALLENGE

An iconic moment in recognising the independent scholar’s right to move between towns, cities and states in search of refuge is the *Constitutio Habita* declaration of Bologna University in the mid-twelfth century. The declaration is remembered today chiefly because European university presidents cited the *Constitutio Habita* as precedent when they met to sign a continental charter of academic principles, *Magna Charta Universitatum*, in Bologna in 1988.²⁴ The 1988 *Charta* was a forward-looking document laying out the ‘principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy as a guideline for good governance and self-understanding of universities in the

future.’²⁵ In the following year the *Charta* helped to guide and to govern mergers and transitions among East European and West European universities following the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

In higher education, Australia is part of this European story. Many will recall that Australian universities were caught up in the struggle for freedom in Eastern Europe in the post-war period through their hosting of a number of prominent intellectual refugees from Nazism, Leninism and Stalinism. Richard Krygier, Eugene Kamenka, Agnes Heller, Ferenc Fehér,

of Nazism, Leninism, and Stalinism were a real and malevolent accompaniment of their personal and family lives.²⁶

And yet Australia is also part of China’s story. Since 1989 Australia has hosted a comparable number of intellectual refugees from Maoism and Leninism in China. Their reflections rarely make their way into public debate through mainstream journals and magazines. Their names are little known. Had they remained in China, they would today be university professors, deans and presidents. In Australia they remain part-time



(above)
Statue of Confucius

PHOTO: CCO 1.0
UNIVERSAL, PIXABAY.

Hugo Wolfsohn, Henry Mayer, among others, lectured and published widely in Australia. They built and led centres and departments of research and teaching in the humanities and social sciences, and founded and contributed to journals, magazines, professional associations and learned academies at a time of intellectual ferment arguably unparalleled in Australia. Martin Krygier reminded us a few years ago that, while for many Australians the Cold War was a ‘free-floating fantasy’ leavened by parochial political concerns, for his father and other intellectual refugees the spectres

tutors, lecturers and senior lecturers, usually in languages departments, with little prospect of promotion unless they make themselves useful by deploying their networks to open lucrative channels to the Chinese higher education market.

As China patriots, Chinese-Australian intellectuals wish China well. And yet they value the freedoms Australia has to offer more than career opportunities available in China. Threats to their friends, families and students within China, and repeated injunctions to wage ideological warfare against them for choosing

to live in the liberal West, form a malevolent accompaniment to their everyday lives. Many look on in wonder as their university deans and vice chancellors enter into deals with Chinese universities that imply the moral equivalence of the Chinese and Australian higher education systems.

The entry of Confucius Institutes onto Australian campuses, twelve at last count, offers a pointed illustration of the challenges the corporate university presents for academic freedom in international engagements.²⁷ Confucius Institutes appear on the whole harmless and inconspicuous agencies in the Australian universities that host them. For this reason they are thought to be inconsequential.

It would be shortsighted to overlook their symbolic significance. Confucius Institutes breach fundamental principles of academic autonomy and freedom relating to curricula and appointments. As a rule, host universities have no say in the selection of Chinese staff, who are subject to the guidelines and restrictions on academics set out in the documents noted above and are monitored by the Communist Party Secretary of the overarching management office in Beijing, the Hanban. Their curricula and teaching materials are censored at the margins to pass the test of approved 'battlefront' scholarship. Their directors are expected to play a gate-keeping role to prevent the circulation of materials in Australia that Chinese government authorities may deem offensive, including those touching on China's territorial sovereignty, or the Seven Prohibitions, which are the bread and butter of a liberal arts education. Any discussion of the limits on academic freedom that apply within China is off limits as well.

On the Australian side, accepting an invitation to set up a Confucius Institute may be thought a gesture of good will on the part of university executives wishing to do business with China. To Chinese authorities, Australian universities' disregard for the principles of academic freedom and autonomy when allowing the establishment of these Institutes marks a significant breach in the battlefront with Western liberal values. On both sides, Confucius Institutes symbolise the equivalence of the principles governing

the Australian and Chinese higher education systems. Australian universities value academic freedom, China's do not. To host a Confucius Institute is to exchange academic freedom for Communist Party authoritarianism, as if in a currency exchange, at equal value of one to one. After swapping values, Australian universities pursue collaborative research and education opportunities with Chinese institutions on a scale that far outstrips anything a Confucius Institute could possibly match. Their innocuousness is then a measure of their success: the less conspicuous the Confucius Institute, the greater its achievement as an arbiter of values exchange.

HOW DID IT COME TO THIS?

In most cases, Confucius Institutes were introduced onto Australian campuses as an executive initiative with little involvement on the part of humanities academics familiar with the risks involved. Dr Jocelyn Chey, a former colleague of Professor Bertie Davis at the University of Sydney, told ABC radio's *Background Briefing* program that a proposal going before the University's Senate happened to fall into her hands while she was visiting the university in 2007. The proposal suggested that university management was considering folding its Chinese programs into a new Confucius Institute. Up to that point there had been little consultation with academic staff who had the capacity to advise of the risks to academic freedom implied by this arrangement. In Dr Chey's words, the proposal going to Council challenged 'the right of academics not just to teach but to research and to publish in areas where they are not under the guidance or direction of anybody.'²⁸ Even the watered-down version of a Confucius Institute that was admitted onto campus after Dr Chey's informal intervention would not have been admitted under the shared management model of academic and executive responsibility for university governance that applied when Bertie Davis ran the Oriental Studies Department at the University of Sydney.

I do not propose returning to the age of the powerful patriarchal professoriat — nor to the era of Oriental Studies — but I would suggest

that Australian universities need to recover the capacity to measure and manage risks in dealing with their counterparts in authoritarian states. The convergence of strategic planning and corporate management styles on both sides, I would suggest, blinds Australian university executives to the incommensurability of the values underpinning the two higher education systems.

Some decades ago when Beijing was obsessed with national development and domestic affairs this may not have mattered. Even today, State Council injunctions and Education Ministry guidelines are intended for domestic application, not application abroad. But the distinction between home and away is blurring as China follows its policy of 'going abroad', in effect exporting its world view and values well beyond its borders, including to Australia.²⁹

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Academic freedom is nested in wider forms of freedom but is fundamentally embedded in institutions. Put to the test, the contemporary Australian university does not appear well equipped to manage the risks that can arise when it aligns its research, teaching and corporate missions with universities in other national systems that hold academic freedom in low regard.

Changes to higher education triggered by the Dawkins reforms enhanced the autonomy of institutions but placed enhanced autonomy in the hands of an executive leadership inclined to place issues of revenue, status and performance ahead of traditional academic values.

In particular, there appears to be little independent academic input into executive

THE DOMESTIC REPRESSION OF ACADEMIC EXPRESSION WHICH IS AN EVERY DAY EVENT IN CHINA IS NOW EXPORTED ALONG WITH CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES

Education is part of China's going abroad strategy. On the pull side, the appeal of China's 'Confucian' education model is growing among countries in the region.³⁰ On the push side, Chinese education specialists now call for Australian universities that accept Chinese students to give greater weighting to the values of the education system that produced them.³¹ And China's Ministry of Education has begun to export the style of interventionist academic policing it routinely practices at home. In July 2014 the Director of the Ministry's Hanban agency which manages Confucius Institutes overseas, Madame Xu Lin, ordered that a page be ripped out of the conference program of the 20th Annual Conference of the European Association of Chinese Studies, an independent academic fellowship then convening in Portugal. Her staff removed the pages without consulting the academic conference organisers who put the program together. The domestic repression of academic expression which is an everyday event in China is now exported along with Confucius Institutes.³²

decisions relating to China. When invited, independent academic input is often ignored if it fails to match the higher corporate vision. Faced with opportunities for aligning universities with institutional partners and systems that do not value freedom, the current corporate model is systematically inclined to go for alignment and set aside values once considered a liberal university's greatest assets.

Some say that we should go along with it all because China is changing, or in the words of Bob Carr, formerly Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs and now Director of the Australia-China Relations Institute at the University of Technology, Sydney, China is 'becoming more like us'.³³ This claim rests on slim evidence. China's education system is geared to ensuring precisely that China does not become 'more like us' in the sense of embracing universal values, human rights, constitutional government, civil society or freedom of religion, speech and assembly. It certainly has no intention of embracing academic freedom. Not only are ideals and institutions such as these banned in China; discussion of them is specifically outlawed on

China's campuses and in institutes governed by China on Australian campuses.

It is not China that is changing but Australia. The ABC has censored its own news programs for fear of offending Beijing. Chinese Communist Party propaganda bureau publications are delivered to the homes of subscribers to Fairfax newspapers each month. Sky News co-produces news and current affairs programs with CCTV in China where the outcomes of cooperation are censored before broadcasting. Australia's Chinese-language media — print, radio, online and social media — are largely owned or dominated by arms of the Chinese Communist Party and government. Beijing monitors and restricts the freedom of Chinese Australians to practice religion by threatening to harm family members in China if they join this or that religious congregation. Our university executives invite onto our campuses institutions and political representatives who profess to be at war with our values, including academic freedom.

One thing to be done is to call out this kind of behaviour in our universities. During her visit to Australia in October this year, Anson Chan, head of the Hong Kong public service from 1993 to 2001, spelled out a lesson for Australia. 'I don't think Australians understand the sort of country they're dealing with ... By the time China's infiltration of Australia is readily apparent, it will be too late.' Despite Hong Kong reverting to Chinese sovereignty in 1997, she reminds us, the Communist Party remains an underground organisation in that city. In the early years of Chinese sovereignty, Communist agents moved quietly into the city to remould Hong Kong's media, universities, non-profit and government agencies in Beijing's likeness. Within two decades they were openly intimidating journalists, kidnapping publishers, and intervening in the appointment of senior university administrators. To Anson Chan, Australia appears to sit now where Hong Kong sat two decades ago. 'Australia is a very open society so it wouldn't occur to most people, the designs of the one-party state. And it wouldn't have occurred to the people of Hong Kong until we experienced it first hand.'³⁴

Calling out abuses can itself invite abuse. On ABC national radio, Professor Bob Carr accused humanities scholars of being vehemently anti-



China for drawing attention to what Chinese authorities themselves were saying in Chinese.³⁵ In fact we do China a courtesy by reading and translating what Party and government agencies are saying in their own language and to their own people. We extend a further courtesy when we accept what they say as true statements of intent. It is Australia's political leaders, media owners, business managers and university executives who do China a disservice by ignoring what Beijing is saying every day through its government and media proclamations in favour of their own ill-founded presuppositions. More important, we do our Chinese colleagues in Australia and in China a disservice by not accepting the obligation to speak up about it.

Second, we can deploy the tools and drivers that corporate universities themselves employ to enhance their status and promote their services. One readily available set of tools is competitive global rankings. The entry of Chinese universities into the top echelons of published league tables, Oxford Professor Rana Mitter astutely observes, suggests that academic freedom no longer matters for university standing.³⁶ It could equally be read as an indictment of ranking systems that make no provision in their measurement indicators for free and open critical inquiry in the humanities and social sciences. This omission could be remedied by encouraging ranking



Professor John Fitzgerald

PHOTO:
GLEN BRAITHWAITE

agencies to introduce a minimal commitment to academic freedom as a threshold for entry onto competitive league tables, and to devise a workable measure of the exercise of academic freedom in each national system and university that crosses the threshold. Global rankings could then drive reforms favouring freedom through the competitive market mechanisms that currently stifle them.

A third course of action is to encourage more Australian universities to sign on to the 1988 *Magna Charta Universitatum* and encourage prospective Chinese partners to become signatories on the understanding that they will seek to abide by the principles governing the *Charta*, and submit to routine monitoring and reporting on matters relating to academic freedom. To date four universities in China have signed — Peking, Nankai, Tongji, and Wuhan — and eight Australian universities have done so. Australian universities could opt to give preference to research and teaching partnerships with universities that are prepared to sign the *Charta*.

A fourth action concerns the influence of external donors on shaping university appointments and research. Given the value differences separating our national higher education systems, Australian universities dealing with China face unprecedented pressures to meet the expectations of external donors and partners wishing to shape their research and teaching activities. Risks to academic freedom are magnified when university executives place the prospect of promising opportunities, big money and long-term strategic partnerships with Chinese entities ahead of academic values. One remedy would be to invite an overarching body, such as Universities Australia, to develop and promote a best-practice guide for accepting and managing donor funds. This would ensure that the sources and origins of donations are clearly documented, that donors present minimal risk to the standing of the university, and that firewalls are erected separating donor engagement from the selection of academic staff and research and teaching projects.

Fifth, the external funding and appointment processes applying to Confucius Institutes give their host universities in Australia a direct stake in the management of China's higher education system. Every university hosting a Confucius Institute should routinely ask its China-appointed staff to report publicly on the terms and conditions of their employment, including the terms of their annual performance appraisals. Australian universities hosting Institutes should also monitor the formal terms and conditions under which State Council guidelines, Education Ministry directives and institutional performance appraisal mechanisms apply to visiting teachers and professors.

In bringing values more clearly into view, moving them from the doorway and putting them on the table as it were, the aim should not be to impose them on others but to impose them on ourselves — to remind ourselves of who we are and what we believe and where we draw the line. International engagements vital for the future development of higher education in Australia should not be allowed to place at risk the values that mark the university as an institution.

In the Academy we need to talk about values. We have a duty to speak out about contemporary risks to academic freedom in the knowledge that the liberties we enjoy in the academy play an important role in the life of the community at large. And it is our duty to speak out in the knowledge that freedoms rarely exercised are freedoms readily surrendered. ¶

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Smart Engagement with Asia

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Smart Engagement with Asia: Leveraging Language, Research and Culture, published in 2015, was produced as part of the Securing Australia's Future (SAF) program, a multidisciplinary research initiative of the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA), funded by the Australian Research Council under the auspices of the Office of the Chief Scientist.¹ The report was a unique opportunity for humanities scholars to work together with other researchers — scientists and social scientists — on a topic of crucial importance for Australia's future prosperity and security, allowing them to conduct evidence-based research and generate interdisciplinary findings to support policy development. For three years from late 2012 an expert working group of representatives from all four of the learned Academies, chaired by myself, met regularly to scope the issues at hand, prepare and design the project, and debate the arguments and conclusions to be drawn from the research.² The report focuses on three areas of major importance for Australia's evolving relationship with Asia: languages and linguistic competencies, research and research collaboration, and cultural diplomacy and relations.

There is no question that 'smart engagement with Asia' is essential for securing Australia's future. But what is 'smart' engagement? The dominant meaning of the word 'smart' today associates it with being clever, quick, and

technologically sophisticated. In the context of international relations in today's complex world, however, 'smart engagement' needs to be conceived rather differently: in our report we define it as the slow and patient nurturing of long-term, sustainable, mutually beneficial relationships. In particular, smart engagement requires an outlook that goes beyond the pursuit of purely transactional relationships for short-term, self-interested gain. Rather than the one-way outward projection and promotion of Australia's national interest, smart engagement focuses on the patient cultivation of genuine partnerships through mutually beneficial cooperation and collaboration.

Smart engagement also requires nuanced knowledge and understanding of the complexity, diversity and intricate dynamics of the region we often too easily homogenise by using the shorthand term 'Asia'. Despite the rise of populist nationalist sentiment in the West, the common wisdom in the countries of contemporary Asia is that increased connectivity between societies — at physical, institutional and people-to-people levels — plays an important part in promoting growth, maintaining peace and safeguarding stability in the region and beyond. At the same time, Asia, or what is now sometimes called the 'Indo-Pacific' region, is rapidly being reshaped by the rising influence of the giant regional powers, particularly China and, to a lesser extent, India. In this context, Australia has to

(above)

Fireworks at the 2008 Olympic Games opening ceremony in Beijing.

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UNIVERSAL, PIXABAY.

(far right)
Copies of the report at its launch in Melbourne at Footscray Community Arts Centre on 5 Jun 2015.

PHOTO: TEAGAN GLENANE

make sure that it does not get left out of the intensifying web of transnational connections and cross-border alignments being spun across the region today. That there is still much work to do in this regard is evidenced by a recent PriceWaterhouseCoopers report which found that a great majority of Australian businesses (88%) have no experience of doing business in Asia at all, and that most of them have no intention of changing this aloof stance towards Asia because of a prevailing belief that engaging with Asia is 'too hard', that Asia is 'too different' and uncomfortably so.³ This indicates that there are many barriers to overcome for 'smart engagement' to occur, and that these barriers are not just economic or regulatory in nature, but linguistic, social and cultural. It is on these dimensions that the *Smart Engagement with Asia* report concentrates its focus.

LANGUAGES FOR SMART ENGAGEMENT

Language is a fundamental communication tool without which no social interaction (including the establishment of networks, linkages, and collaborations) can take place. The importance of language — and language differences — is often underestimated, especially in a largely monoglot, English-speaking country such as Australia. According to the 2011 census 81% of Australia's citizens and residents communicate only in English at home. This is despite the fact that Australia has a large migrant population from non-English speaking backgrounds. While 53% of first generation Australians spoke a language other than English at home, this dropped to 20% for second generation Australians, and plummeted to just 1.6% for third and subsequent generations.⁴ This process of linguistic assimilation is, according to Lo Bianco and Slaughter, the universal experience of immigrant populations.⁵

Promoting Asian languages has been an educational policy goal since the 1990s, with mixed success. Many Australians believe that they do not need to learn other languages because of the status of English as a global lingua franca, including throughout Asia. According to a global comparative study on the value of education conducted by the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC), only



12% of Australian parents see foreign language skills as an important priority for their children at secondary school. This is lower than for parents in other Anglophone countries (Canada 20%, US 23%, UK 28%). It would seem then that English monolingualism is more entrenched in Australia than in other countries.⁶ However, evidence shows that monolingual English speakers are at a significant disadvantage when engaging in a world where others tend to be multilingual.

Of course it is indisputable that English has become an Asian language, as it is widely used across the region. In many region-wide operations, such as international research collaboration or formal intergovernmental affairs, English is now accepted as the de facto language of communication. Demand for learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is high in all countries in the region. Yet proficiency levels are very uneven, with only Singapore (where English is the official working language) and Malaysia demonstrating high proficiency in English. In all other Asian countries, relying only on English as a vehicle of communication is a distinct disadvantage. In highly competitive global economic spheres, multilingual people have a comparative advantage in increasingly global or cross-national companies and organisations. Multilingual capabilities are of undeniable benefit for facilitating intercultural interactions and are considered essential in various professions such as engineering, medicine and tourism. A 2014 survey found that only 51% of Chinese visitors were satisfied with the availability of Chinese language facilities in Australia, and 37%

cited the 'language barrier' as a reason for not recommending Australia as a destination.⁷

Moreover, multilingualism, or more specifically, learning a language other than English, also translates into broader 'translingual' skills by challenging students to cultivate a worldview different to the one they inhabit through English, and to be more appreciative of the histories and cultures of the society whose language they are learning. For example, a recent survey of Australian attitudes towards Indonesia, commissioned by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, found that those who have studied the Indonesian language have a higher level of awareness and understanding of Indonesia, have more positive perceptions of Indonesia, are more likely to think Australia and Indonesia have things in common, are more likely to consider Indonesia important to the Australian national interest, and are more supportive of increased links between the two countries.⁸

with Chinese or Japanese culture are able to prevent these types of situations and help collaborative work proceed more smoothly.⁹

In short, although English is the global language par excellence, being monolingual in English will impede Australia's ability to engage more effectively with the region. To paraphrase Joseph Lo Bianco, there are two important linguistic disadvantages: the first is not speaking English; the second is speaking *only* English. Consequently, smart engagement with Asia requires breaking the 'vicious circle of monolingualism'.¹⁰ In this regard, promoting foreign language education remains an essential policy goal. It is not sufficient to rely solely on English in the expectation that others will adapt. The principle of reciprocity demands that Australians need to cultivate a preparedness to recognise the inherently complex language diversity within the region and the capacity

MULTILINGUALISM...TRANSLATES INTO BROADER 'TRANSLINGUAL' SKILLS BY CHALLENGING STUDENTS TO CULTIVATE A WORLDVIEW DIFFERENT TO THE ONE THEY INHABIT THROUGH ENGLISH.

Finally, the limits of English-only are evident even in contexts where English is the dominant international medium of communication, such as in science and research. For example, Montgomery has argued that effective research collaboration requires more than just a formal lingua franca. As he observes:

The daily operations of research, from the role of the individual to the structure of organizations, reflect the society in which they occur. When it comes to the actual work of collaboration, therefore, mismatches of practice often happen. A global tongue can make these situations both better and worse, since it can disguise through seeming agreement a disconnect in expected behavior. This has often been observed in the case of East Asian researchers, whose cultural ways of expressing doubt, agreement, and criticism are often quite indirect and can be easily misinterpreted when translated directly into English. Scientists familiar

and sensitivity to navigate this complexity. At the same time, although it is not necessary for Australians to be fluent in Asian languages to engage with Asia, multilingual capability is of undeniable benefit to facilitate intercultural interactions and collaborations.

RESEARCH COLLABORATION AS SMART ENGAGEMENT

Scientific research is increasingly a globally interconnected endeavour, with more researchers around the world seeking opportunities to pursue their research interests by collaborating both within and across national boundaries. In these circumstances, international research collaboration represents a significant mode of institutional and people-to-people connectivity between countries. When researchers work together across national boundaries, they not only contribute to the global production of knowledge, they also play a part in sustaining a culture of cooperation that

contributes to more harmonious international relations. In this way, international research collaboration has a strong potential to be a powerful form of smart engagement.

Asia is the most dynamic region for research investment and output today. Research and development expenditure in the region exceeded that in North America for the first time in 2011. China is now the third largest producer of research articles, behind only the United States and the European Union bloc, and is on course to overtake the United States before the end of the current decade. Japan's status as a global research power is in long-term decline, but it is still very strong. South Korea and India are also increasingly prominent regional research powers.¹¹ A recent article in *Asian Scientist* reports that, in 2007, Asia contributed nearly one-third of the 5.8 million researchers worldwide. The combined number of researchers in South Korea, Taiwan, China, and Singapore rose from 16% in 2003 to 31% in 2007, driven mostly by China's rapid growth in research and development. In contrast, the number of US and EU researchers declined from 51% to 49% of the global total; Japan's share dropped from 17% to 12%.¹² It is also heartening to know that, according to a recent UNESCO report, there has been a rapid increase in publication rates in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASS)

disciplines in Asian countries, especially since 2008.¹³ This suggests that as the countries of Asia are becoming more developed, research and scholarship in HASS is growing in importance, although from a low base. This points to an increased interest in the HASS disciplines in the region, in line with the global trend to embrace a more rounded conception of knowledge, not just in science and technology but also of society and culture, required to understand and tackle more holistically the complex challenges of our time.

While the issue of (poor) quality is still an important one, with much professional development needing to be done in the research workforce, especially in smaller and less developed countries, the growth in the pool of researchers across the region enhances the potential for research collaboration with them. So what is the state of affairs in international research collaboration within the Asian region, and how engaged is Australia with Asia in this domain?

International research collaboration is usually measured through international co-authorship of research publications. This is at best a very partial measure, as international research collaboration can take many different forms and does not necessarily have to result in co-authored journal articles, especially in the humanities. In the absence of alternative measures, however,

(right)

Korean pop stars

PHOTO: 'KOREAN POP STARS - IMG_2601' BY SALI SASAKI <[HTTPS://WWW.FLICKR.COM/PHOTOS/SALISASAKI/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/salisasaki/)>, LICENSED UNDER CC BY-SA 2.0 <[HTTPS://CREATIVECOMMONS.ORG/LICENSES/BY-SA/2.0/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/)>.



we had to rely on bibliometric data (such as those provided by Scopus) to gauge the rate of international research collaboration. These data show that, globally, there has indeed been a marked rise in international collaboration on scientific articles, with estimates ranging from 25% to 35% by the end of the first decade of this century.¹⁴ Overall the main Asian countries tend to show less collaborative propensity than researchers in North America, Europe and

exception: collaboration with China, which has risen exponentially in the past decade and a half. Between 1997 and 2012 the rate of co-authored publications with China has increased more than ten times.¹⁷ Only three other countries have seen similarly fast growth rates in co-authored papers with China: the US, Taiwan and Singapore. Why is this? An important explanation can be found in what we call the 'Chinese diaspora effect'. By this we mean that the exceptional

THE SHARP RISE OF AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COLLABORATION WITH CHINA CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO A VERY LARGE EXTENT TO THE ACTIVITIES OF RESEARCHERS OF CHINESE DESCENT WORKING IN AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTIONS.

Australasia. Nevertheless, the density of research collaboration between countries in the region has increased strongly in the past decade. This suggests that intra-Asian research collaboration is on the increase, though from a low base. The 1997 Asian financial crisis has propelled the countries of Northeast Asia and the Association of South East Asian Nations countries to pursue greater regional integration, and this has flowed into an intensification of research collaboration within the region.¹⁵ Australian researchers are among the most frequent international collaborators: about half of Australian scientific articles involve an international co-author. Data show, however, that Australian researchers are relatively less inclined to collaborate with Asian co-authors than with co-authors based in the US, Europe and New Zealand. As Thomas Barlow has observed, rather acerbically, Australian collaboration with Japanese co-authors remains at almost the same level as collaboration with researchers in New Zealand, even though Japan has thirteen times New Zealand's publication output. By the same token, India's scientific output is seven times larger and South Korea's six times larger than New Zealand's, but—using the number of co-authored papers as the measure—Australian researchers seem to collaborate less than half as often with Indians or South Koreans as with New Zealanders.¹⁶

Such quantitative data juggling suggests that Australia's pattern of international collaboration is heavily tilted towards other Western, especially Anglophone, countries. But there is one huge

growth in collaboration can be attributed to the contributions made by Chinese diasporic researchers in these countries.

Anecdotal observations suggest that migrant Chinese researchers have played a critical role in driving Australia's collaboration with China. Such observations can be backed by quantitative evidence, derived from research on co-authorships involving collaborations between researchers from China and other countries. Such research is usually conducted by examining the surnames of the international collaborators, on the basis that Chinese surnames are highly recognisable. Research by Wang et al. suggests that Australian research collaboration with China is driven far more by Chinese diasporic researchers than in other country: while as many as 66% of Australia-China collaborations involve the work of an Australia-based co-author of Chinese descent, this is the case for only 48% in the UK, 32% in Japan, and 28% in Germany.¹⁸ This tendency is corroborated by an analysis by Anderson and Stafford of the pattern of research collaboration of one Australian university, the University of Adelaide, with China. Of the top twenty most productive Adelaide researchers who co-published with Chinese researchers between 2009 and 2013, fifteen were originally from China. Of the five non-Chinese, two were ethnically Vietnamese, two British, and one Anglo-Australian.¹⁹

In other words, the sharp rise of Australian research collaboration with China can be attributed to a very large extent to the activities

of researchers of Chinese descent working in Australian research institutions. In terms of a broader research engagement with China, then, Australia's high reliance on Chinese diasporic researchers suggests that enhancing research links with China among non-Chinese Australian researchers requires major policy attention. The large contribution of Chinese diasporic researchers inflates the extent of collaborative links, and masks the fact that Australian researchers who are *not* of Chinese background are not as strongly engaged with China as they could be. At the same time, it is important to recognise the significant role played by Chinese diasporic researchers in bridging the cultural and linguistic divide between the two countries. More research is also needed on the role of diasporic researchers from other Asian countries in maintaining connections with counterparts in their home countries.

a lack of social connections and of intercultural capabilities plays a crucial role in the prevailing disconnect. The social and cultural dimensions of international collaboration require more attention if we are to nurture smart research engagement with Asia.

CULTURAL RELATIONS AND SMART ENGAGEMENT

As we have pointed out in the Smart Engagement report, the scale of cultural contact between peoples across the world, including Asia, has increased massively since the beginning of the twenty-first century. It has been fuelled by rapid economic development and the associated growth of new middle classes, the rise of international travel and tourism, and the growth of communication technologies, including social media. Globalisation is not

GLOBALISATION IS NOT JUST AN ECONOMIC PHENOMENON:
IT ALSO HAS AN IMPORTANT CULTURAL DIMENSION.

The *Smart Engagement with Asia* project has made a start by surveying not only Chinese, but also Indian diaspora researchers in Australia.²⁰ These diaspora researchers strongly argue that their linguistic skills and familiarity with their cultural heritage are of great benefit in their collaborative activities with researchers in these countries. For many of them, existing relationships (e.g. through postgraduate studies, former workplace relations or family or personal connections) have been fundamental to initiating collaboration.

From this it is reasonable to conclude that there is no quick solution to the challenge of developing collaborative research networks: it takes time, dedication and patience. In this regard, the most common official approach to international engagement such as trade missions or research delegations, typically of too short duration to enable in-depth mutual familiarisation, is unlikely to produce any concrete benefit without multiple return visits. Although institutional and resourcing barriers are important reasons for the weak links of Australian researchers with their Asian peers,

just an economic phenomenon; it also has an important cultural dimension, exposing different peoples and cultures to each other on an unprecedented scale. As a consequence, culture and international relations are now strongly interdependent, where culture can play both a positive and a negative role. A country's cultural credentials are very important for its international reputation and standing, with the implication that shaping international cultural relations to serve the national interest is now an increasingly important policy challenge. This is the field of cultural diplomacy.²¹

A popular term to describe the objective of cultural diplomacy is 'soft power', defined by Joseph Nye as the ability to influence others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment (hard power).²² It is thought that soft power can enhance a country's capacity to assert international influence, and soft power can be attained by presenting an attractive image of the national culture to foreign publics. In the globalised and multipolar world of the twenty-first century, governments around the world



have shown increased interest in maximising their soft power through cultural and public diplomacy initiatives. However, in the age of the Internet and mass international travel the flow of information and images can no longer be controlled by governments. Many other actors play a part in the shaping of international cultural relations, including independent cultural, media and educational institutions, cultural non-government organisations (including diaspora organisations), businesses, private foundations and philanthropists, and individuals (e.g. artists, sportspeople). Moreover, international publics are more active than ever before in seeking out their own information and in transnational peer-to-peer communications through social media and other means.

In this context, analysts argue that cultural diplomacy needs to focus less on simple, one-way 'projection' and more on mutuality, cultural exchange and cross-cultural understanding. According to Nye, 'effective public diplomacy is a two-way street that involves listening as well as talking.'²³ The lesson for governments is that if they want to pursue smart cultural engagement they should refrain from the too directive broadcasting of their national qualities: 'Public diplomacy that degenerates into

propaganda not only fails to convince, but it can undercut soft power.'²⁴

The notion of 'soft power' has recently become influential across Asia. Nations such as China and South Korea are investing heavily to increase their global cultural recognition and hoping to convert it into strategic influence in other areas. For example, China's extensive public and cultural diplomacy program includes Confucius Institutes to promote Chinese language and culture, a 'Media Going Global' strategy, educational exchanges, and programs of cultural festivals and performances showcasing Chinese culture in cities around the world.²⁵ Overall, however, an emphasis on outward cultural projection and cultural export predominates, with much less attention being given to reciprocal cultural exchange. This paradoxically can limit the soft power effects of cultural and public diplomacy initiatives.

Thus, data from several polls suggest that international public opinion of China has not significantly improved despite its massive investment in cultural and public diplomacy.²⁶ A poll taken in Asia after the Beijing Olympics in 2008, presumably a soft-power triumph, found that China's charm offensive had been ineffective. Opinions of China's influence have



(above)

Bollywood posters

PHOTO: CC0 1.0
UNIVERSAL, PIXABAY.



(above)

Fig. 4. Professors Krishna Sen FAHA, David Walker FAHA and Ien Ang FAHA discussing the *Smart Engagement with Asia* report at the Australian Academy of the Humanities' 2016 Symposium.

PHOTO: KYLIE BRASS

remained predominantly negative not only in the United States and Europe, but also in India, Japan and South Korea. Nye argues that China is weak on soft power because the style of its public diplomacy relies on the high-profile grand gesture and does not allow an active participation in civil society.²⁷

Similarly, while the Korean government has strongly relied on the popularity of Korean Wave popular culture to increase its international cultural standing, anti-Korean Wave movements have sprung up in Japan, Taiwan, China, Singapore and other Asian countries, criticising the cultural invasion of Korean pop culture as a new form of cultural imperialism.²⁸

Hall and Smith worry that the intensifying struggle for soft power in Asia may lead to the deepening of distrust and the hardening of international hostilities in the region. Rather than alleviating national differences, it may accentuate them and even heighten the competition for hard power.²⁹ This is a cautionary note, which poses important challenges to the cultural and public diplomacy strategies deployed in these countries, and their impact on regional prosperity and security. One conclusion is that the race for soft power, when conceived exclusively or predominantly as a competition for national cultural ascendancy, is not particularly helpful in improving the cultural relations between countries.

Instead, smart regional engagement requires more reciprocal approaches to cultural diplomacy to counterbalance the

overwhelmingly nationalistic objectives of most soft power schemes in the region. As Joseph Nye argues, 'cooperative public diplomacy can ... help take the edge off suspicions of narrow national motives.'³⁰ Important lessons can be drawn for Australia in this regard. Former Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Peter Varghese, has famously made the observation that Australia is suffering a 'soft power deficit' in the region.³¹ Indeed, evidence suggests that the popular image of Australia in countries such as India and China is still dominated by its past embrace of the White Australia policy, or by stereotypical impressions of koalas or kangaroos. That is, Australia's relationship with Asian countries is comparatively thin and instrumental, characterised by a major sense of cultural distance.³²

There is no quick fix for this deep cultural disconnect, which poses a big challenge to Australia's cultural diplomacy effort. In particular, it is important that the focus here should not be on the unilateral projection of a preferred soft power image, but, in more reciprocal fashion, on building long-term, sustained cultural relationships. Rather than one-way messaging, smart cultural engagement should emphasise mutuality and collaboration.

Interestingly, as the *Smart Engagement with Asia* report details, in recent times a whole range of cultural institutions, artist associations and community groups have already risen to the challenge by initiating cultural exchanges, collaborative projects, and partnerships with like-minded people across the region. Often, though, these initiatives are small-scale, poorly resourced and lack broader recognition. Research conducted by Asialink in Victoria shows that such projects were largely self-funded, with only small contributions from government grants and subsidies. In the arts sector, smaller organisations and individual artists have shown themselves to be more active in cultural exchange initiatives and more willing to take risks than larger organisations which had to balance commercial returns and cultural exchange. The lessons learned from these experiences are, again, that successful engagement requires long-term commitment and substantial investment to develop enduring relationships based on trust: one-off, ad hoc projects do not necessarily lead

to sustainable relationships. In policy terms, this has implications for the design of funding models, too often restrictively focused on short-term outputs and outcomes. However, while lack of funding was the most important challenge, 51% of respondents in the Asialink survey mentioned difficulties in cultural understanding as a key challenge, as well as a lack of relevant experience and relationships in Asia.³³

In this context, the role of diaspora cultural practitioners deserves a special mention. Exploratory research by Fitzgerald and Chau shows there is extensive cultural exchange between Asian and Pacific Islands diasporas

CONCLUSION

The *Smart Engagement with Asia* project has highlighted a structural disconnect between Australia and Asia, despite increasingly strong pragmatic and transactional relations, such as through trade and tourism. This disconnect manifests itself in a lack of interest in learning Asian languages, the comparatively low level of research collaboration with Asian countries, and the fragmented nature of cultural connections with Asia. Underlying these issues are linguistic, social and cultural divergences which require long-term and sustained commitment if they

AUSTRALIA'S CONNECTIVITY WITH ASIA CAN BE FACILITATED BY THE BRIDGING ROLE OF DIASPORAS IN BRINGING AUSTRALIANS AND ASIANS CLOSER TOGETHER.

in Australia and their home nations and other diaspora locations. An example is the role of Indian diaspora professionals working in Australia in bringing Bollywood cinema productions to Australia since the 1990s. Diaspora cultural practitioners based in Australia demonstrate many of the key attributes of smart cultural engagement, including peer-to-peer trust, self-reliance, a focus on impact, a high degree of literacy in digital and traditional media, autonomous organisations, and a commitment to building long-term relationships. They are generally less dependent on public funding, they frequently engage business and private donors, and they bring requisite capabilities, understandings and networks to their work. They are alert to emerging sensitivities among Asian and Pacific Island communities and quick to take advantage of emergent opportunities for transnational engagements crossing ethnic and national boundaries. They are contextually aware, generally well informed, and need little advocacy, training, or encouragement to engage internationally. However, their activities receive little media coverage or public acknowledgement in Australia.³⁴ Greater recognition and understanding of the ways in which these diasporas can contribute to Australia's broader effort to engage with Asia, should therefore be an important priority.

are to be overcome. This is not an easy message to sell to policy makers and politicians, who are generally more interested in concrete measures with direct, calculable outcomes. Nevertheless, it is hoped that a report such as this can exert indirect influence by deepening Australian discourse and thinking about its changing place in the world in the coming decades. One important finding from the report is that Australia's connectivity with Asia can be facilitated by the bridging role of diasporas in bringing Australians and Asians closer together. Australia has a comparative advantage in this regard, given that it has a very significant Asian migrant population. At the same time, relying *only* on Asian diasporas would not be a smart option. As Asia will play an increasingly dominant role in global affairs in the coming century, smart engagement with Asia will require a reoriented outlook for society as a whole. ¶



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In the Dalabon language of Arnhem Land, the noun root *malk* can mean ‘place, country’, but also ‘season, weather’ as well as ‘place in a system’, e.g. one’s ‘skin’ in the overarching system of kin relations, or the point on a net where the support sticks are fixed. The verb root *wonan* basically means ‘hear, listen’ but is regularly extended to other types of non-visual perception, such as smelling, and to thought and consideration more generally. Combined with *malk*, it means ‘think about where to go, consider what to do next’. The generous polysynthetic nature of Dalabon — where *polysynthetic* denotes a type of language which can combine many elements together into a single verbal word to express what would take a sentence in English — gives us the word *ngurrhalmalkwonawoniyan*. I have chosen it to introduce this essay because of its ambiguity between ‘let’s listen, let’s attend carefully to this country, to this path’ and ‘let’s think about where to go next’.

Australia is a paradoxically appropriate place for the flowering of linguistic research we have seen here in the last few decades: a predominantly monolingual country with a deep multilingual past, located at the epicentre of the world’s linguistic diversity among trading partners speaking languages of the most varied types. During its first forty to fifty millennia, indigenous cultures developed a diverse mosaic of over three hundred languages in which high levels of multilingualism were the norm and

which evinced great interest in language in all its forms, leading to such ‘monuments to the human intellect’ as the initiation language Damin on Mornington Island that I will say more about below. But, in contrast to our neighbour Aotearoa, these languages are all but invisible, and inaudible, in the public sphere. We are at last witnessing long-overdue moves to introduce the study of indigenous languages into schools, though the states doing this — New South Wales leading the charge — are, paradoxically, among those in which the effects of centuries of linguistic dispossession have taken the heaviest toll.

A common objection to the introduction of indigenous languages in schools is their purported lack of utility — wouldn’t it be more useful to study Chinese, Japanese, Spanish etc.? These objections are simplistic. The human brain has evolved to be multilingual and readily absorbs the learning of multiple languages. Multilingualism is certainly the default human condition in terms of current worldwide demography, was arguably our primal human state if we extrapolate from the small groups of hunter-gatherers who are our best simulacrum of early social organisation, and is part of the long tradition of humanist scholarship both in Europe and elsewhere. So there is no need to choose — each new language you learn makes it easier to learn the next. Indeed, a case can be made that a supple training in one or

(above)
Detail, recording
the Kaytetye ‘Elder
Sister’ sand story
(p. 39).

more indigenous languages provides both the analytic sophistication and the hermeneutic subtlety to reinforce the study of whatever other language(s) one may study. A common and wistfully-expressed view of the place of Latin in traditional school curricula — that it teaches the student how to think, how to parse, how to be succinct — can be made with equal force for indigenous languages. Kayardild, the language I wrestled with for my PhD, weighs in with twenty cases to Latin's six, the same freedom of word order that classical poets could exploit, and a terseness that allows one to express something like '(watch out), lest it get away from the one belonging to your opposite-sex sibling' in a single word, *kularrinkarranmulanharranth*. I've used Kayardild as an example, but any reasonably well-documented Australian language contains enough grammatical complexities to wrinkle a Latin master's parsing brow for years.



But before returning to the topic of Australian languages in all their cultural wealth, let's back up to my earlier phrase 'epicentre of linguistic diversity'. These words are not chosen lightly. Of the world's roughly 7,000 languages, over a fifth are spoken in our region — some thousand on the island of New Guinea (both sides), 250–400 in Australia depending on the measure (and these are languages, not dialects — counting the latter sends the figure much higher), over 130 in Vanuatu (the world champion in Gross Linguistic Product at close to one language per 2,000 speakers). And among the world's top dozen countries measured by number of endemic languages, half are in our neighbourhood —

#1 Papua New Guinea, #2 Indonesia, #4 India, #5 Australia, #10 Philippines and #12 Vanuatu.² The sheer linguistic prodigality on the island of New Guinea alone is comparable to that of Eurasia as a whole, from Ireland to Japan, from Siberia to Sri Lanka — and this statement broadly holds up whether one counts the number of languages, the number of language families, or the amount of 'disparity' in language structures. Languages like Iau (in West Papua) with nine tones sit cheek by jowl with others with no tones at all, and the language with the largest sound inventory in the western Pacific (Yéli-Dnye on Rossel Island) is just a couple of hundred kilometres from that with the smallest, Rotokas on Bougainville Island.

This voluptuous linguistic landscape is one reason for the thriving linguistic scene in Australia, which got started when R.M.W. Dixon FAHA founded the Department of Linguistics in the (then) Faculties at the Australian National University, early in the 1970s. But I think that for many linguists working in Australia there are other more personal motives — a wish for a more authentic view of who we are in this part of the world, grounded in the intricate and diverse cultural products of fifty millennia of human occupation and the mosaic of world-views these have elaborated. Add to this the fact that so many non-indigenous Australians grow up with an aching sense of unconnectedness to their land, stemming from the invisibility and inaudibility of Aboriginal culture and the peremptory way its insights were briskly swept aside by the British colonisation process. This makes linguistic research — and one day, I hope, the broader cultural and educational awareness that grows from it — an opportunity to create a type of culture that so far we have failed to nourish in this country.³

I spent a lot of my childhood in the bush around Canberra, whether after school in the bush behind Campbell or on long camping trips. Nonetheless, I am probably typical of non-indigenous Australians in the shallowness of what I learned about my environment, and in the mismatch between my monoglot English upbringing and the inchoate feelings I held for my surrounds. In northern Australia, on the

(far left)

Pluto Bentinck, one of my Kayardild teachers. Mornington Island, 1982.

PHOTO: NICHOLAS EVANS

other hand — a place where I have spent less time, and in a less formative period of life — almost every plant and bird now bears a vivid charge. Not only have I carefully been taught their names, in Dalabon or Bininj Kun-wok or other local languages, but also their uses, what their flowering says about the availability of food resources, and a whole rich panoply of myth.

(right)

Maggie Tukumba,
my principal
Dalabon teacher.

PHOTO: SARAH CUTFIELD



The web of life, in languages like this, is mirrored in the web of words, from different verbs for the distinct hopping gait of every different macropod species, male, female and child, to retriplied nouns for ecozones dominated by a particular plant (e.g. Kunwinjku *mi-djoh-djo-djo* ‘mixed scrub with wattle, *acacia difficilis*, dominant’ from *an-djoh* ‘*acacia difficilis*’). This is mingled with a rich affective lexicon for the sensations and emotions the landscape brings out — words such as, from Dalabon, *karddulunghno* ‘smell of first rains’, or from Iwaidja, *angmarranguldin* ‘change in environmental conditions, bringing back memories and inspire longings for an absent person or place through the recollection of the smell of the sea or of a dying bushfire as the wind turns.’

There is also the intriguing phenomenon of ‘sign metonymies’,⁴ which signal the fact that one natural phenomenon is a guide in space or time to the presence of the other — e.g. in Gun-djeihmi *alyurr* denotes the Leichhardt’s grasshopper (*Petaside ephipigera*), two herb species which it eats (*Pityrodia jamesii* and *Cleome viscosa*), and whose location is thus

the best way to track these grasshoppers down, and the lightning spirit, which starts to manifest itself in the first monsoonal storms at the same time as the herbs are ready for these grasshoppers to eat. At the time of the first lightning storms, Leichhardt’s grasshopper is said to don its sumptuous orange and blue outfit and go looking for the lightning; local cave paintings depict lightning spirits with axes on their heads representing the grasshopper’s antennae. Howard Morphy FASSA FAHA and Ian Keen⁵ have described the central place in Yolngu symbolic thought held by *likan*, a word which literally means ‘elbow’ but extends to mean ‘joint, connection’ — close to what would be called *tropes* in the Western tradition — and the way that ‘likan names’ are used, in contexts of art and ceremony, to indicate more allusive readings to the culturally knowledgeable. Elsewhere in Australia distinct biota will be referred to as ‘mates’ or ‘kin’ on the basis of a number of shared characteristics.⁶

These examples don’t just illustrate how learning an indigenous language brings with it a vast network of knowledge about the natural world. They also show the extent to which indigenous cultures were fascinated by



(far right)

Alyurr: Leichhardt’s
grasshopper, herb
and lightning man.

PHOTOS: PETER COOKE
(GRASSHOPPER); MURRAY
GARDE (LIGHTNING MAN).

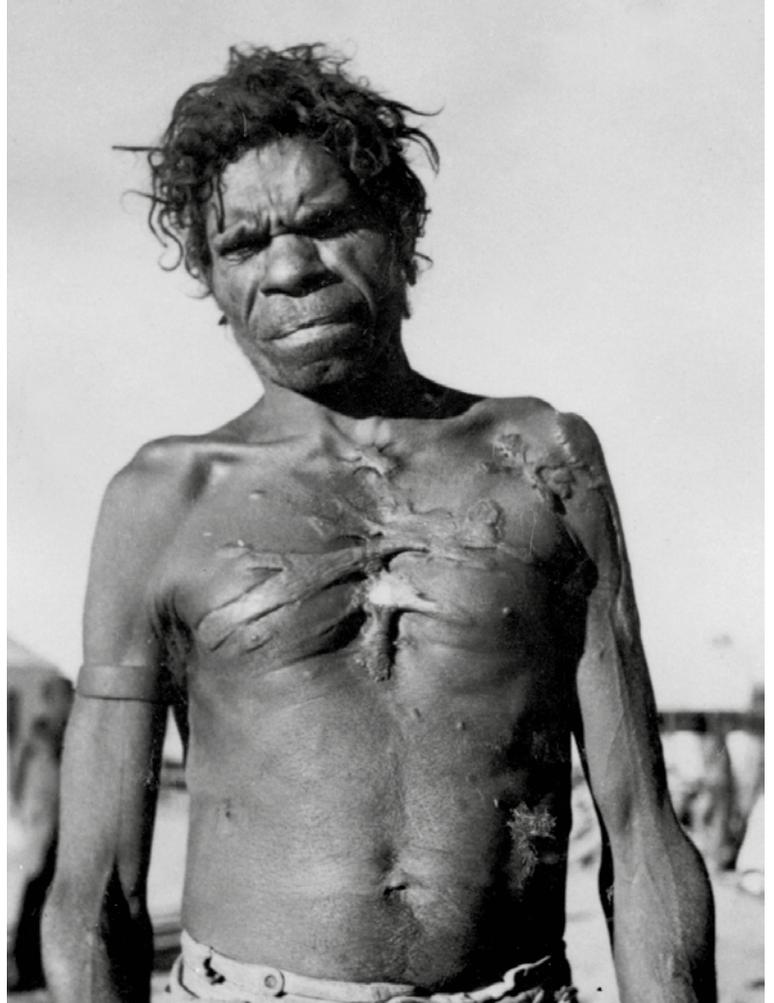
language and developed a range of metalinguistic terms (like *likan*), practices and products. Few aspects of indigenous culture better illustrate the intellectual sophistication of indigenous Australian traditions than some of the special auxiliary linguistic systems they created.⁷ Many of these were linked to initiation rites — to make clear that the passage to adulthood was not just a matter of physical trials⁸ and self-discipline, but also of attaining a new understanding of how language articulates with the world.

Take the problem of antonymy. Giving ‘up’ as the opposite of ‘down’ or ‘tall’ as the opposite of ‘short’ are trivial. But most semantic textbooks remain mute on the question of where antonymic oppositions stop — an errant omission in a world seeking to decompose all representation to binary code. What is the opposite of mother — father, or child? Or worse, of ‘red kangaroo’, or ‘countryman’, or ‘(s)he’? The antonym of ‘deaf’ is evident, but what about ‘see’?

The special register known as Jiliwirri,⁹ learned by Warlpiri initiates, is as far as I know the only case in the world’s intellectual history of a thoroughgoing investigation of antonymy applied to the entire lexicon. To speak it, you must replace all lexical items (though not grammatical affixes other than pronouns) with their opposites. As the following example shows, to convey the proposition ‘I am sitting on the ground’, you use a Jiliwirri utterance which would translate literally into everyday Warlpiri as ‘someone else is standing in the sky’. Jiliwirri has been used to investigate antonymy in Warlpiri lexical semantics, including such non-obvious issues as whether the perception verbs ‘see’, ‘hear’ etc. have antonyms, and how one determines antonyms for natural species names like ‘red kangaroo’.

- 1a. *ngaju ka-rna walya-ngka nyina-mi*
 I PRES-I ground-LOCATIVE sit-NONPAST
 ‘I am sitting on the ground.’ (ordinary Warlpiri)
- 1b. *kari ka-ø nguru-ngka karri-mi*
 other PRES-(s)he sky-LOCATIVE stand-NONPAST
 ‘I am sitting on the ground.’ (Jiliwirri)

Even more spectacular is a special initiation register known as Damin,¹⁰ which was taught to Lardil men on Mornington Island as part of their initiation as *warama* (second degree initiates).¹¹



Damin is said to have been created by an ancestor known as Kaltharr (Yellow Trevally fish), and has a rich inventory of sounds, supposed to echo what ‘fish talk’ would sound like. In fact, its phoneme inventory is unique among the world’s languages and employs types of sound not found anywhere else, such as the ‘ingressive lateral fricative’ (phonetically written \updownarrow as in the word \updownarrow i ‘fish’), made like a Welsh *ll* (roughly *thl*) but breathing in. There are also a range of click sounds, like those found in Southern Africa.

Because grammatical affixes are simply taken over from everyday Lardil, it is only the lexical roots that display these special sounds, as can be illustrated by the following sentence equivalents from everyday Lardil (2a) and Damin (2b): Damin substitutes $\eta^!aa$ for *ngada*, *didi* for *ji-* and \updownarrow i for *yak-*, but leaves the grammatical suffixes intact.

- 2a. *Ngada ji-thur yak-ur*
 I eat-FUTURE fish-FUTURE.OBJECT
 ‘I will eat fish.’
- 2b. $\eta^!aa$ *didi-thur \updownarrowi-ngkur*

However exotic its phonetics, it is the semantic structure of Damin which represents a true tour-de-force in metalinguistic analysis. Since the time of Leibniz philosophers and semanticists in the Western intellectual tradition have been



(above)
 Popgun, one of the
 Demiinkurlda or
 ‘Damin-possessors’.

PHOTO TAKEN AT THE
 MORNINGTON ISLAND
 MISSION BY NORMAN
 NELSON IN 1936.

seeking an ‘alphabet of human thought’ which would allow all meanings to be decomposed into a small stock of elements, a quest continued here in Australia through epic work by Anna Wierzbicka FASSA FAHA and Cliff Goddard FAHA, and their students. Damin comes close to achieving this goal — out of nowhere in terms of prior philosophical traditions, and without drawing on any tools of written logical notation. It maps the many thousand lexical items of everyday Lardil onto around 200 words by a combination of highly abstract semantics, extended chains stringing together meaning extensions,¹² paraphrase, and supplementation by hand signs.

Thus in the above example, *ŋ̄:aa* does not simply correspond to *ngada* ‘I’. Rather, it can denote any group including ego. Now everyday Lardil has eight ways of translating English ‘we’ — given by the three-dimensional binary matrix of ‘inclusive’ (i.e. we, including you) vs ‘exclusive’ (we, but not you), ‘dual’ (two) vs ‘plural’ (more than two) and ‘harmonic’ (referents in even-numbered generations with respect to each other, such as siblings, or grandkin) vs ‘disharmonic’ (odd-numbered generations such as parent and child or great-grandkin). This exuberant semantic specificity in the everyday language is mapped onto the sober, highly abstract Damin word *ŋ̄:aa* ‘I, we, here’, opposed to *ŋ̄:uu* ‘you, (s)he, they, there’. Integration with gesture is an important part of what makes communication possible in Damin — as well as ‘there’, *ŋ̄:uu* can also mean ‘north’, ‘south’, ‘east’ and ‘west’ in Damin. The distinction between these is indicated by pointing in the

attempts at semantic decomposition of verbal predicates which linguistic philosophers began experimenting with in the 1960s. Thus the Damin verb *didi* takes in, among many other correspondents, *jitha* ‘eat’, but also all actions producing a physical change on their object, such as *barrki* ‘chop’, *betha* ‘bite’, *bunbe* ‘shoot’, and *kele* ‘cut’. Another word *diidi*, which sounds similar but has a long vowel, includes all actions of motion and caused motion, such as *waa* ‘go’, *jatha* ‘enter’, *murrwa* ‘follow’, *jidma* ‘lift’, and *kirrkala* ‘put’. Sometimes the motion is to be understood metaphorically, such as a change in possession (*wutha* ‘give’, *wungi* ‘steal’), a transfer of information (*kangka* ‘speak’), or the movement of food from outside to inside the body (*jitha* ‘eat’). The net effect is to produce a totally indigenous analysis of the semantics of the entire vocabulary into a small number of elements, and Hale justifiably refers to Damin as a ‘monument to the human intellect’.¹³ Elsewhere he has drawn attention to the fact that its association with rituals outlawed by the missionaries in power on Mornington Island meant that its transmission was interrupted well before the transmission of everyday Lardil, as well as to the invisibility of this achievement to the outside world:

The destruction of this intellectual treasure was carried out, for the most part, by people who were not aware of its existence, coming as they did from a culture in which wealth is physical and visible. Damin was not visible for them, and as far as they were concerned, the Lardil people had no wealth, apart from their land.¹⁴

ANY REASONABLY WELL-DOCUMENTED AUSTRALIAN LANGUAGE CONTAINS ENOUGH GRAMMATICAL COMPLEXITIES TO WRINKLE A LATIN MASTER’S PARSING BROW FOR YEARS.

appropriate direction while uttering the word — in the process giving a valuable insight into how a type of language functions in which the communicative load is more evenly distributed between speech and gesture.

As another example of how Damin semantics works, the rich particularity of verbs in the everyday language are mapped onto highly general designators in Damin, reminiscent of

The digital era is opening many possibilities for linguistic research. As Maggie Tukumba once remarked to me in Dalabon, on seeing a video we had made of her husband, the late George Jangawanga singing a song-cycle, *kahnjuhdeknolodjihmini!*, ‘new technology has arrived’.¹⁵ One effect is simply to make it possible to capture so much more of the life of any given language, and its speakers. With economical



(above, left)

Recording the Kaytetye 'Elder Sister' sand story. Carol Thompson, Myfany Turpin and Tommy Thompson, near Artarre community, Northern Territory, July 2011.

PHOTO: JENNY GREEN

(above, right)

Tommy Thompson narrates the 'Elder Sister' story, near Artarre community, Northern Territory, July 2011.

VIDEO STILL:
JENNY GREEN

equipment — a good digital sound-recorder and a video camera — we can now record hundreds of hours of speech, in ways that vividly bring to life the speakers' gestures, faces and other aspects of their verbal art. It is impossible to overstate the advantages of this accompanying visual record. For one thing, we 'hear' around 10% of speech with our eyes (google the 'McGurk Effect' if this is news to you). This means that even at the most basic level of transcription, our accuracy is improved when we can see what people are doing with their lips, tongue etc.

Then there is gesture. For most of human history, language has been multimodal, with speech indissolubly wedded to gesture, until it was 'reduced' to writing. Languages, and the way we use them for most of our lives, evolved in this multimodal crucible. I mentioned above how many of the words of Damir remain unclear in their meaning without gestural disambiguation. There are no longer any Demiinkurlda (Damir-possessors) left alive, so we are lucky that Ken Hale, linguist extraordinaire, recorded the language with such insight and phonetic accuracy but, however great he was as a linguist, he was very much a product of his time in focusing on the flow of sound alone. Two other investigators — artist and pilot Percy Tresize and anthropologist David McKnight — made movie recordings of Damir which will allow us to truly penetrate the workings of this system (a project that has yet to be undertaken) — for example,

by showing how the generic word $\uparrow\downarrow i$ for 'fish' would be accompanied by simultaneous gestures that were different according to whether one meant a parrotfish or a sole, for example.

As another example of this speech-gesture integration, when I was working on Iwaidja I couldn't help feeling a little bit disappointed that it lacked certain structures I was used to finding in other Australian languages. To express the notion of instrument, for example, Kayardild has a rich set of case suffixes, whereas in Iwaidja you just plonk the word for the instrument next to the activity, e.g. 'he.hunted fish bark.torch' for 'he went out for fish using a bark torch'. It was only when I looked at a video recording of an Iwaidja story that I became aware that the speaker, Khaki Marrala, was making a holding gesture above his head at the very moment of saying 'bark torch' — an enlightening example of how far spoken language and gesture can be interwoven into a single expressive whole.

The rich possibilities of multimedia recording are finally putting the pieces of the scattered communicative act back together again. I'd long been interested in what 'multiple semiotic systems' can tell us, for example by drawing on the sorts of symbolism discussed in Nancy Munn's *Walbiri Iconography*, which puzzled me by presenting the same shared symbol in Warlpiri sand-drawing (e.g. three straight lines for both 'rain' and 'track') as I had encountered in the mysterious Kayardild polysemy 'foot, track, rain'

(right)

Elizabeth Marrkilyi Ellis filming *mirlpa* (sand story telling) with Jennifer Green and Inge Kral, Tjukurla, 2012.

PHOTO: INGE KRAL



for the word *jara* (seemingly based on the fact that, for trackers, rain erases the smudgy mess of old tracks and presents a fresh new surface). But such work suffered, of technological necessity, from being confined to static symbols rather than the dynamics of actual use. One of the most exciting lines of research here in recent years has been Jenny Green's¹⁶ research on story-telling traditions in Central Australia, which make use of prepared ground, 'story wires' to mark the ground and leaves and other props to represent characters. Performances integrate gestures, strokes with the story wire to sketch schematised characters and places on the ground, songs, and vivid speech. Typically, Green captures this with two time-aligned video cameras, one mounted vertically above the emerging scene, and another focussed on the story teller's speech and gestures. More recently, work by Lizzie Marrkilyi Ellis,

Inge Kral, Jenny Green and Jane Simpson has begun to examine not just the verbal art of an accomplished Ngaanyatjarra storyteller like Ellis herself, but also the way it is being transposed into the modern technological setting by teenage girls adapting traditional sand-drawing techniques to touch screens.

New annotation software, like EUDICO Linguistic Annotation (ELAN), also makes it much easier to transcribe what you've recorded, by time-linking sound files, video files, and layers of transcription in a linguist-friendly way. Just a couple of decades ago, when we worked by playing back audio-tapes, we were very much the victim of what we expected to hear — it's natural to bracket out the little unlearned bits that you're not ready to process yet, and just write down the bits you recognise. Now, by offering a visual sound-trace at the same time as you listen,

there's nowhere to hide, and every bit of sound must be accounted for. Programs like ELAN are also revolutionising the way linguists make their discussions of language accountable to real data, by making it possible to search almost instantly through a whole transcribed corpus, or to link an example sentence to a sound file in a digital repository like PARADISEC (<http://www.paradisec.org.au/>) — a vital step in ensuring the verifiability of linguistic claims.

This leads to another promising avenue for future research, the use of linked digital files to build the equivalent of Talmudic or Koranic commentary, or of classical commentaries on Chinese texts.¹⁷ The task of translating a text from an indigenous language is strewn with all the hermeneutic challenges familiar to classical philology, made even more difficult by the vast gulf in cultural assumptions and the lack, in almost all cases, of recorded commentary or versions of the same text. But it is becoming easier and easier to play back versions of key texts, interspersing commentary or alternative

languages. For a language like Greek, the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, assembled in the mid 1970s, offers around 50 million words. Not only does this exhibit a rich and varied range of genres and authors, it also contains enough linguistic mass, so to speak, that we can answer most questions about the language which we would like to ask. Compare this to the situation with indigenous languages, or underdocumented languages from elsewhere in the world. For a relatively well-documented Australian language, we are usually lucky to have more than twenty or thirty hours of (currently) transcribed linguistic material — and taking the rule of thumb of around 10,000 words per hour of corpus,¹⁸ this is a mere 200–300,000 words. A resourceful and hard-working PhD student writing their thesis on a previously undescribed language is doing well to transcribe 8–10 hours of material, i.e. 80–100,000 words. The Australian language with the largest corpus is probably Warlpiri, which has benefited from around sixty years of research by a star-studded cast, but even there

OVERVALUING TALKING (AND WRITING) AT THE EXPENSE OF LISTENING (AND READING) IS A DANGEROUS CULTURAL IMBALANCE THAT UNDERCUTS THE PATIENCE AND EMPATHY THAT GROWS FROM INTERPRETIVE PHILOLOGY.

versions, whether from the original speaker or another. Though we're not there yet, we are on the brink of developing software that will put this interpretive quest in the hands of young indigenous scholars wanting to explore their oral traditions in more depth, one that captures the whole philological process of interpretive dialogue with texts of the past, but now in oral form. Here again I would stress the analogies with how classical languages were studied. Another of the objections to enshrining the study of indigenous languages in the school curriculum is — 'what's the point of learning a language that there are so few people to talk it to?' But overvaluing talking (and writing), at the expense of listening (and reading), is a dangerous cultural imbalance that undercuts the patience and empathy that grow from interpretive philology.

A final development of the digital era which I'd like to mention concerns our need to build larger corpora for small, underdocumented

the total corpus is probably less than a million.¹⁹ Figures like this demonstrate that our corpora for these languages occupy a very small piece of shelf-space in Borges' great library of Babel — a few slim volumes, as it were, and a handful of pamphlets. Yet time and again, during my fieldwork in Australia and Papua New Guinea, I have been impressed by the vastness of what people transmit, and create, in their languages.

At this technological moment it is becoming feasible to record around 500 hours of linguistic material in the course of a year or two's fieldwork, thanks to the miniaturisation, fidelity and portability of our recording devices. But transcribing it is another matter — we encounter the dreaded 'Transcription Bottleneck', with its tyrannical ratio of 100 hours of transcription time for a single hour of recorded material (on average). We will only begin to bring our knowledge of the languages of our region to the depth they merit when we can speed this up. At present the massive powers of machine

learning, being developed apace by tech giants like Google, can only work if trained on vast amounts of already-transcribed data, so they can't just be ported over to the study of small languages. We hit the Catch-22 that until we have more transcribed data we can't train the algorithms that would help us transcribe more data. But one of the initiatives of CoEDL — our new Australian Research Council-funded Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language — is to develop a Transcription Acceleration Program (TAP). This aims to accelerate the process of transcription, through adept use of such methods as concentrating on the commonest collocations, sound-banking hundreds of occurrences of these across multiple speakers, and dynamically offering these to linguists transcribing texts in a way that allows the program to learn from the 'false positives' and 'false negatives' it offers. Our goal is not to completely mechanise transcription — which remains one of the most pleasurable and insight-generating experiences in the life of the field linguist — but to shift the balance between chore and discovery by taking care of the more predictable parts of this task with greater efficiency.

Through these examples I hope to have shown how linguistics continues its role as the most scientific of the humanities, and the most humanistic of the sciences, but with many new twists flowing from an ever-greater appreciation of the richness of indigenous languages on the one hand, and a quickening pace of technological advance on the other. Within Australia we have been most fortunate to see growing recognition of the importance of linguistic study, most recently through the welcome decision of the Australian Research Council to fund CoEDL. By bringing together linguists, psycholinguistics, anthropologists, computer scientists, evolutionary biologists and philosophers of language, we hope to forge a new approach to language that does justice to our extraordinarily diverse quarter of the logosphere.²⁰ One that at the same time melds the insights of traditional humanist scholarship — the hard-won understandings that can only be obtained through years of sharing people's lives through their language — with the

new lines of investigation we hope to open up through 'big data for small languages'.

Less than twenty of the continent's original languages are now being transmitted to children, pointing to a further great loss on top of the shocking losses we have already experienced. With unprecedented interest in the humanistic and scientific value of indigenous languages, and resources for recording and analysing them that were unthinkable even a decade ago, preservation of what remains becomes urgent. Few challenges for the humanities in our part of the world are as exciting, or engage as deeply with who we have been over fifty millennia, who we have failed to be over two centuries, and who we might be in the time to come. 'We' can be translated into Dalabon by many different prefixes, according to whether it is exclusive or inclusive, dual or plural, and my uses of 'we' in the preceding sentence deliberately take in many of these. In my title, I chose the inclusive plural form *ngûrrah-*. So: *ngûrrahmalkwonawoniyani!* I conclude by citing some further words from my teacher Maggie Tukumba, *Kenbo yilah-dulu- burlhkeyhwoyan, mak kaduluwanjingh, bah kadjahng-ngongno kanh duluno, kanh drebuy njelng yilaye-yenjdjung*: 'Then we'll bring out the meaning of things, not just one idea, but all sorts of meanings, including the true subtleties of what we say.' ¶



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FAHA FASSA FBA is a linguist specialising in the languages of Australia (Kayardild, Bininj Gun-wok, Dalabon, Iwaidja) and Southern New Guinea (Nen), as well as more general problems of documenting the

world's fragile linguistic patrimony. His theoretical interests include linguistic typology, semantics, anthropological linguistics, historical linguistics, and more generally the development of a theory of language-culture coevolution that places diversity at centre stage, a program advanced by his influential 2009 article (with Steve Levinson) *The Myth of Language Universals*, published in *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*.

He has written comprehensive reference grammars of previously undescribed Australian languages (Kayardild, 1995 and Bininj Gun-wok, 2003), dictionaries of Kayardild (1992) and

Dalabon (2004, with Francesca Merlan and Maggie Tukumba), and edited or coedited ten books or special journal issues on a range of linguistic problems (language and archaeology, polysynthesis, reciprocal constructions, insubordination). His crossover book *Dying Words: Endangered Languages and What They Have to Tell Us* (2010) has been translated into French, German, Japanese, Korean and Chinese. He has served as an interpreter and anthropological consultant in several Aboriginal native title claims, and written background interpretations for a number of artists based on Mornington Island. Based at the Australian National University, he holds an ARC Laureate Professorship (Project: *The Wellsprings of Linguistic Diversity*) and directs CoEDL, the ARC Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language.

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2. For details see Ch. 1 of Nicholas Evans, *Dying Words: Endangered Languages and What They Have to Tell Us* (Maldon: Wiley Blackwell, 2010).
3. Of course there were exceptions, like Lieutenant William Dawes, the only member of the First Fleet to make progress with the Sydney language, as so magnificently depicted in Kate Grenville's novel *The Lieutenant* (2008). But his abiding friendships with his teacher Patyegarang and other indigenous people led to his banishment. To commemorate the significance of the Patyegarang/Dawes dyad as a symbol of the deeply transformative power of language learning, CoEDL has established the Patji-Dawes award to honour outstanding language teachers — see <http://www.dynamicsoflanguage.edu.au/education-and-outreach/dawes-award/>. Also relevant here is Peter Sutton's thoughtful essay on friendships between anthropologists

and their indigenous teachers in his *Politics of Suffering* (2011).

4. See Nicholas Evans, 'Sign Metonymies and the Problem of Flora-Fauna Polysemy in Australian Linguistics', in *Boundary Rider. Essays in Honour of Geoffrey O'Grady*, ed. by D. Tryon and M. Walsh (Canberra: Pacific Linguistics, 1997), pp. 133–53.
5. Ian Keen, *Knowledge and Secrecy in an Aboriginal Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); Howard Morphy, *Ancestral Connections* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).
6. Athol Chase and John Von Sturmer, 'Anthropology and Botany: Turning over a New Leaf' in *Papers in Australian Linguistics No. 13; Contributions to Australian Linguistics*, ed. by Bruce Rigsby and Peter Sutton (Canberra: Pacific Linguistics, 1980).
7. I have been unable to source the phrase 'intellectual aristocrats of the primitive world', often attributed to Lévi-Strauss but without a traceable citation (see e.g. http://austhrutime.com/intellectual_aristocrats.htm). However, another quote of his applies well, with only slight modification: 'les Australiens, arriérés sur le plan économique, occupent une place si avancée par rapport au reste de l'humanité qu'il est nécessaire, pour comprendre les systèmes de règles élaborés par eux de façon consciente et réfléchie, de faire appel aux formes les plus raffinées des mathématiques modernes.' For 'mathématiques modernes', modern mathematics, I would substitute 'modern semantics'. This quotation is from Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Race et histoire* (Paris: Denoël Folios essais, 1952), pp. 48–9. I am grateful to Ian Keen, Nic Petersen and Maïa Ponsonnet for helping me (fruitlessly, as it transpired) to track down the original quote, and to Laurent Dousset for finding the substitute given here.
8. On Mornington Island, as over much of Australia, first-degree initiates are circumcised, while second-degree initiates are subincised by making a cut along and through the underside of the penis as far as the urethra, a bit like preparing a Kransky sausage for pan-frying. There are many anthropological theories about the significance of this ritual, but the Lardil themselves explain it simply by saying that Kaltharr the Yellow Trevally ancestor was himself subincised. I had the good fortune to have been circumcised at birth, and managed to talk my way out of undergoing the second trial by promising to obtain a second-degree initiation within my own culture (i.e. submitting my PhD) within a time frame agreed upon with senior Mornington men. The deadline worked.
9. Kenneth L. Hale, 'Notes on a Walpiri Tradition of Antonymy', in *Semantics*, ed. by D.D. Steinberg and L.A. Jakobovits (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 472–82.

10. More properly transcribed as Demiin, literally ‘that by means of which one asks’, i.e. ‘means of enquiry’, but I use the transcription Damin because of its wider currency in the literature.
11. Kenneth L. Hale and David Nash, ‘Damin and Lardil Phonotactics’, in *Boundary Rider: Essays in Honour of Geoffrey O’Grady*, ed. by Darrell Tryon and Michael Walsh (Canberra: Pacific Linguistics, 1997), pp. 247–59; David McKnight, *People, Countries and the Rainbow Serpent* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
12. Nicholas Evans, ‘Multiple Semiotic Systems, Hyperpolysemy, and the Reconstruction of Semantic Change in Australian Languages’ in *Diachrony within Synchrony*, ed. by Ünter Kellerman and Michael Morrissey (Bern: Peter Lang Verlag, 1992), pp. 475–508.
13. Kenneth L. Hale, ‘The Logic of Damin Kinship Terminology’ (Appendix by Ellen Woolford), in *Languages of Kinship in Aboriginal Australia*, ed. by Jeffrey Heath, F. Merlan and A. Rumsey, Oceania Linguistic Monographs 24 (Oceania, University of Sydney, 1982), p. 32.
14. Kenneth L. Hale, ‘On Endangered Languages and the Importance of Linguistic Diversity’, in *Endangered Languages: Current Issues and Future Prospects*, ed. by Lenore A. Grenoble and Lindsay Whaley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 192–216.
15. Her coinage here is formed by wrapping the Dalabon affixal sequence *kah-...-minj* ‘it has become’ around the imported words *new* (as Dalabon *njuh*) and technology (as Dalabon *deknolodjih*; in both cases the *h* is a glottal stop as between the two parts of *oh-oh!*).
16. Jennifer Green, *Drawn From the Ground: Sound, Sign and Inscription in Central Australian Sand Stories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
17. Nicholas Evans and Hans-Jürgen Sasse, ‘Searching for Meaning in the Library of Babel: Field Semantics and Problems of Digital Archiving’, in *Proceedings of the Paradisec Workshop on Digital Archiving* (2004), ed. by Linda Barwick and Jane Simpson. Online publication available at http://www.paradisec.org.au/EvansSasse_paper_rev1.pdf (also: <http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/1509>).
18. This figure is from Gary Simons, ‘The Rise of Documentary Linguistics and a New Kind of Corpus’ (Manila: 5th National Natural Language Symposium, De La Salle University, 2008), based on estimated speaking speeds of 100–200 words per minute; a less generous figure of 4,000 words per hour of spoken corpus comes from the Chintang corpus. Balthasar Bickel and Fernando Zuñiga, ‘The “word” in polysynthetic languages: phonological and syntactic challenges’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Polysynthesis*, ed. by Michael Fortescue, Marianne Mithun and Nicholas Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming) report around a million orthographic words from 258 hours of transcriptions.
19. I am grateful for David Nash and Mary Laughren for discussions of how much material we have here. The estimate of under a million words — probably 950,000 — is based on there being around 100 hours of transcribed material from Ken Hale’s work, and another 30 hours transcribed material produced inside the Warlpiri schools program (at 5,000 words/hr average, giving around 650,000 words), plus 142,000 words written/composed in Warlpiri, a further 136,000 for the Warlpiri Bible translation, and another 10,000 words of further material, such as the bilingual ‘Warlpiri Doors’ material and the bilingual texts in Peggy Rockman Napaljarri and Lee Cataldi, *Yimikirli, Warlpiri Dreamings and Histories: Newly Recorded Stories from the Aboriginal Elders of Central Australia* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1994). Taken together this comprises 938,000 words; this could be expanded to a million relatively straightforwardly by adding transcriptions of the 5-minutes per day, 5-days per week ABC news in Warlpiri over the last three years, and transcribing Warlpiri subtitles to a range of video material, but so far this is a task for the future.
20. The useful term logosphere was coined by the American linguist Michael Krauss: just as the ‘biosphere’ is the totality of all species of life and all ecological links on earth, the logosphere is the whole vast realm of the world’s words, the languages that they build, and the links between them.

EMPATHY AND THE MYALL CREEK MASSACRE

Images, Humanitarianism & Empire

» JANE LYDON

In my recent book, *Photography, Humanitarianism, Empire*, I set out to explore how images have worked historically to create empathy and mobilise social action.¹ Many scholars have examined the role images have played in shaping ideas about race and difference, but I became interested in the broader array of emotional relationships and ideas they helped to define, and especially the ways in which they may have helped to argue for humanitarian ideals and, ultimately, human rights. A key question raised by this history is the way that images may prompt what eighteenth-century philosopher Adam Smith called ‘fellow feeling’, today often glossed as empathy. Today, empathy is generally considered to be a self-evident good. We try to teach our children empathy by encouraging them to imagine what it would be like to ‘walk in another’s shoes’. Empathy is seen to be an essential skill for medical students, in particular, alongside technical knowledge, so as to establish trust, the foundation of a good doctor-patient relationship. Over the last decade, a substantial body of research has argued that more empathetic doctors can be linked to ‘greater patient satisfaction, better outcomes, decreased physician burnout, and a lower risk of malpractice suits and errors.’² Empathy is considered a cognitive skill that can be taught, rather than a personality trait, and so empathy training is increasingly being incorporated into medical courses around the world. Frequently

such teaching is premised upon the belief that fictional narratives, art, or music may effectively convey another’s experience and allow the observer an enlarged understanding of their plight.

This belief has also played an important part in accounts of the development of human rights. For example, Lynn Hunt, in her groundbreaking history, *Inventing Human Rights*, argues that the psychological foundations for human rights emerged during the revolutionary period of the late eighteenth century in America and France, from a new humanitarian sentiment entailing forms of subjectivity characterised by sympathy and autonomy. ‘Sentimentalism’, the moral expectation that one should care about others, was grounded in new means, such as the epistolary novel, to bring observers into proximity with the distant victims of suffering.³ In Hunt’s account, the idea of human rights that emerged during the eighteenth century was succeeded by a period of relative ‘silence’ during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which was finally broken at the conclusion of the Second World War.⁴ In this analysis, the long ‘silence’ about rights was caused by the emergence of nation states — so that debate occurred within ‘specific national frameworks’ — and by the challenge to a shared humanity posed by racial science.⁵

More recently, others have complicated Hunt’s account by pointing to the proliferation

(background)
Montage using
article figures.

of debates, processes and events entailing concepts of human rights across the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, within imperial and global contexts. This research has begun to view the history of human rights as a process that developed dialogically between the Western metropole and the colonies, as debates about universal humanity were fought around race, slavery, colonialism and imperial rule. Rather than a 'silence' about human rights, this period witnessed a more complex series of engagements that shaped the emergence of a global category of shared humanity, formed in negotiations over the nature of empire and Britain's role in the wider world.⁶

This story reveals the close historical and intellectual relationship between human rights and humanitarianism, distinct and

to circumstance, response or refusal in systems of circulation and exchange that Sara Ahmed terms 'emotional economies'.¹² Extending the focus on the function of emotion in written texts, I also explored the practices surrounding viewing and using images, attending especially to their affective content. Such practices constitute humanitarian 'objects of feeling' — those toward whom we feel pity, anger or love.¹³

From the mid-eighteenth century a so-called 'cult of sensibility' arose in Britain, stressing a set of values that regarded sensation as a 'moral and emotional capacity', and that came to associate sensibility with refined feeling, discrimination and taste as well as an intense sensitivity to the suffering of others.¹⁴ Adam Smith's landmark 1759 work, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, examined the human capacity

HUMANITARIANISM IS A TERM THAT PASSED INTO EVERY DAY USAGE AFTER 1800 AND REFERS TO A PHILOSOPHY OF ADVOCATING OR PRACTISING COMPASSIONATE ACTION.

sometimes incommensurable as these concepts might be.⁷ Humanitarianism is a term that passed into everyday use after 1800 and refers to a philosophy of advocating or practising compassionate action.⁸ Eventually the expansion and stabilisation of this category, and its extension to all humankind within a growing view of the human as a universal, global category, produced the twentieth-century system of principles and law that we now term 'human rights'.

FELLOW-FEELING

As I have noted, many argue that this was enabled by new technologies of seeing and a sense of empathy with and responsibility for the suffering of others.⁹ Such concern has taken the form of emotions defined variously over the last three centuries as pity, sympathy, fellow-feeling, compassion and empathy.¹⁰ Scholarly interest in emotions, sometimes termed the 'affective turn', has defined emotions, or 'felt judgements', as embodied feelings experienced in the context of cultural values and principles.¹¹ Emotions may be collective, historically created and locally contingent, and respond dynamically

for 'pity or compassion, the emotion which we feel for the misery of others, when we either see it, or are made to conceive it in a very lively manner'.¹⁵ Smith argued that it is not just suffering that 'call[s] forth our fellow-feeling', but that with any 'passion' evinced from the object, 'an analogous emotion springs up, at the thought of his situation, in the breast of every attentive spectator.' Our joy for 'those heroes of tragedy or romance who interest us, is as sincere as our grief for their distress, and our fellow-feeling with their misery is not more real than with their happiness'.¹⁶ And he explained that while 'pity' and 'compassion' signify our fellow-feeling with the 'sorrow of others', by contrast 'sympathy' denoted 'our fellow-feeling with any passion whatever'.¹⁷ Smith's broad conception of sympathy encompassed what during the twentieth century increasingly came to be called 'empathy', a term introduced into English only in 1909 from the German '*Einfühlung*' (or 'feeling into').¹⁸ In its earliest turn of the century usage, empathy referred to an aesthetic experience, such as a reaction to a work of art, as well as a bodily response.¹⁹ During the twentieth century, empathy merged with and completely replaced the multidimensional concept of sympathy used by earlier observers.²⁰

Identifying the ultimate limit to such 'fellow-feeling', Smith pointed out that 'though our brother is on the rack, as long as we ourselves are at our ease, our senses will never inform us of what he suffers'. The viewer is limited by her own experience and remains unable to truly enter into another person's subjectivity; empathy can thus only be felt as an imaginative identification. In the end, 'it is the impressions of our own senses only, not those of his, which our imaginations copy'. Significantly, Smith grounded moral conduct in the experience of seeing and being seen; he considered sympathetic identification with others a natural response to viewing their experiences, prompted by an inner spectator, 'the man within'.

Twenty-first century neuroscience has corroborated Smith's notion of sympathy — or, as we now term it, empathy — as a process of mirroring the mental activities or experiences of another person based on the observation of his bodily activities or facial expressions.²¹ The term 'mirror neuron' refers to the significant overlap between 'neural areas of excitation' aroused by our own experience as well as our observation of someone else's.²² Our consciousness of this relationship — our bodily observation and awareness of our simultaneous separateness and identification — is central. Smith wrote, 'We suppose ourselves the spectators of our own behavior, and endeavor to imagine what effect it would, in this light, produce upon us. This is the only looking-glass by which we can, in some measure, with the eyes of other people, scrutinize the propriety of our own conduct.'²³ Smith's recognition of our innate disposition for motor mimicry anticipated a mode of sympathy, moral appeal and campaign for reform designed to confront viewers with the plight of suffering victims in order to prompt empathy.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the cult of sensibility, along with its stereotype, 'the Man of Feeling', had become the object of parody and satire, suggesting its decline. However, a culture of 'sentimentalism' emerged from this emotional regime, infused with a new power by evangelical Protestantism, to become a key element of nineteenth-century philanthropy and humanitarianism.²⁴ The rise of 'humanitarianism' has been closely linked to the antislavery movement and a shift in perception

towards the end of the eighteenth century that made slavery appear morally unacceptable to many. This new cultural orientation emphasised sympathy for suffering and revulsion from pain, uniting ethical witnessing with a moral universalism and a notion of necessary action to alleviate suffering.²⁵

Humanitarian narratives were an integral aspect of the culture of sentimentalism and the growing moral expectation that one should care about others. Thomas W. Laqueur's classic essay, 'Bodies, Details, and the Humanitarian Narrative', argued that the humanitarian narrative 'relies on the personal body, not only as the locus of pain but also as the common bond between those who suffer and those who would help': detailed accounts of the suffering body elicited 'sympathetic passions' that could move a person from feeling to action.²⁶ In addition, in many contexts humanitarians successfully deployed graphic scenes of distress as a powerful prompt to sympathy, expressing through visual means the liberal political philosophy of rights and, some argue, contributing to the abolition of slavery throughout the empire with the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833.²⁷ According to this view, such images create an empathetic imaginative identification with those unlike 'us' that expands the category of humanity itself.²⁸

HUMANITARIAN IMAGES IN COLONIAL AUSTRALIA

So what evidence do we have for the work of these emotional images and narratives in colonial Australia? How did colonial experience contribute to global debates about universal humanity and rights? One landmark scandal that polarised observers across the British Empire took place during a decade that marked the height of metropolitan antislavery sentiment, yet was also a time of intense frontier violence in south-eastern Australia. Following the horrifying Myall Creek Massacre of June 1838, humanitarians in New South Wales and Britain attempted to arouse compassion for the victims using affective antislavery strategies. But colonists had become increasingly agitated by violent clashes with Aboriginal people, and many argued for their extermination.



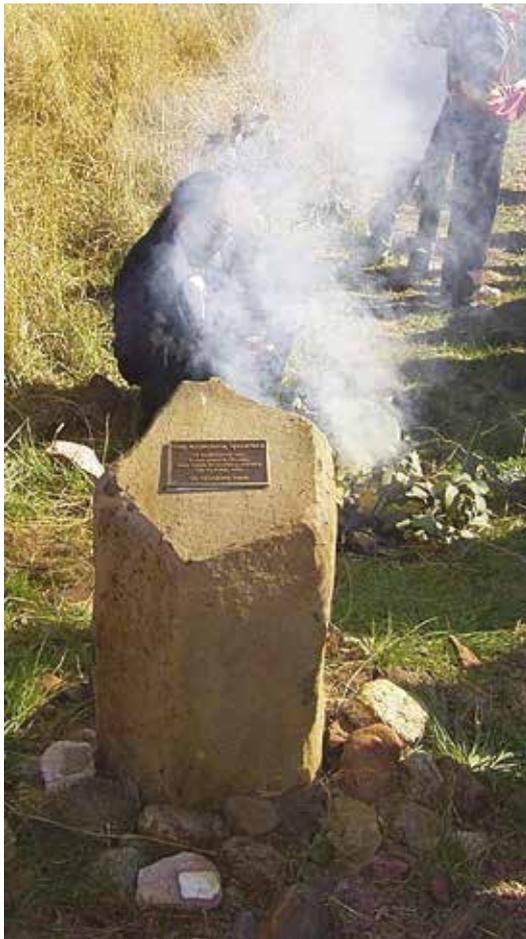
(above)
View across Myall
Creek.

PHOTO:
JAIN DAVIDSON FAHA

In recent years new research has begun to reveal how 'slavery' was invoked in the settler colony of Australia, seemingly so distant from the Atlantic slave trade and its canonical forms of subjection and exploitation.²⁹ The British campaign that culminated in 1833 accumulated tremendous cultural, moral, and affective power, and was subsequently adopted for many different social causes throughout the nineteenth century.³⁰ Following the abolition of slavery, the movement's leaders sought to redirect popular interest from abolition to the empire's Indigenous peoples, as exemplified by the 1835–6 'Select Committee on Aborigines' inquiry (Aborigines Select Committee). This applied the language of antislavery to British settlers and sought to define principles that would uphold the rights of Indigenous people across the empire. In particular, a range of diverse relations between colonists and Indigenous peoples, including forced indenture, trafficking and prostitution, were characterised by humanitarians and Indigenous people as slavery.³¹ Such analogies reveal how metropolitan ideas about humanity, freedom, and ultimately human rights, have been tested against colonial experience, whilst domestic Australian interests were adjudicated by imperial humanitarianism, in a dialogue that was global in scope.³² However, recent work on imperial humanitarianism has

also traced the imbrication of humanitarian ideals and the apparatus of colonial government, challenging simple oppositions between moral and political, philanthropic and colonial interests.³³

1836 had been a particularly bloody year in New South Wales, as Aboriginal people of the northern plains came under intense siege from squatters and convicts moving out into their country. The public climate of fear and anger in the colony was exacerbated in October by news of the murder and ill-treatment of survivors from the wreck of the *Stirling Castle* on Fraser Island in Queensland, and that of the *Charles Eaton* in Torres Strait. Earlier, the *Oldham* had been wrecked in 1832 in the Pacific, with only seven surviving a massacre to become enslaved.³⁴ Framed as horror stories, in which Indigenous people figured as savage cannibals, these accounts prompted vengeful responses from colonists, with many urging extermination. Such nightmares were given weight by 'scientific' arguments concerning the supposed essential racial difference of Aboriginal people, considered by some contemporaries to represent an 'intermediate stage' of human development.³⁵ In this way the evangelical language of brotherhood and a shared humanity was severely challenged by popular views of Indigenous people as primitive savages.



In late September 1838 Sydney newspapers began to publish 'most horrible accounts' of events at Myall Creek, in which eleven stockmen murdered around thirty-three Weraerai people, predominantly women and children. They rounded them up, tying them together with rope, then led them to a creek bed where they were hacked or clubbed to death and then decapitated.³⁶ At a time of heightened public fear and anger in New South Wales, primitivist stereotypes battled with affective antislavery strategies employed by humanitarians both in Australia and in Britain. So missionary Lancelot Threlkeld of the London Missionary Society sought to invoke atrocity to horrify and shock settlers, in arguing in his 1837 annual report that a 'war of extirpation' had long existed, and providing graphic descriptions of torture and cruelty.³⁷ As Laqueur observes, narratives such as Threlkeld's, that spoke in such an extraordinarily detailed way about 'the pains and deaths of ordinary people', produced a literary 'reality effect' in which the body as locus of pain formed a common bond between sufferer and observer.³⁸

THE LIMITS OF EMPATHY?

Mistrust, however, has always surrounded such representations and the emotions they seek to excite.³⁹ As considerable recent scholarship has argued, it is clear that the emotions – such as empathy and compassion — aroused by such narratives and imagery do not always lead to reform or progress, but may in fact maintain inequalities and foster division.⁴⁰ Wariness about empathy stems from three chief problems: feeling is not necessarily linked to action, so that these emotions may simply reinforce the status quo; representations of suffering may obscure the other's subjectivity, distancing and diminishing their humanity; and third, and most unsettling, as Lauren Berlant suggests, perhaps 'compassion and coldness are not opposite at all but are two sides of a bargain that the subjects of modernity have struck with structural inequality'.⁴¹ Such doubts have led some to conclude that humanitarianism itself relies upon a notion of the human that is partial, limited and exclusive.⁴²

For these reasons, visual theorists exploring the operation of empathy and antislavery imagery have also focused on identifying its *limits*. Marcus Wood's analysis of antislavery visual culture concludes that slaves were represented as passive beneficiaries of white compassion, reflecting abolitionist perceptions of black men and women as human, but not equals.⁴³ Wood argues that the abolitionist movement's logo, Wedgwood's medallion of the kneeling slave captioned 'Am I not a man and a brother?', helped to popularise the antislavery movement, but emphasised the slave's helplessness and need of white compassion.⁴⁴ This strategy was also used to represent the victims of Myall Creek in official accounts, as actors such as Governor Gipps emphasised their peaceful and harmless behaviour.⁴⁵

(far left)

Smoking ceremony, Myall Creek.

PHOTO:
JAIN DAVIDSON FAHA



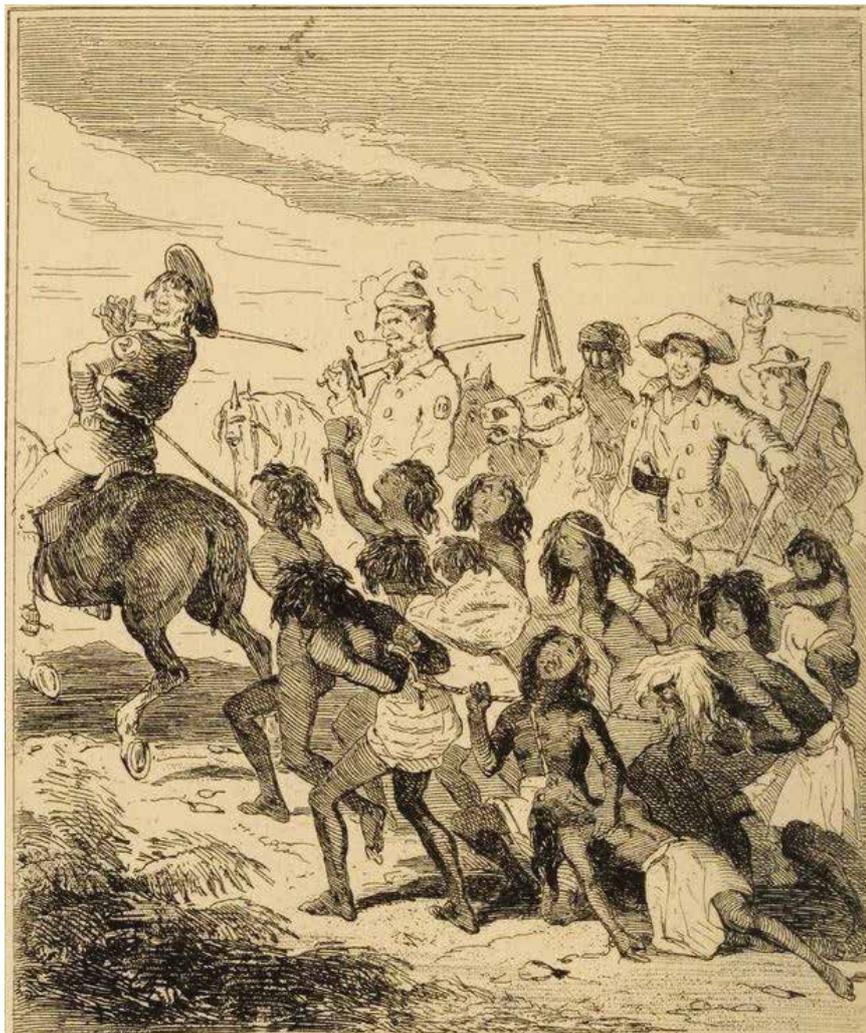
(above)

The emblem of the abolitionist movement, the kneeling slave in chains, surrounded by the words 'Am I Not a Man and a Brother?' Medallion; jasper ware; chained kneeling slave in relief in black, with inscription above; set in an oval gold mount.

SOURCE: TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

(right)
'Phiz' (Hablot Knight Browne),
'Australian Aborigines
Slaughtered by
Convicts'.

SOURCE: PELHAM
CAMERON, *THE
CHRONICLES OF CRIME;
OR, THE NEW NEWGATE
CALENDAR*, LONDON:
SYDNEY: PRINTED FOR T.
TEGG, 2 VOLUMES, 1841,
BETWEEN PAGES 472–3.



One rare image, produced in London within three years of the event, 'Australian Aborigines Slaughtered by Convicts', circulated widely among contemporaries. This engraving by 'Phiz' was published in the 1841 *Chronicles of Crime; or, The New Newgate Calendar*, showing the Myall Creek victims being dragged along by ruffians on horseback (see fig. above). 'Phiz' was the pseudonym of Hablot Knight Browne, a popular artist best known for illustrating Charles Dickens's *Pickwick Papers* and many other novels from 1836 onwards.⁴⁶ The *Newgate Calendar*, originally a register of names compiled each month by the Ordinary, the gaol-keeper of London's most notorious prison, developed into a series of sensational accounts written by the Ordinary, in order to supplement his wages.⁴⁷ From its beginnings, British crime reporting of this kind was intended to be both instructive and profitable.⁴⁸ Phiz produced 52 engravings for the 1841 edition, perfectly harmonising with the *Calendar's* melodramatic tone. This

edition was published in London, Sydney, Hobart and Glasgow by Thomas Tegg, one of the largest publishers of his day, and is the first example of an attempt to exploit colonial as well as metropolitan audiences.⁴⁹ Among the *Calendar's* 500 cases, the only other Australian crimes included were the escape of Mary Bryant, and the exploits of Van Diemen's Land convict Alexander Pierce, a murderer and cannibal.⁵⁰ These sensational tales characterised the colonies as places of savagery, bestiality, daring and transgression.

The upraised, shackled hands of the Aboriginal people in Browne's image evoke Wedgwood's antislavery logo, emphasising the innocence and vulnerability of the victims — but also their passivity and need to be helped by the white humanitarian.⁵¹ Simultaneously, the image exaggerates the brutality of the perpetrators, drawing them as caricatures rather than realistically. The framing text describes the 'atrocious cold-blooded massacre of which



these persons were guilty' and contrasts the 'victims', 'the unoffending aboriginal natives of the country', with their murderers, 'Englishmen, who, however, from their sanguinary disposition, do not deserve that they should receive such an appellation.'

The text goes on to describe the 'unresisting', 'hapless wretches' who were 'brutally butchered', and finishes its account of the atrocity by describing how '[t]he demon butchers then placed the bodies in a heap, kindled an immense fire over them, and thus attempted to destroy the evidence of their unheard-of brutality.'⁵²

degraded convicts, ignoring the wider context of frontier violence. For example, the discovery of the crime is attributed to the observation of carrion birds at the site, completely omitting the two white ex-convicts who testified against the murderers. This perspective echoes that of the Aborigines Select Committee, for whom lower-class white convicts were the source of colonial sin and contagion. The committee's introduction argued that 'unoffending' Australian Aboriginal people 'suffered in an aggravated degree from the planting among them of our penal settlements', and that 'very little care has since been taken



(above, left)
'The Man with the Carpet-bag' by 'Phiz' from *Chronicles of Crime*.

SOURCE: PELHAM CAMERON, *THE CHRONICLES OF CRIME; OR, THE NEW NEWGATE CALENDAR*, LONDON: SYDNEY: PRINTED FOR T. TEGG, 2 VOLUMES, 1841, BETWEEN PAGES 312–313.

(above, right)
Frontispiece by 'Phiz'.

SOURCE: PELHAM CAMERON, *THE CHRONICLES OF CRIME; OR, THE NEW NEWGATE CALENDAR*, LONDON: SYDNEY: PRINTED FOR T. TEGG, 2 VOLUMES, 1841.

HUMANITARIAN GOVERNANCE RELIED UPON POPULAR SENTIMENT REGARDING THE CLAIMS AND CAPACITY OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE, AND IMAGERY PROVIDED A POWERFUL TOOL IN THESE DEBATES.

This reversal, in which the white masters rather than their black victims are cast as 'savage', was a common antislavery trope in this period, expressed also in literary responses to Myall Creek such as Eliza Hamilton Dunlop's poem 'The Aboriginal Mother', which echoed transatlantic antislavery poetry.⁵³

As signalled by the caption 'Australian Aborigines Slaughtered by Convicts', it is also significant that this popular account portrays the atrocity as a single episode initiated by

to protect them from the violence or the contamination of the dregs of our countrymen:⁵⁴ As Elizabeth Elbourne points out, the Committee's emphasis on personal and national morality deflected attention from 'structure' — that is, the system of colonisation itself and its inherent inequalities.⁵⁵ Others have noted that colonial scandals reveal the transgression of rules, ultimately serving to re-sanction social norms.⁵⁶ Framing frontier atrocity as convict crime allowed both colonists and humanitarians

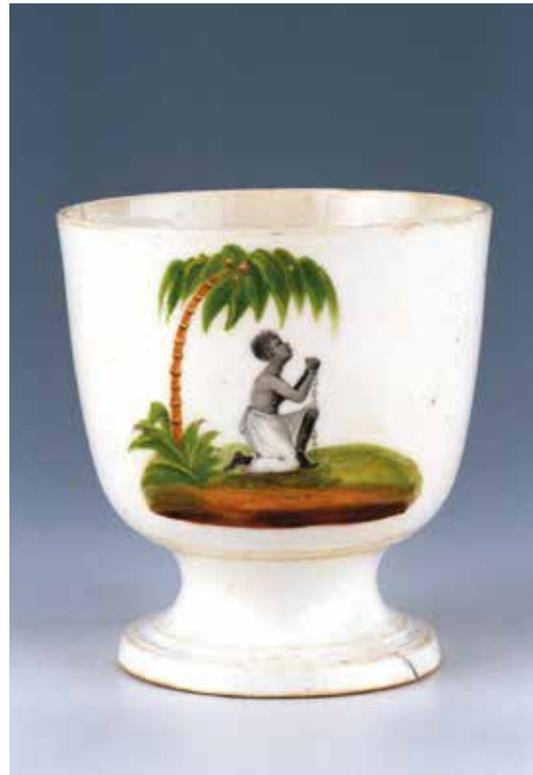
(right)
Needlework picture
of kneeling slave,
America, 1820–55,
wool on linen.

THE COLONIAL
WILLIAMSBURG
FOUNDATION. MUSEUM
PURCHASE. ACCESSION
#1990-222, IMAGE
#DS1995-0174.



(far right)
Sugar bowl,
England, 1825–30,
hand-painted bone
china.

THE COLONIAL
WILLIAMSBURG
FOUNDATION. MUSEUM
PURCHASE, MR. AND
MRS. JOHN C. AUSTIN,
PHYLLIS M. CARSTENS,
MRS. JOYCE LONGWORTH,
ANN WINTER ODETTE,
JOHN F. ORMAN, JR., MS.
JOAN M. PLOETZ, MR.
AND MRS. THOMAS G.
POTTERFIELD, MR. AND
MRS. ROBERT PRIOLEAU,
JOAN N. WOODHOUSE,
THE DWIGHT P. AND
ANN-ELISA W. BLACK
FUND, AND THE JOHN R.
AND CAROLYN J. MANESS
FAMILY FOUNDATION.
ACCESSION #1998-37,
IMAGE #DS1998-068.



to displace their own complicity in Indigenous dispossession. By laying the blame for damage to Indigenous peoples not on the system of colonisation itself but on a class of already guilty outlaws, imperial authority was reconstituted.

For white viewers, the savage white represents a narratable figure that Greg Dening called a ‘comfortable’ sort of villain, one whose wickedness is so unimaginably distant from the viewer’s experience that it allows us to feel safely detached.⁵⁷ Such a conception of atrocity renders it as grotesque and the victims as other, conferring a sense of the distance of these people and events from the viewer’s everyday present, and effecting narrative closure for at least some white viewers. For popular audiences, the visibly depraved cartoon figures of Phiz’s convicts made it clear where blame should be placed: at the door of these (already convicted) murderers rather than with the larger forces of state-sanctioned violence and dispossession, explaining the event as a tragic crime rather than an inevitable consequence of white invasion.

CONCLUSION

This historical example demonstrates the ambivalent and politicised effects of such affective strategies. The historical conjunction of British imperial philanthropy and settler violence in New South Wales during the 1830s shaped radically polarised views regarding frontier violence and the impact of colonisation upon Indigenous people. Humanitarians represented the Myall Creek massacre as an atrocious cruelty

toward Aboriginal people, but colonists saw their eventual conviction as an injustice to the white perpetrators. Many colonists refused to acknowledge the basic humanity of the victims, and notoriously, one juror in the Myall Creek trial later declared that ‘I look on the blacks ... as a set of monkeys, and I think the earlier they are exterminated from the face of the earth the better. I knew well they were guilty of the murder, but I, for one, would never consent to see a white man suffer for shooting a black one.’⁵⁸ As many have argued, such responses to Myall Creek prompted a frontier culture of secrecy, and hindered colonial officials pursuing similar crimes against Aboriginal people for decades afterwards, because they were unsure of the legal outcome.⁵⁹

Humanitarian reactions to Myall Creek, and attempts to awaken compassion for its victims, were clearly shaped by the British antislavery movement. Yet the politicisation of humanitarian sentiment both in Sydney and London limited the impact of literary and visual accounts. The upper-class humanitarians of the 1836 Aborigines Selection Committee were concerned with morality — atonement and redemption — and particularly the sins of the settlers. Seen in this context, we must recognise the class-based displacement of guilt on to already-condemned

convicts, while leaving the larger apparatus of colonisation unscathed. Philanthropists usually stopped short of acknowledging Aboriginal rights to the land, demonstrating that their idealising empathy with Indigenous peoples was deeply complicit with dispossession.

Nonetheless this lobby constituted a powerful voice for justice in 1830s New South Wales. Among its concrete effects, the humanitarian campaign prompted the creation of a colonial philanthropic network, and in London, the Anti-Slavery Society and the Colonial Office pushed to admit Aboriginal evidence into court, and to bring Indigenous imperial subjects under the protection of English law.⁶⁰ Despite the inequality of affective relationships such as pity and protection, and the undeniable *limits* of empathy, such historical examples demonstrate that sentimental responses may have real political consequences. Humanitarian governance relied upon popular sentiment regarding the claims and capacity of Aboriginal people, and imagery provided a powerful tool in these debates. In 1830s practice, common primitivist stereotypes showing Aboriginal people as non-human, primitive, and cannibal, were opposed by images that argued for their fundamental humanity. Even as Phiz's engraving of the imprisoned Weraiarai reduced them to abject victims, and obscured the structural forces behind their plight, he drew upon familiar and powerful abolitionist imagery to assert their innocence and shared status as human beings. ¶



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Her books include *The Flash of Recognition: Photography and the Emergence of Indigenous Rights* (NewSouth, 2012), which won the History Award in the 2013 Queensland Literary Awards, and (ed.) *Calling the Shots: Aboriginal Photographies* (Aboriginal Studies Press, 2014) which brings together Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal scholars to explore the Indigenous meanings of the photographic archive. Her *Photography, Humanitarianism, Empire* was published by Bloomsbury in July 2016.

1. Jane Lydon, *Photography, Humanitarianism, Empire* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016). I am grateful to Bloomsbury for allowing me to draw from my introduction. For support in researching the Myall Creek massacre I also acknowledge the Australian Research Council Discovery project 'Anti-Slavery in Australia' (DP140101793); I am most grateful to my co-Chief Investigators Fiona Paisley and Jennifer Burn, and Partner Investigators Philippa Levine and Kevin Grant, for their intellectual engagement and enthusiasm throughout the project.
2. For a recent review see Bee Teng Lim, Helen Moriarty, Mark Huthwaite, Peter Gallagher, Roshan Perera, 'Teaching Empathy to Undergraduate Medical Students: Translation to Practice', *Focus on Health Professional Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 17 (2016), 59–70. Quotation from Sandra Boodman, 'How to Teach Doctors Empathy', *The Atlantic*, 15 March 2015 <<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/03/how-to-teach-doctors-empathy/387784/>> [accessed 29 January 2017].
3. See for example Carlo Ginzburg, 'Killing a Chinese Mandarin: The Moral Implications of Distance', *Critical Inquiry*, 21 (1994), 46–60; Karen Halttunen, 'Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture', *American Historical Review*, 100 (1995), 303–34.
4. Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2007).
5. Hunt, p. 176.
6. Emily Baughan and Bronwen Everill, 'Empire and Humanitarianism: A Preface', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40 (2012), 727–8.
7. Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown, 'Introduction', in *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy*, ed. by Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 1–28.
8. Wilson and Brown, p. 2. While rights are often secured through an appeal to the humanitarian principle of ending unnecessary suffering, these orientations may exist in tension, as exemplified by the slave owner who campaigns for the kinder treatment of slaves or, conversely, the abolitionist who nonetheless submits to the apparatus of slavery in order to buy and free the enslaved.
9. Gary J. Bass, *Freedom's Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention* (New York: Knopf, 2008). For a prominent dissenting view, see Samuel Moyn's *The Last Utopia* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 19–20, 243n. Moyn rejects the connection between humanitarianism and human rights, which, he argues, took recognisable form only in the 1970s. In my opinion, Moyn's definition of

- human rights is unhelpfully narrow, and I prefer to see humanitarianism and human rights as overlapping concepts with interlinked histories.
10. While it is true that each of these distinct categories has attracted scholarly definition and historicisation, as I explain further, here I seek to emphasise what they *share*.
 11. Thomas Dixon refers to 'felt judgements'. See Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Barbara Rosenwein, 'Worrying about Emotions in History', *American Historical Review*, 107 (2002), 921–45.
 12. Affect is not merely a universal dimension of *attachment*, it is always already an *attachment to*, given specificity by a range of social encounters. Sara Ahmed, 'Happy Objects', in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010), pp. 29–51.
 13. Sarah Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), pp. 8–9, p. 83.
 14. Daniel Wickberg, 'What Is the History of Sensibilities?', *American Historical Review*, 112 (2007), 661–84; See also James Chandler, 'The Politics of Sentiment: Notes toward a New Account', *Studies in Romanticism*, 49 (2010), 553–75.
 15. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. by D.D. Raphael and A.L. Macfie (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, [1759] 1984), p. 9.
 16. Smith, p. 10.
 17. Smith, p. 10.
 18. Karsten Stueber, 'Empathy', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last revised 14 February 2013 <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/empathy/>> [accessed 29 January 2017].
 19. Carolyn Burdett, 'Is Empathy the End of Sentimentality?', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 16 (2011), 259–74.
 20. I aim to use terms such as 'sympathy' within their historical context; however, in drawing on the extensive recent critical literature focused upon a broad and inclusive usage of 'empathy', I use this latter term to refer to the constellation of sympathetic emotions. Some now consider empathy to refer to a closer identification with another's emotional state than sympathy, but I choose to retain the inclusive sense of Smith's 'fellow-feeling'.
 21. See for example C. Daniel Batson, 'These Things Called Empathy: Eight Related but Distinct Phenomena', in *The Social Neuroscience of Empathy*, ed. by Jean Decety and William Ickes (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009), pp. 3–16; C. Daniel Batson, *Altruism in Humans* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
 22. Giacomo Rizzolatti and Corrado Sinigaglia, *Mirrors in the Brain: How our Minds Share Actions and Emotions*, trans. Frances Anderson (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).
 23. Smith, p. 112.
 24. John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).
 25. David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).
 26. Thomas Laqueur, 'Bodies, Details, and the Humanitarian Narrative', in *The New Cultural History*, ed. by Lynn Hunt (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 176–204.
 27. Elizabeth B. Clark, "'The Sacred Rights of the Weak": Pain, Sympathy, and the Culture of Individual Rights in Antebellum America', *Journal of American History*, 82 (1995), 463–93; Maurice O. Wallace and Shawn Michelle Smith (eds), *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).
 28. In this vein, scholars such as Martha Nussbaum, Richard Rorty and K. Anthony Appiah have argued for models of cosmopolitan reading that allow the reader to bridge difference: Richard Rorty, 'Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality', in *On Human Rights: The Oxford Amnesty Lectures*, ed. by Stephen Shute and Susan Hurley (New York: BasicBooks, 1993), pp. 111–34; Martha Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life* (Boston: Beacon, 1996); K. Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006).
 29. Fiona Paisley and Jane Lydon, 'Australia and Anti-Slavery', *Australian Historical Studies*, 45 (2014), 1–12. See contributions to this special issue.
 30. Richard Huzzey, for example, argues that having achieved their purpose, the older abolitionist organisations declined but were replaced by newer forms of anti-slavery, particularly evident in literature and culture: Richard Huzzey, *Freedom Burning: Anti-Slavery and Empire in Victorian Britain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); Seymour Drescher, *Capitalism and Anti-Slavery: British Mobilization in Comparative Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).
 31. Penny Edmonds, 'Collecting Looerryminer's "testimony"', *Australian Historical Studies*, 45 (2014), 13–33; Jane Lydon, 'The Bloody Skirt of Settlement: Arthur Vogan and Anti-Slavery in 1890s Australia', *Australian Historical Studies*, 45 (2014), 46–70; Fiona Paisley, 'An Echo of Black

- Slavery: Emancipation, Forced Labour and Australia in 1933', *Australian Historical Studies*, 45 (2014), 103–125.
32. Lydon, *Photography*; Adele Perry, 'Vocabularies of Slavery and Anti-Slavery: The North American Fur-Trade and the Imperial World', *Australian Historical Studies*, 45 (2014), 34–45; Baughan, 727–8; Rob Skinner and Alan Lester, 'Humanitarianism and Empire: New Research Agendas', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 40 (2012), 729–47; Andrew Porter, 'Trusteeship, Anti-Slavery and Humanitarianism' in *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, ed. by Andrew Porter (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 222–46.
 33. Alan Lester and Fae Dussart, *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Intervention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Lydon, *Photography*.
 34. Allan McInnes, 'The Wreck of the "Charles Eaton"' (Cairns: Cairns Historical Society, 1983), 198–220; Kay Schaffer, *In the Wake of First Contact: The Eliza Fraser Stories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
 35. See for example 'Domestic Intelligence', *Sydney Herald*, Wednesday 29 August 1838, p. 2. For histories of racial thought see for example Bronwyn Douglas and Chris Ballard (eds), *Foreign Bodies: Oceania and the Science of Race 1750–1940* (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2008).
 36. For accounts of the massacre see Alan Atkinson and Marian Aveling (eds.), *Australians 1838* (Sydney: Fairfax, Syme and Weldon Associates, 1987), pp. 54–60; R.H.W. Reece, *Aborigines and Colonists: Aborigines and Colonial Society in New South Wales in the 1830s and 1840s* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1974); Brian Harrison, 'The Myall Creek Massacre' in *Records of Times Past: Ethnohistorical Essays on the Culture and Ecology of the New England Tribes*, ed. by Isabel McBryde (Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1978), pp. 17–51; Roger Milliss, *Waterloo Creek* (Ringwood, Victoria: McPhee Gribble, Penguin Books, 1992).
 37. Niel Gunson, *Australian Reminiscences and Papers of L.E. Threlkeld, Missionary to the Aborigines, 1824–1859* (Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1974), vol I, p. 139. See also Anna Johnston, *The Paper War: Morality, Print Culture, and Power in Colonial New South Wales* (Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2011). Threlkeld's language also recalls the much older critique of colonisation by sixteenth-century Dominican reformer Bishop Bartolomé de las Casas. I thank Kevin Grant for drawing my attention to this link.
 38. Laqueur, 178.
 39. Karen Halttunen, 'Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture', *American Historical Review*, 100 (1995), 303–334.
 40. Berlant, 'Introduction: Compassion (and Withholding)', in *Compassion: The Culture and Politics of an Emotion*, ed. by Lauren Berlant (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 1–24.
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 42. Lynn Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).
 43. M. Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America 1780–1865* (New York: Manchester University Press and Routledge, 2000); M. Wood, *The Horrible Gift of Freedom: Atlantic Slavery and the Representation of Emancipation* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 2010).
 44. Wood, *Blind Memory*, pp. 22–23; R. Oldfield, *Popular Politics and British Anti-Slavery: The Mobilisation of Public Opinion Against the Slave Trade, 1787–1807* (London: Routledge, 1998).
 45. The day after the seven convicts were hanged at Sydney, 19 December 1838, the new Governor, Sir George Gipps, sent a dispatch to Lord Glenelg at the Home Office, noting that for some weeks before the tragedy, around fifty people had been living in the area 'in perfect tranquility, neither molesting the Whites nor being themselves molested by them.' *HRA Series I, XIX*, Gipps to Glenelg, pp. 700–04.
 46. Valerie Lester, *Phiz: The Man Who Drew Dickens* (London: Random House, 2011).
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 48. S. Chibnall, 'Chronicles of the Gallows: The Social History of Crime Reporting', *Sociological Review*, 29 (1981), 179–217.
 49. L.F. Fitzhardinge, 'Tegg, James (1808–1845)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University <<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/tegg-james-2718/text3827>> [accessed 29 January 2017]; J. Barnes and P. Barnes, 'Reassessing the Reputation of Thomas Tegg, London Publisher, 1776–1846', *Book History*, 3 (2000), 45–60.
 50. Cameron, Vol I, pp. 330–331.
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 53. Katie Hansord, 'Eliza Hamilton Dunlop's "The Aboriginal Mother": Romanticism, Anti Slavery, and Imperial Feminism in the Nineteenth

- Century', *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature*, 11 (1) <<http://openjournals.library.usyd.edu.au/index.php/JASAL/article/view/9793>> [accessed 29 January 2017]; Anna Johnston, 'Mrs Milson's Wordlist: Eliza Hamilton Dunlop's Linguistic Collection and the Economies of Representation', unpublished paper delivered to 'Colonial Economies, Violence and Intimacy', University of Tasmania, November 2016.
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 55. Elizabeth Elbourne, 'The Sin of the Settler: The 1835–36 Select Committee on Aborigines and Debates over Virtue and Conquest', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 4 (2003), 1–23.
 56. Kirsten McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies: Sydney and Cape Town, 1820–1850* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004), pp. 8–11; S. Epstein, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
 57. Greg Denning, *Mr Bligh's Bad Language: Passion, Power and Theatre on the Bounty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 340–341.
 58. 'Advance Australia: The Jury System', *Sydney Gazette*, 11 December 1838, p. 2.
 59. Harrison; Reece; Jane Lydon, "'No Moral Doubt": Aboriginal Evidence and the Kangaroo Creek Poisoning, 1847–1849', *Aboriginal History*, 20 (1996), 151–75.
 60. Jane Lydon, 'Anti-slavery in Australia: Picturing the 1838 Myall Creek Massacre', *History Compass* (in press); Russell Smandych, 'Contemplating the Testimony of Others: James Stephen, the Colonial Office, and the Fate of Australian Aboriginal Evidence Acts, circa 1839–1849', *Australian Journal of Legal History*, 11 (2004) <<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/journals/AJLH/2004/11.html>> [accessed 29 January 2017].



MACARONI MEN AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FASHION CULTURE

‘THE VULGAR TONGUE’

» PETER McNEIL

Macaroni, An Italian paste made of flour and eggs; also, a fop; which name arose from a club, called the Macaroni Club, instituted by some of the most dressy travelled gentlemen about town, who led the fashions; whence a man foppishly dressed was supposed a member of that club, and, by contradiction, stiled [sic] a Macaroni.¹

In 1823 when this term was included in Pierce Egan’s new edition of *Grose’s Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1785), ‘macaroni’ had been circulating in the English language for sixty years, denoting a species of foppish man.² It was a term mainly used between 1760 and 1780, but was still in everyday use in 1795, when a verse described men shopping in the spa town of Bath thus: ‘booted and spur’d, the gay macaronies, Bstride Mandell’s counter, instead of their ponies.’³ The word continues to echo on a daily basis within the refrain of the famous patriotic tune *Yankee Doodle* (published 1767), referring to the appearance of troops during the French and Indian War (or the ‘Seven Years War’, 1754–63):

Yankee Doodle Came to Town
Riding on a Pony,
Stuck a feather in his cap
And called it Macaroni!⁴

The macaroni were remembered in the nineteenth century as colourful fashion eccentrics from a romantic past long surpassed by Victorian materialism, until the cataloguers

of the British Museum’s eighteenth-century satirical prints gave the topic greater potential for study with their comprehensive published catalogue cross-referenced to historical events. The catalogue had been undertaken, building on the earlier notes of Edward Hawkins, in the 1860s by Frederic George Stephens, a member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and supporter of late-nineteenth-century aestheticism (hence the co-authorship of ‘Stephens and Hawkins’ for the first part of the British Museum catalogue). It was continued in the first decades of the twentieth century by the indefatigable M. Dorothy George (who had worked for British Intelligence), one of several notable women including ‘George Paston’ (pseudonym of Miss E. M. Symonds) to set themselves the task of cataloguing British caricature prints with explanatory keys. Not well known to the general public apart from those who have a particular interest in late-Georgian England, the macaroni evokes bemused puzzlement when his name is mentioned today. Slippery like the pasta that his name connotes, the term ‘macaroni’ was once widely

(above)
Detail, fig. 8, p. 64,
*Ridiculous Taste or
the Ladies Absurdity*.



(left)

Fig. 1. Man's Coat and Breeches, Italy, probably Venice, c. 1770, green silk, a) coat centre back length: 35 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (90.81 cm); c) breeches length: 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (62.23 cm).

LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART, COSTUME COUNCIL FUND M.83.200.1A-C.

Man's Waistcoat, France, c. 1770, pink silk, Waistcoat centre back length: 26 in. (66.04 cm).

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since, for a period of thirty years, 'macaroni' was a highly topical term, yielding a complex set of meanings and associations. 'Macaroni' indicated either fine or ultra-fashionable dressing, but it was not a static fashion movement with simply one form. Macaroni men dressed in a manner that asserted a cosmopolitan, fashion-centric outlook (fig. 1). Desirous of the rich and colourful textiles that countries such as France and Italy were renowned for, their attitude towards fashion was exclusive and undemocratic. Many macaroni men wore the tightly cut suit or *habit à la française* that derived from French court society, which also became the trans-national and up-to-date fashion for many European men at this time. (Swedish courtiers rushed to get out of their imposed national dress and into the modern 'French suit' as soon as they could whilst travelling). Such clothing and the accessories expected to accompany it were expensive and unsuitable for many forms of work. Yet it was possible to copy many aspects of the macaroni appearance, particularly the hair-style, and it seems many did so, including young men from the countryside.

Macaroni men were connected to new ideas about masculine self-presentation, selfhood and celebrity in late-eighteenth-century England. Contemporary interest in male sartorial display was amplified by the great expansion of printed satirical caricatures that occurred concurrently, where the macaroni phenomenon formed a major topic. Macaroni dress was not restricted to members of the aristocracy and gentry; men of the artisan, artist and upper servant classes

recognised in daily life, just as the word 'punk' is now. Eclipsed by the fame of the masculine Regency bucks and swells, and not embedded in tumultuous political events as was the *Incroyable* of post-Revolutionary Paris, the macaroni existed thirty years before the justly famous figure of the dandy. Although many people today say 'aha! A dandy' when they hear his name, his ethos and appearance were completely different from that Promethean figure.

The study I have recently completed, *'Pretty Gentlemen': Macaroni Men and the Eighteenth-Century Fashion World*, is on one level a study of men and their sartorial fashions.⁵ It is also a social, sexual and more general cultural history

wore versions of this visually lavish clothing with a distinctive cut and shorter jackets in woolen cloth, for example. Wealthier shopkeepers and entrepreneurs also sometimes wore lavish clothing, particularly those associated with the London luxury trades. Macaroni status was attributed to figures as notable as the Whig politician Charles James Fox (1749–1806) — ‘the Original Macaroni’; botanist and explorer Sir Joseph Banks (1743–1820) — the ‘Fly Catching Macaroni’; the renowned miniature painter Richard Cosway (1742–1821) — ‘The Miniature Macaroni’ [he painted in this format and was also very short in stature]; the famed landscape designer Humphrey Repton (1752–1818); the St Martin’s Lane luxury upholsterer John Cobb; Julius ‘Soubise’, the freed slave of the Duchess of Queensbury, known as the ‘Mungo Macaroni’; and the Reverend William Dodd (1729–1777) — the ‘Macaroni Parson’ [the extravagantly-dressed Chaplain to George III, later put to death as perhaps the first ‘white-collar’ criminal]. John Gascoigne FAHA outlines Sir Joseph Banks’s macaronic affiliation and the subsequent attacks on his scientific credentials (linked to his youthful interest in fashion) in *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment: Useful Knowledge and Polite Culture* (1994).⁶ Sarah Sophia Banks, Joseph’s sister with whom he lived in Soho Square, created an extensive collection of prints and ephemera (akin to the natural history and other specimens collected by her brother in its taxonomic ambition) which is now in the British Museum and British Library. She owned several prints identifying her brother as macaroni. Men of secure social standing such as Banks seem to have been more comfortable with the label, which was something of an ‘in joke’. The repetition of certain motifs within these caricatures — the very high hair-style, a tiny hat, the cane and sword, spying glasses, high-heeled shoes and use of a snuff-box — indicates that these objects had a powerful charge for male participants in this type of dressing.

This is certainly the view taken by the late Paul Langford, who noted that ‘young men with too much money and too few inhibitions prospered in the permissive climate of the years between two great wars’ in the eighteenth century.⁷ Here he referred to the cessation of the Seven Years War (1756–1763), at which point

many young well-to-do men rushed to the continent to see what was going on with the French and Italian fashion they had so missed during wartime. The Seven Years War was a disaster for France but saw an ascendancy for Britain, hence the even stronger significance of clothing styles adopted at a time of national confidence. The American, Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars that reshaped borders and colonies mark the conclusion of the period under consideration.

Other issues are important for understanding the significance of men’s fashion. Some of these acquisitions were status-conscious purchases to signal cosmopolitanism and success; others were possibly crafted by female relatives and lovers and therefore inscribe chains of attachment and sometimes also eroticism. Eighteenth-century women frequently worked waistcoats and made sword-knots for their husbands, particularly at their marriage, a custom explicit for the aristocracy in France.⁸ There was therefore a personal charge attached to aspects of ‘gift exchange’ as well as the making of sartorial fashions. This was transferred in a homophobic manner to a group of ‘queer embroiderers’ described in a scurrilous pamphlet mocking such men entitled ‘The Pretty Gentleman’ (1747), from which my forthcoming book takes its title.

Fundamental to the general notion of macaroni fashion was the hair-style. Fashionable men in the late 1760s and 1770s replaced the small ‘scratch-wig’ of the older generation, a prosthetic which supplemented the natural hair and was often worn for riding, with elaborate hairstyles that matched the towering heights of the contemporary female coiffure. For men, a very tall *toupée* rising in front and a thick club of hair behind required extensive dressing with pomade and white powder. Other wigs had very long and thin tails, looking rather like horses’. Wigs became a widespread fashion item, able to be copied by men ‘up from the country’, and barbers and hairdressers were common even in rural areas of England and France. The new fashionable macaroni ‘queue’ of hair was held in a large black satin wig-bag, often trimmed with a rosette, to protect the back of the jacket. The wig-bag was requisite for attendance at court and therefore became striking when worn in the street and in everyday life; it also carried

(right)

Fig. 2. Man's Vest, English, c. 1780, cotton plain weave with supplementary-weft patterning, centre-back length: 24 in. (60.96 cm).

LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART, GIFT OF JACK COLE. 63.24.6.



an added expense (account books indicate that wig-bags had to be replaced at least several times a year). The effect of the hair could be copied with real and partial wiggling; many men wore a mixture of their own hair plus wiggling. The macaroni 'big hair' silhouette dominates the fashion ideal of many of the men of this era and is a signature of the notable portraiture associated with the most important artists of the day including Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough, Pompeo Batoni and Richard Cosway.

MACARONI ORIGINS

The first use of the term 'macaroni' appeared within actor and theatre-manager David Garrick's play *The Male-Coquette* (1757), which included a foppish character, the 'Marchese di Macaroni'.⁹ The term was used occasionally to

refer to women noted for their conspicuous gambling, described, like fashion, as a form of endless and ephemeral expenditure — but it generally referred to the styling of men. The famous observer of manners, Sir Horace Walpole, made numerous references to these new fashionables. In the first relevant letter, dated February 1764, Walpole discussed gambling losses amongst the sons of foreign aristocrats at the 'Maccaroni [sic] club, which is composed of all the travelled young men who wear long curls and spying-glasses'.¹⁰

Macaroni men wore and carried accessories that were characteristic of societies with a court at their pinnacle. These included the hanger or dress smallsword, traditionally the preserve of the nobility, but worn also by this time as a fashion statement. Red-heeled and thin-soled, slipper-like black leather shoes with leather rosettes or decorative buckles of diamond, paste

or polished steel; a tiny *nivernais*, named for the French Ambassador resident in London, the duc de Nivernais (translator of Horace Walpole's essay on gardening into French); large floral corsages or 'nosegays' as they were called in the eighteenth century; *chateleines* or hanging watches and seals suspended around the waist-line; elaborate or finely turned canes; and decorative neo-classical metal snuffboxes and spying or eye-glasses feature in the many descriptions and images of the macaroni wardrobe.

The macaroni departed from the trembling erotics of the rococo taste in that symmetry and new textile preferences were often enforced in his dressing. The newly fashionable textiles were often spotted or thinly striped, moving away from the large-patterned meandering brocades characteristic of the period of George II and Louis XV. Macaroni often balanced the pocket watch hanging from the waistcoat with a bunch of seals, or perhaps a *fausse-montre*, a dummy watch. His clothing therefore mirrored developments in architecture and interior design, when elite interiors included false doors to achieve symmetry in interior architecture.

New materials also set new fashion trends. Fine examples of this development include the 'jockey' style printed cotton waistcoats associated with late macaroni taste; such garments created new fashions for men, that must even have felt different, being soft, pliable and easily washed (cotton was not generally worn by men as either undergarments or overgarments until the last years of the eighteenth century) (fig. 2). These clothing innovations replicate the effects of the much more expensive trimmings used on more expensive urban dress but they also have a new jauntiness. By the 1770s the fashion was for the new material of steel rather than silver accessories, including buttons; sometimes a combination of materials was used in a piece of jewellery or a shoe-buckle.

Bobbing just below the waist was the sword-knot, which garnished the small-sword. Although sword knots were generally made from textiles, and few seem to survive, some were made of steel, as with the beautiful example attributed to the great entrepreneur of metals Matthew Boulton or his workshop (fig. 3). The original owner of this sword was Colonel Lord

Evelyn James Stuart (1773–1842), politician and soldier, second son of John Stuart, first Marquis of Bute. Since he was a young man in the 1790s, this is an indication of the longevity of certain courtly fashion tastes.

The carrying of such fashion accessories contributed to an emphasising of what was seen either as polite or courtly manners in posture, gesture and speech, further underlined by the use of cosmetics such as face-whiteners and rouge, breath fresheners and even preferred drinks such as asses' or donkey's milk. Asses' milk was used to great satiric effect by Pope in his *Epistle* (1735) which referred to 'Sporus! That mere white curd of ass's milk...' ¹¹ Asses' milk carries two further contrasted suggestions. The first is the practice of bathing in it by famed women such as Cleopatra and various Roman empresses to preserve their looks; hence when consumed by males its use was highly effeminate. Secondly, the male ass since antiquity has from the size of its genitals figured as a symbol of



(left)
Fig. 3. English smallsword with chased cut-steel hilt, attributed to Matthew Boulton, length 104 cm, blade length 83 cm.

COURTESY PETER FINER, LONDON.



(above, left)
 Fig. 4. M. Darly, *Ridiculous Taste or the Ladies Absurdity*, London, 15 July 1771.

COURTESY OF THE LEWIS WALPOLE LIBRARY, YALE UNIVERSITY.

(above, right)
 Fig. 5. R. Sayer and J. Bennett, *Ridiculous Taste*, 10 June 1776 (reduced copy after M. Darly), mezzotint.

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hypervirility (as in Apuleius's *Golden Ass* and the anonymous Greek predecessor *Lucius, or the Ass*). Hence drinking the asses' milk might have been a tonic to restore virility, and therefore consumed by invalid or delicate males. According to contemporary reports, there was also a mannered macaroni accent and idiom, captured in popular ditties and joke-books of the period.

The interest in the macaroni was not confined to one visual or literary genre or even to England. Macaroni dress was amplified in its influence because it appeared concurrently with the marked expansion of the production of English caricature prints, which were perused far beyond the borders of that country. Almost immediately, plays, joke-books and songs were written about him and glass and ceramics were painted with his likeness. He developed a wide European appeal, particularly through the caricature print published by Matthew Darly, *Ridiculous Taste, or the Ladies Absurdity*, first issued in July 1771 (fig. 4), re-published in reverse by Sayer and Bennett in 1776 (fig. 5). A man who might represent a husband, but whose figure also refers

to the South Seas explorer Sir Joseph Banks, uses a sextant (for celestial navigation) to observe the top of the head of a female fashionable, who is tended by an ugly *friseur* or hairdresser in macaroni dress, standing up a ladder. Hanging on the wall in the background is a severe portrait of an unfashionable man, perhaps Oliver Cromwell. The image was clearly very popular, as another version was published in the *Oxford Magazine* as 'The Female Pyramid', a nice joke about exploring exotic and unbelievable places (fig. 6). It finds an echo in Thomas Patch's painted caricature of an Italian gallery with the Medici Venus c. 1760 (fig. 7), in which the painter himself, dressed in seaman's trousers, scales the classical statue and uses dividers to measure its proportion. As David Cast notes of such Grand Tour images, they are not simply about laughing at others, but often concern the self-assurance of the arrogant and well-to-do.¹²

The Darly print of the macaroni hairdresser reappeared in many surprising formats, direct and indirect copies, indicating the usefulness and malleability of print culture within wider



(left)

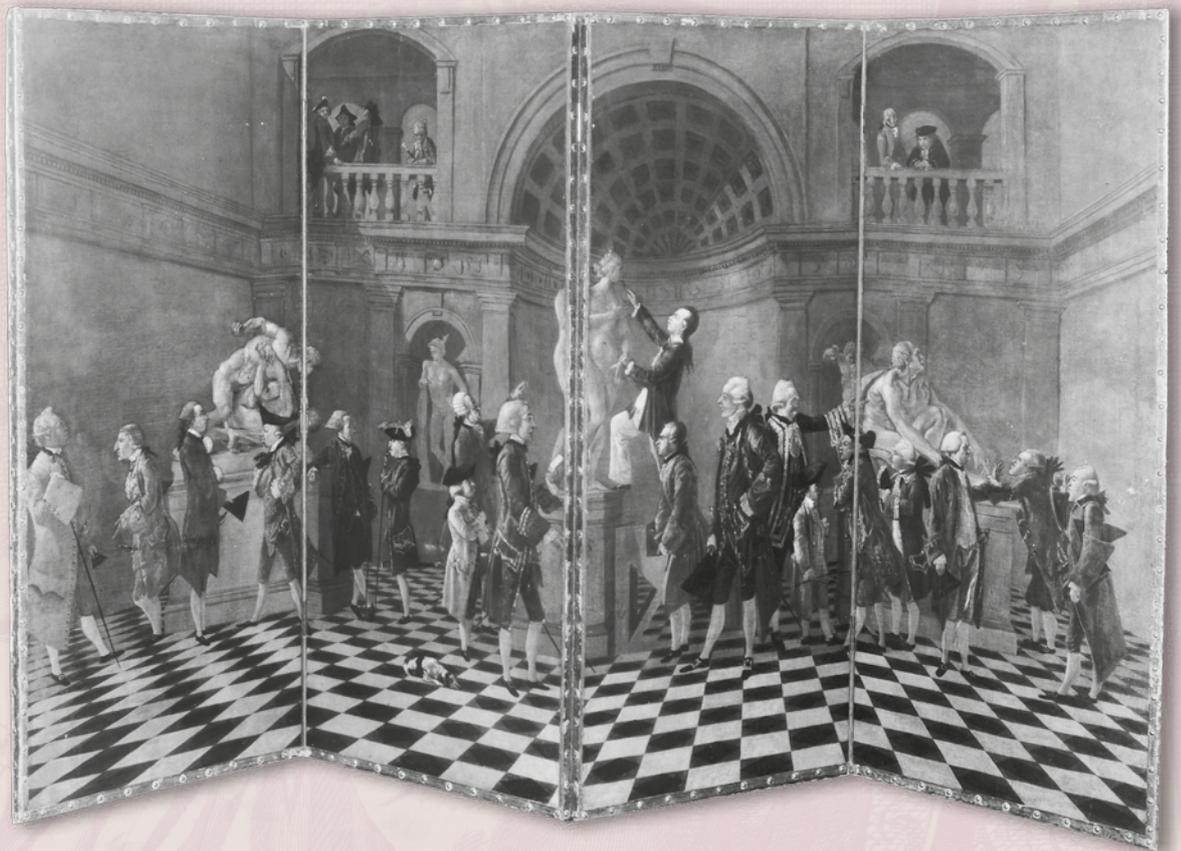
Fig. 6. 'The Female Pyramid', *The Oxford Magazine*, 1771, facing p. 129.

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(below)

Fig. 7. Screen, converted from a painting by Thomas Patch, *A Gathering of Dilettanti in a Sculpture Hall*, c. 1760–1, oil on canvas, 137.2 × 228.6 cm (54 × 90 in). Anon. photograph, Patch Papers 75 P 27 S940 Extra III.

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(above)

Fig. 8. *Ridiculous Taste or the Ladies Absurdity*, oil on canvas painted on the reverse of a possible signboard, 84 × 52 cm, c. 1780.

KULTUREN, LUND, SWEDEN, KM 15580.

design and decoration. It was copied in the unusual medium of an oil painting that is extant in Sweden (fig. 8) and on a Swedish Marieberg-made ceramic tray (fig. 9) painted with a macaroni hairdresser tending a lady client, dated 1772, and hence just a few months after the first appearance of the image (if the date is correct). The painter of the ceramic tray simplified the details of the rich interior so that it did not disrupt the expanse of glossy white glaze and the striking impact of the leaf-form handles that are modelled in relief.

The translation across borders and media was not a simple act of copying; an extant Swedish painted copy of the English caricature — an extremely rare survival — is set in a recognisably Swedish type of interior with fictive *boiserie* and a *trompe-l'oeil* painted perspectival floor typical of that region. The oil was painted on the back of a panel decorated with flowers, the latter

(below, top)

Fig. 9. Erik Borg, *Ridiculous Taste or the Ladies Absurdity*, faience tray, sepia paint, 46 × 30.5 cm, produced by Marieberg, 1772.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, STOCKHOLM, NMK 78/1943. PHOTO COPYRIGHT GRETA LINDSTRÖM, NATIONALMUSEUM, STOCKHOLM.

(below, bottom)

Fig. 10. *Ridiculous Taste or the Ladies Absurdity*, embroidery, wool and silk yarn on fabric, 41 × 35.5 cm, c. 1800, purchased 1895 from Bukowski auction house, Stockholm.

NM.0080638, NORDISKA MUSEET/NORDIC MUSEUM, STOCKHOLM.



possibly by a sign painter. The composition was also reworked in wools into a picture, eighteenth century or slightly later, probably made by a leisured woman (fig. 10). The strong Swedish interest in this image is not surprising; Patrik Steorn's post-doctoral research, carried out within our EU-funded project, discovered that the first illustrated cover of a Swedish newspaper (*Stockholms Posten*) carried a crude wood-cut interpretation of the print in July



1779, noting that it was after an English original, but not naming the printmaker Darly (fig. 11).¹³ The image was connected to an article by the newspaper's editor, Johan Holmberg who, Steorn writes, 'defended the rights of authors of texts and images to remain anonymous by discussing the necessity of satire, for example of women's fashion exuberance'. Gustav III had restricted the press in Sweden in 1774, and newspaper publishers used as covers several redrawn caricatures based on French fashion periodicals, suggesting that fashion images were useful in underscoring the corrective power of satire.¹⁴ Visual satires of macaroni fashion played multi-faceted roles in their incarnations in and outside England.

The noble ceramic works Ludwigsburg, which specialised in fine quality porcelain figural groups, created another version of a hairdresser group in which the lady sits at her *toilette* table (fig. 12). Numerous men with very high hair tend her with the support of stepladder and spying glass, suggesting that men's business has been reduced to frippery. The design was possibly by Gottlieb Friedrich Riedel (1724–84), director of painting and design at Ludwigsburg from 1759 to 1779 and an independent engraver as well. Whether such models had any corrective potential, or were simply made to decorate

mantles or dressing tables, remains unclear, although Horace Walpole and others complained about the invasion of china figurines and knick-knacks into women's private cabinets and lives at this time. Research conducted by Jan Stockigt FAHA (kindly communicated to me) has indicated that Dresden court circles during carnival enjoyed the porcelain figures (resting on dinner tables) that they sometimes resembled, including when they dressed as tavern folk, peasants and in occupational dress (the *Wirtschaft*). Another Continental hard-paste figure group of the 1760s–70s depicts a courtier sporting an enormous black wig-bow attempting to walk through the arch of a classical ruin (fig. 13). He is watched by another fop and a poorly-dressed man, but

(far left)
Fig. 11. *Ridiculous Taste or the Ladies Absurdity*, woodcut, front cover of *Stockholms Posten*, 17 July 1779, *Dagstidning* 1700–1850.

MAPS AND PICTURES, PL. AF 50: 105, KUNGLIGA BIBLIOTEKET, NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SWEDEN.



(left, top)
Fig. 12. *The Coiffure*, Ludwigsburg Porcelain Manufactory, Germany, model attributed to Gottlieb Friedrich Riedel (German, Dresden 1724–84 Augsburg), c. 1770, hard-paste porcelain, 12.7 cm x 9.8 cm, depth 7 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, USA, Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1964 (64.101.326), ART462021.

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(left, bottom)
Fig. 13. Figure group; porcelain; attributed to Ludwigsburg, Württemberg, German, c. 1770. British Museum 1923, 0314.102.CR.

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(right)

Fig. 14. Carl Pehr Hilleström, *Petter Pehr Hilleström studying a sculpture*, c. 1770, oil on copper, 50 × 39 cm.

KONSTAKADEMIEN / THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS, STOCKHOLM.



there is empathy, sweetness and charm in the expressions and the selected palette. The allusion here includes a ludicrous participation in the Grand Tour. A painting of this period by the Swedish painter Carl Pehr Hilleström, *Petter Pehr Hilleström studying a sculpture*, indicates the complex relationship between artistic practice, fashionable clothing, bodily posture and an observation of the classical tradition, in this case a cast of the Apollo Belvedere (fig. 14). These Swedish and German survivals indicate

the topicality and mobility of images of the Grand Tourist abroad and the enjoyment of print culture as a part of everyday life for those with leisure, access to imported images and education.¹⁵ The Swedish artist who copied Darly's print created the sense of a proscenium stage, and this is significant, as many such prints might have had their basis in performances at the theatre, or been associated with that giddy world. Satirical prints inspired the theatre and other 'real life' situations. A contemporary report

of the London Pantheon masquerade ball in 1773, for example, noted that a woman wore 'a tall Head-dress and a little ladder to it, after Darley's [sic] print'.¹⁶

None of the recent scholarship on the macaroni focuses much on what was actually worn by these men. Assessing what people wore is a complicated matter that demands an assessment of sources including accounts, diaries, letters, memoirs, literature, and incipient journalism, to name but a few. In some cases there is evidence that the elites were depicted wearing clothes specially purchased for a portrait sitting (for example on the Grand Tour), but it is also well understood that in many cases the clothing depicted in art is fictive, or serves various allegorical or other purposes. What was 'actually worn' in the past is a topic that has been emphasised by art historian Aileen Ribeiro, who has argued that theoretical understandings of dress and fashion sometimes get in the way of understanding exactly what we are talking about in the pursuit of fashion studies.¹⁷ 'Fashion studies' in the US and the UK has tended to be dominated by ethnography and sociology and has been somewhat uncomfortable with material culture, museology and so called 'dress history'. Writers to date have not often enquired what the macaroni resembled. What did he look like and how are we to recognise him? If 'costume history' makes frequent use of printed and drawn caricatures, then do we arrive at a caricature when assessing macaroni fashion? That was certainly the impression re-presented in period films such as James Ivory's *Jefferson in Paris* (1995), which included a greatly exaggerated (but effective) vignette of the painter Richard Cosway.¹⁸

At a time when English dress generally consisted of more sober cuts and the use of monochrome broadcloth, macaronism emphasised the effects associated with French, Spanish and Italian textiles and trimmings such as brocaded and embroidered silks and velvets; pastel colours, fashionable patterns of spots (fig. 15), stripes and small-field motifs. So 'over the top' were some Italian silks and velvets that the painter Venceslao Verlin depicted a man wearing leopard-skin pattern breeches in a Grand Tour scene of 1768 (private collection, sold Carlo Orsi, Milan 1997). Contemporary

viewers were probably able to identify domestic and imported silks, as they had a highly refined sense of materiality, colours and cloth. It was suggested that French silks resembled colours viewed under artificial light, whereas the English (or so it was claimed) used a palette drawn more from nature.¹⁹ French silks were banned in Britain from 1766, and excluded from the Free Trade Treaty of 1786, 'a prohibition which lasted until July 1826'.²⁰ Much smuggling of cloth continued; ambassadors could flout the rules but tourists sometimes had their fine purchases burned at the border. A legal case of 1773 against the foppish Lord Villiers determined that a 'gentleman' could not be prosecuted for bringing in his own foreign-purchased clothes. Macaroni men, therefore, embodied a tension in English society between native interests, manufactures and prerogatives, and a cosmopolitan outlook that privileged travel, urbanity and access to outside ideas.

Being a macaroni was about more than wearing fashion. There were strong links between modes of appearing in dress and interior decoration. Fine London townhouses such as Chandos House (1770–71) and No. 20, St James's Square (1772–74), designed by Robert Adam, were being erected at this time. The



(left)

Fig. 15. M. Darly, *Sam Spot Esquire*, 1 July 1778.

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(far right)

Fig. 16. A French Macaroni eating of macaroons, published as the Act Directs, 22 July 1772.

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preferred colour combinations and effects of macaroni men were not without meaning; they related to broader fashion schemes for goods and spaces as diverse as snuffboxes and boudoirs. The colours particularly associated with macaronism include those used in the designs of this neo-classical architect: pea green, pink, red and deep orange, garnished with a great deal of gilt. Adam's use of 'patches of bright colour in a non-constructional way' was a departure from the more tonal approach of his rival, William Chambers, and surprised viewers and critics alike.²¹ The striking colours and light effects created for patrons by Adam in the 1770s, such as the red foil set behind glass and simulating porphyry for the drawing room of Northumberland House, London (1774), find their corollary in the foiled buttons and jewels of this period worn by men and women of fashion. The clashing components of macaroni dress were not always 'harmonious' but suggested a mode of dressing that carried ludic overtones and suggestions of carnivalesque *mentalités* that reached far back in time.

FASHION AND FOOD – MACARONI MEN

Things culinary have profound cultural meaning in all parts of the world. The slipperiness — and instability — of the food preferred by the macaroni finds its corollary in the fact that a flaccid penis is still compared with a 'noodle' by some Mandarin speakers. To what extent did people associate this fashion figure with jokes concerning food? Quite a lot, it would seem. A French dictionary of 1768 specified that 'macaroni etits [sic] morceaux de pâtes



be connected to earlier *mentalités*. 'Maccus' or 'Maco' was the name of a glutton of noodles in the *commedia*. Pulcinella (later 'Punch') was famous as a 'lazy, cunning and licentious' stage glutton and, as Meredith Chilton writes, his preferred foods were 'spaghetti, macaroni, and gnocchi, which he consumed in vast quantities whenever possible.'²³ In 1888 W.A. Clouston published *The Book of Noodles: Stories of Simpletons or Fools and their Follies*.²⁴ The joke here is partly that pasta swells up to several times its size, just as macaroni were associated with a swollen pride.

'MACARONI' THEREFORE SUGGESTED THE WORLD OF THE MEDIEVAL CARNIVAL, BURLESQUE AND CAROUSING CONNECTED TO THE GLUTTON.

coupés par tranche'.²² A macaroni caricature played directly with the analogy between food and fop: H. W. Bunbury's *The Salutation Tavern* (published by J. Bretherton, 20 March 1773), is subtitled 'Macaroni & other Soups hot every day.' The macaroni was firmly embedded within popular conceptions of food culture, carnival and the *commedia dell'arte* and can accordingly

The commonly held explanation for the title 'macaroni', that it was derived from a fondness for that dish, may be supplemented in that 'macaronic' refers also to a type of Latin poetry which revolved around wit and also foolery, a hallmark of the macaroni stereotype. 'Macaroni' therefore suggested the world of the medieval carnival, burlesque and carousing

connected to the glutton. The carnival reference was also related to the topos of the macaroni as 'numbskull' or 'noodle-head'; cauldrons of the food 'macaroni' had been paraded in early-modern European carnivals, accompanying a fat man (in Germanic carnival the food is more generally sausage).²⁵ Images of pasta-eaters consuming huge amounts and lengths of the food were particularly associated with Naples. Porcelain figures were made of 'spaghetti eaters' at factories in Italy (Capodimonte) and Spain (Buen Retiro) from mid-century to the 1780s.²⁶ Reproduced here for perhaps the first time, *A French Macarony Eating of Macaroons* (fig. 16) makes the connection between a foreigner and his food choice explicit. A fop in a fine striped suit, hanger sword and buckled shoes, with an elaborate and high hairstyle, holds an incongruous spoon, lifting his head up to eat some slippery pasta from the dish below. The joke is also scatological as a small dog fouls the pot on the ground from which he is eating. The theorist Jacques Lacan once remarked that 'everyone makes jokes about macaroni, because it is a hole with something around it'; that is, as medievalist Juliet Fleming notes, an object organised around emptiness.²⁷

The satirical image of the empty-headed man sometimes emerging fully born from an 'egg' (that is also subsequently 'empty') also might relate to folklore and carnival uses of eggs, in which witches were said to fly. There is another joke at work here: Eros 'is an ancient mythic figure at the centre of creation mythology who is said to have emerged from an enormous egg to create the earth'.²⁸ Such references provide an explanation for the distinctive image of a well-dressed macaroni hatching from an egg, published as the frontispiece to *The Macaroni Jester and Pantheon of Wit* (fig. 17). 'An Account of a Macaroni', published in the *London Magazine*, April 1772, described the macaroni as 'the offspring of a *body*, but not of an individual. This same body was a many headed monster in Pall-Mall, produced by the Daemoniack committee of depraved taste and exaggerated fancy, conceived in the courts of France and Italy, and adapted in England. Hence that variety of fantastical beings in all places of publick resort'. There followed a discussion of its digestion: 'The eye is the paunch of a *virtuoso Maccaroni*, as the stomach

of the glutton. The *devouring Maccaroni* does not derive the appellation from an immoderate indulgence in animal food; the idea would be too coarse and sensual'.²⁹

Fops were considered effeminate but that did not correlate necessarily with a lack of interest in women. Since the Italian Renaissance, the effeminate and finely dressed man was sometimes — but not always — associated with attributes of love and cast as an object of desire.³⁰ The macaroni episode redefined such 'effeminate' men. A substantial number of prints, plays and satires cast the macaroni as an indeterminate figure not fitting normative stereotypes of gender

(below)

Fig. 17. *The Macaroni Jester and Pantheon of Wit*, frontispiece, 1773.

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and sexuality. Although the aesthetics were different, the attributes of the Regency dandy (circa 1810) — deviant masculine consumption, non-reproductive irresponsibility, a rejection of ‘middling-sort’ gendering, a creation of the male body and home into a ‘work of Art’ — were already present in the macaroni.³¹ My work therefore maps a reading of clothing culture onto the history of sexuality. In so doing it questions some of the standard theories of male sartorial ‘renunciation’ (an expression coined by popular psychologist J.C. Flügel in the 1920s), many of which have overlooked the macaroni and turned directly to the dandy before commencing with an analysis of modern dressing.

The macaroni remained for a time to populate the novels of Jane Austen and Charles Dickens as an ailing and ridiculous fop, generally resident in Bath, at odds with youthful masculinity. Austen’s *Persuasion* includes the character of Sir Walter Elliot, the vain and obsequious father of Anne, who revels in the society of Bath which is disavowed by Anne in favour of the seaside: ‘Vanity was the beginning and the end of Sir Walter Elliot’s character; vanity of person and of situation.’³² *The Pickwick Papers* (1836–37), set around 1827, features a fifty year old macaroni, master of ceremonies at the Bath Assembly Rooms, with affected manners and speech: ‘it was difficult at a small distance to tell the real from the false.’³³ By the Edwardian period, the macaroni was reduced to being a figure of ‘olden times’, from a world ‘where grace and charm were omnipotent, where worth without wit, or wisdom without brilliance were of small account.’³⁴ He passed into the ‘silver fork’ short stories, as a ‘lahdy-da’ or macaroni in 1935,³⁵ and as late as 1938 was mentioned in one such story in the *Australian Woman’s Weekly*.³⁶ He was also alluded to rather wittily in the trade name of ‘Cavalier’ food products, described as ‘Australia’s most modern macaroni factory’, producing vermicelli and semolina pastes, in Collingwood, Melbourne.³⁷ Macaroni had come ‘full circle’, ready to be consumed as everyday food on Australian dining tables. The macaroni ended up old, foolish and feeble, rather than young and sparkling like the men I introduce. ¶



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from 2008–17. Parts of this research have been conducted within the EU-funded ‘Humanities in the European Research Area’ project *Fashioning the Early Modern: Dress, Textiles and Innovation in Europe 1500–1800* (conducted from 2010–13) which aimed to investigate the cultures of creativity that spread west-European fashion across linguistic and geographical borders. McNeil contributed to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art exhibition *Reigning Men: Fashion in Menswear 1715–2015* (and accompanying catalogue, Prestel, 2016), the largest exhibition of men’s fashion ever held, which will travel to Sydney in 2018.

‘Pretty Gentlemen’: Macaroni Men and the Eighteenth-Century Fashion World will be published by Yale University Press in March 2018. Grounded in a study of archival documents and surviving material culture, the book uses an art historical approach that crosses hierarchies and genres from the scurrilous caricature to the respectful portrait painting as well as a diverse range of applied arts including ceramics, glass and printed textiles. The monograph pays particular attention to the integration of primary sources concerning clothing and accessories and their deployment in a range of social spaces from the street to the theatre.

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AUSTRALIAN LEAGUE OF NATIONS UNION AND WAR REFUGEES

Internationalism and Humanitarianism, 1930–39

» JOY DAMOUSI

N'ever since the days of the Great War', stated the New South Wales (NSW) branch of the Australian League of Nations Union in its *Bulletin* in 1932, 'have the international waters been so troubled.'¹ The branch noted that just 'when it seemed that the League was handling current international problems with a considerable measure of success' issues were emerging to create a 'multitude of new problems'. One of the 'new' and 'multiple' problems that escalated during the 1930s was the growing number of refugees from various international conflicts. Refugees flowed from the Spanish Civil War of 1936; the Sino-Japanese war of 1937; and finally, in 1938, on the eve of the outbreak of the Second World War, an unprecedented refugee crisis was developing in Czechoslovakia and across Europe.

The branches of the Australian League of Nations Union (hereafter Union) — formed to promote the values and aims of the League of Nations — responded to the growing international refugee crisis with a range of measures and actions. I explore three distinctive aspects of this response, as a way of considering the role of the Union branches in attempting to foster within Australia an international and humanitarian outlook towards the plight of war refugees during the interwar years.

First, how these Union branches began to coalesce their activities in the 1930s around a language of refugees and humanitarian aid that

over time developed into a coherent narrative. Most notably, this became apparent with the indirect and then direct challenge to the White Australia policy from Union members as they became more assertive in their demands for government to take in refugees from war zones.

Second, how Union branches shifted from being educative groups to ones more directly involved in political agitation and active lobbying. Related to this is a key argument of this essay: that we can identify a shift by the Union from supporting specific and individual causes to adopting a defined liberal internationalist position on humanitarian refugee relief. This can be traced over the period from 1936–1939, when a wider and broader campaign developed in support of a more liberal refugee policy.

Third, why a focus on this period is significant for historiographical reasons. In histories of refugees, the 1930s are often seen as simply a prelude to, and dress rehearsal for, the Second World War. But this period warrants closer attention especially in relation to the NSW and Victorian branches of the League of Nations Union and their shifting response to the growing refugee crisis during the 1930s.

The broader significance of focusing on the 1930s is, I also suggest, to be found in the history of government administration. It is crucial to recall that, at this time, issues of immigration were dealt with in the External Affairs branch of the Prime Minister's Department, which in

(above)

Montage, Australian League of Nations Union members, 1938 (p. 73).

1935 became a separate Department of External Affairs. The Department of Immigration was not established until 1945. Why was this important? In having the two areas coupled administratively, we see a merging of international relations with issues of immigration where international diplomacy became focused on refugee and migration policy and vice versa. This became significant I argue because, flowing from this, Union members began to insist on the independent and separate Australian response to the international crisis that Australia's membership of the League of Nations allowed. Immigration became, in this context, about Australia taking the lead in international diplomacy and international relations.

The 1930s are significant for shifts in immigration policy itself, so I will very briefly comment on this, before moving on to the growing agitation by the Union on the question of refugees.

By the early 1930s, as the events in Europe began to escalate, there was increasing pressure on Australia to accept more non-British migrants. At this time, landing permits were required for non-British immigrants, normally given to those

who were able to procure an Australian sponsor or provide landing money. By the mid to late 1930s refugee movements became a wider public issue when applications for Jewish immigration began to increase with the rise of Nazism and the consequent flood of applications pouring in after 1933. Leaders within the Jewish community in Australia mobilised to contribute to refugee relief and lobbied governments to accept greater numbers of Jewish refugees. Following the destruction and violence of *Kristallnacht*, the refugee issue escalated world-wide. In 1938 the Australian Government announced that a quota of 15,000 refugees would be received over three years, beginning in 1939.²

One of the key tasks of the League of Nations from its inception in January 1920 was to protect minorities and offer help to the continuous waves of refugees.³ In 1920, Russian refugees were supported following the Russian revolution and the conflicts thereafter.⁴ The exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey was also a major focus for the efforts of the League, and it recorded that between 1924 and 1928, it had helped to settle over 200,000 families.⁵ Refugees were at the centre of Stanley Bruce's report to the Australian parliament in November 1935, outlining the aid and assistance



(left)
Australian League of Nations Union members attending the annual meeting, Canberra, January 1938.

PHOTO: NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA, [HTTP://NLA.GOV.AU/NLA.OBJ-138082183](http://nla.gov.au/nla OBJ-138082183).

provided by the League of which Australia was an active member.⁶ But Australia's own record on this issue reflected its commitment to the Immigration Act of 1901 designed to limit migration to Australia and to protect a 'white' Australia by ensuring that it remained uncontaminated by those not of British stock. While governments were prepared to provide material support for refugees, it was quite another matter when it came to accommodating them in Australia. During the ongoing crisis in Armenia, for instance, the League of Nations requested that Australia take a certain number of refugees, but this request was declined on racial and economic grounds.⁷

(below)

Newspaper article from *The Mercury* detailing the address given by Ms Fabian Chow, Thursday 24 March, 1938.

PHOTO: NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA. [HTTP://TROVE.NLA.GOV.AU/NEWSPAPER/ARTICLE/25501429](http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/25501429).

In Australia, Union branches had been formed across the country to promote the values and aims of the League which included upholding peace and security, international law, and the settlement of disputes through arbitration, negotiation and disarmament.⁸ The Victorian and NSW branches played a central role from 1936 to 1938 in supporting refugees, initially by assisting individual causes through fund raising and education. This gradually began to change.

With the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 Union branches offered similar support, most of it in the form of endorsing the efforts of others, such as Spanish relief aid organisations, as well as the Federal Government's allocation of £3000 to both sides of the conflict. In April 1938, the Victorian Branch of the League of Nations Union resolved to write to Prime Minister Lyons 'congratulating the Government on the grant of £3000 for Refugee Relief in Spain.'¹⁰ The Joint Spanish Aid Council worked with Union branches to co-ordinate the relief of Spanish refugees and orphaned children. They also supported the efforts by the Republican government to establish children's 'cities' where orphaned and refugee children were cared for and educated with aid from the Joint Spanish Aid Council.¹¹

But when it came to actively agitating for a cause, it was the Sino-Japanese war of 1937 that mobilised Union members into direct activity. The visit of Mrs Fabian Chow, originally from Victoria and ex-President of the Chinese Women's Club of Shanghai which carried out relief work for women and children in China, and Elsie Lee Soong, also a member of the Chinese Women's Club,¹² helped promote the need for financial aid for refugees from this war¹³ and the Union supported their efforts through fund raising. In June 1938, it raised £116 at a public meeting.¹⁴ The Victorian branch took up the cause of Chinese refugees with particular enthusiasm and energy to support humanitarian efforts. A boycott of Japanese goods was recommended to the Secretary-General in Geneva by the Victorian branch,¹⁵ but the wider executive of the Australian League organisation opposed such actions.¹⁶

In November 1937, the League of Nations provided much needed medical supplies.¹⁷ At the annual meeting of the Victorian Branch in mid-1938, the success of the China Relief Appeal was prominent with the branch having collected £2470 in Victoria, an astonishing achievement.¹⁸

By the time of the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Germany in 1938, both the NSW and Victorian branches had become actively involved in lobbying the Federal Government. For the first time they began to direct their energies into calling for assistance in bringing refugees to Australia. In October 1938, the Victorian



In July 1936, following the attack by Italy on Ethiopia, Union branches believed sanctions should be imposed on Italy to assert the authority of the League of Nations while it was also working to secure a peaceful settlement. The attack pointed not to the failure of the League, they argued, but to the failure of member states who had not used the machinery of the League effectively.⁹ But apart from expressions of outrage and this call for sanctions, Union branches took little action.

branch sought to pressure the Government to facilitate the immigration of Czech and German refugees.¹⁹ As the international crisis escalated, the branch became more assertive in its demands and made its own position clear publicly:

It needs little imagination to get some idea of the magnitude of the suffering and distress resulting from the cession of Czech territory to Germany. Many thousands of people, both Czechs and anti-Nazi Germans, are being rendered homeless, thousands of industrialists are being forced to migrate and so become unemployed. ... We British people have been saved, we hope finally, from the unspeakable horrors of a world war — but the cost of that escape has been borne in large measure by the people of Czechoslovakia.²⁰

Government take a new role:

The Government can only be expected to act in these matters if a sufficient number in the community asks for it to act. Such a request for action will only develop if each individual who feels the need for humanitarian action joins with the League of Nations Union in trying to aid these desperately unfortunate people.²⁴

The economic argument was one of the key points marshalled to support refugees. In a program outlined in November 1938 at a gathering at the Melbourne Town Hall, the Victorian branch identified, as a key priority, the assimilation of refugees into the most suitable industries needing workers.²⁵

The Union took its position to the community and to other organisations. In December

WE CAN IDENTIFY A SHIFT BY THE UNION FROM SUPPORTING SPECIFIC AND INDIVIDUAL CAUSES TO ADOPTING A DEFINED LIBERAL INTERNATIONALIST POSITION ON HUMANITARIAN REFUGEE RELIEF.

Soon the argument was made that such refugees would contribute to Australia's population and employment needs since their experience in either primary or secondary industry would be particularly suited to Australian conditions, although questions of race were never far from the discussion.²¹ Professor G.L. Wood from the University of Melbourne suggested that

both for humanitarian reasons, and from motives of self-interest we should all [do what] we could to settle some of these refugees in Australia. We need skilled workers for our expanding secondary industries, we need highly trained scientists, and we need people of good stock.²²

Wood agreed with many Australians when he observed that there was a chance 'that an immigrant will keep an Australian out of work'. The solution in his mind was 'careful selection' of those to be brought out, directed towards choosing ones 'with a training that cannot be obtained in Australia.'²³ The Union believed it was the responsibility of their members, along with others of similar views, to insist the

1938, members convened a public meeting that aimed to assist the 'speedy assimilation of refugees', suggesting 'the establishment of a refugee emergency council to co-ordinate and develop the work of existing refugee welfare organisations'. It explicitly expressed 'its sympathy with those who by reason of their race, religion, or political ideas were persecuted and forced to become refugees'. The meeting also supported government efforts to provide a sanctuary for those in need such as 'distressed men, women, and children'. Francis Anderson, the president of the NSW branch, worked with church groups, women's groups, unions, the Workers' Educational Association and the Refugee Committee of the Union and its chairman, Mr F.E. Barralough, to mobilise support.²⁶ Branches of the Union were also involved in initiatives with others to convene a united front of support for refugees, urging the Australian government to adopt such a stance in international affairs.

But economic imperatives were never far removed from humanitarian concerns. The needs of Jewish refugees caught the

(right)

Professor Francis Anderson and his wife returning to Sydney by the ship *Port Melbourne*, New South Wales, 15 February 1930.

PHOTO: NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA. [HTTP://NLA.GOV.AU/NLA.OBJ-160681036](http://nla.gov.au/nla:obj-160681036).



attention of the Union in 1936.²⁷ In September the Union resolved that it supported

on humanitarian grounds that the administration of the Immigration Act be reasonably relaxed in the case of a limited number of approved Jewish refugees and refers the matter to the Federal Executive to take action as it may deem desirable after making enquiries as to the present conditions.²⁸

Several arguments were put forward to support the immigration of Jewish refugees: 1. 'it would be a humanitarian gesture'; 2. 'members of the League could do something where the refugee movement had failed'; 3. 'it would be an advantage to Australia to import' skilled workers from Germany.²⁹

Throughout the 1930s, then, the Victorian branch led the way in active agitation and support for Australia's acceptance of refugees, using a range of arguments in an attempt to convince the government to do so. This was largely because of two active and committed members: Professor Harold Woodruff, the Victorian president in 1938, and the Victorian secretary, Constance Duncan. The efforts of both Woodruff and Duncan are notable as they were vocal, strident and increasingly insistent that the entry of European war refugees be a high priority for Australia.

Woodruff arrived in Australia from England in 1913 as professor of veterinary pathology at the University of Melbourne. He served in the Australian Imperial Force in the Veterinary Corps in Egypt and France, returning in 1917. After the veterinary school was closed in 1928, Woodruff took up the position of director of the bacteriology department. An advocate for world peace and a practising Methodist, Woodruff spoke against fascism in the 1930s, toured around Victoria warning against racial discrimination and actively advocated the end of the White Australia policy in the 1940s.³⁰

Duncan was a graduate of the University of Melbourne, completing her Bachelor of Arts in 1917 and Master of Arts in 1922. She became Australian secretary of the local branch of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and travelled to Japan where she forged considerable links. There she learnt Japanese and worked for the YWCA in Tokyo. She returned to Australia in 1932, joined the Lyceum Club, and from 1934 to 1941 was the Victorian branch secretary of the League of Nations Union and of the Bureau of Social and International Affairs.

Duncan became directly involved in the refugee question through her role as director of the Victorian International Refugee Emergency Council formed in 1938. She led the move to agitate for more refugees to be allowed to come to Australia. Through the Council, which was sponsored by the League of Nations Union and

the churches, Duncan advocated the admission of more refugees, pressing the need to assist them in settling into Australia and acquainting them with Australian culture, language and customs. She wrote of the need for Australians to adopt a more progressive stance regarding support for refugees: 'People need to be shown that to attack the refugee is really to help Hitler's propaganda.'³¹ In Duncan's association with both organisations she pushed the needs of refugees as an issue of utmost priority that should be of primary concern to the Union.

In particular Duncan promoted the need to assist political refugees, outlining this activity as central to the work of the Union. She believed that

assistance to refugees was an integral part of the League of Nations' Union work, the Union should endeavour to urge the Government to adopt a more definitive policy with regard to granting political refugees an asylum in Australia, and ... select immigrants from amongst the very large number of applicants, choosing those who can best be absorbed into Australian life.³²

This was a major advance in the efforts of the Union. In August 1938, it passed a list of resolutions regarding political refugees. These included: 'the cause of refugees is an integral part of the work of the League', and a 'direct concern'; and the Government should adopt a positive policy towards refugees. It was also stated that '[i]ndifference to the fate of political exiles is not in the British tradition, nor would it be calculated to raise the reputation of Australia in the eyes of international public opinion'. Furthermore, an humanitarian argument was advanced by Duncan:

Merely on humanitarian grounds there is a case for helping refugees. Australia is a democratic country; its sympathies are with oppressed minorities; but sympathies without practical expression are evasions of moral responsibility; Australia is morally committed not only by its membership of the League of Nations, but by its inherent nature as a democratic state to share in the protection of minorities.

The Victorian branch believed that the question of refugees was not separate from broader concerns. It was a 'serious international problem', it argued in 1938, 'likely if unresolved to have adverse effects upon international relations, with world-wide consequences'. It urged 'the Commonwealth Government to co-operate to the fullest extent possible in the international effort to provide refugees with a new political and economic basis of life.'³³ Immigration and the influx of migrants was seen as a solution to increasing Australia's productivity and its 'sparse population' — both issues which would later shape Australia's immigration policy.³⁴

By June 1939 Duncan and the Victorian branch had become some of the most vocal supporters of refugees. When the 'value of refugee immigrants' was discussed, Duncan argued on economic grounds about the enormous value refugees from Europe would bring to the community.³⁵ She believed that they were not to blame if they knew no English and were more likely to be employers when they settled.³⁶ For these reasons, she personally agitated for assistance to be given to them. In July 1939, she helped in the arrival of a Viennese couple.³⁷ In August 1939, in a speech at the Melbourne Lyceum Club, Duncan asked its graduate women members to act as guarantors for a graduate refugee. She succeeded in raising enough funds for three refugee graduates to be supported.³⁸

As the world plunged into further crisis towards the outbreak of war, Woodruff and Duncan became less measured in their public comments. In a letter published in the *Age* in April 1939, their frustration was palpable when they admitted the League of Nations had failed in its ultimate goal: to create a new and peaceful world order. With deep concern they noted that nations had 'sacrificed justice to their own selfish interests'; the breakdown of the League system meant that the key factor determining international politics was now brute force. The British were not 'blameless': 'we [too] have considered our own narrow and short-term interests in preference to those of the world community', they reflected. If any reprieve from war was to be permanent, then a more effective

body needed to be formed, 'something ... more than a hastily constructed association of nations, united only for the purpose of meeting an immediate threat'. The League must be rebuilt, they believed. No nation was free from responsibility for the current crisis, though they acknowledged that circumstances were beyond the control of individual nations.

For a brief period in the 1930s the Union took an active role of pressuring the Australian Government to change its international policy and accept more refugees from Europe. In doing so, it began pushing the Australian Government into a sphere of independent international diplomacy and relations — one less governed by Imperial interests — a move which was required if a more open immigration policy was to develop. Once Europe became consumed by war it was too late to save many refugees from the catastrophe. Far from despairing, Duncan and other committed members of the Union redoubled their efforts after 1939. Even if peace was lost, or because of its loss, the cause of refugee relief became more urgent and required greater intervention, as the victims of war were increasing in numbers never seen before across Europe. After the war, a new chapter would begin for both the League of Nations, when it later morphed into the United Nations, and for the Australian Government, with the establishment of the Department of Immigration to manage refugees as well as migrants. But this was almost a decade away.

Duncan, Woodruff and their ilk in League of Nations Union branches were amongst those who, in the 1930s, began to lay the foundation for drawing the attention of governments to the importance of the war refugee question to Australia's economy, population growth and issues of international relations. They were not the only advocates of broadening Australia's refugee intake but they played a central role in insisting that Australia act with independence and autonomy on the global stage. We have seen that, in the space of a few years, their voices became louder and more strident as the political terrain became more desperate. Eventually Australian governments would listen, but not before the calamity and devastation of total war had created a refugee crisis on a scale beyond anyone's imagination and comprehension. ¶



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Her latest project is a history of child refugees, humanitarianism and internationalism from 1920 to the present for which she was awarded an Australian Research Council Laureate Fellowship. This research seeks to examine the experiences and impact of child refugees displaced by the wars of the twentieth century.

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» PETER ANSTEY

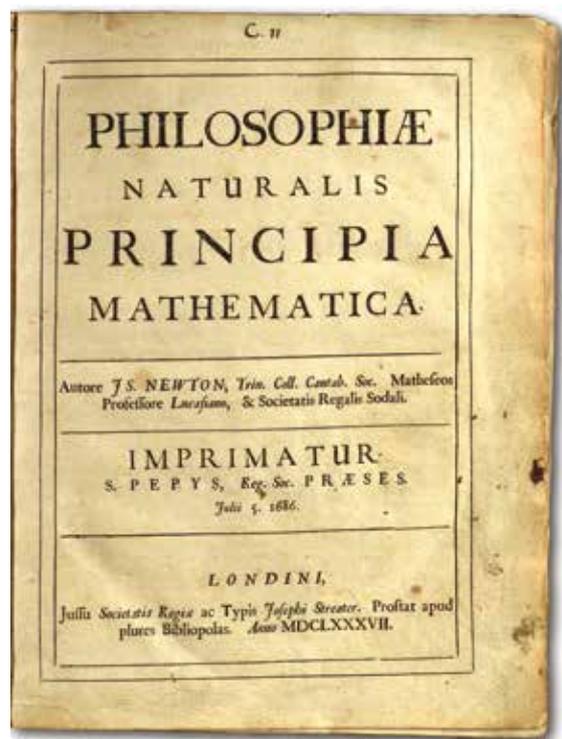
Sometimes it is the sheer ubiquity and ordinariness of a thing that prevents us from seeing it or appreciating its significance. Such is the case with the idea of principles in the early modern period, the age of the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment. Because almost everyone was talking about principles, arguing for them, arguing from them, assuming them, and using them, they have somehow slipped under the radar in intellectual history. Yet principles were important, very important.

Look at some of the titles of path-breaking books from this period: Isaac Newton's *Principia* (1687), René Descartes' *Principles of Philosophy* (1644), George Berkeley's *Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710), David Hume's *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751). There is a recurring theme: principles feature in both the titles and the content of these works.

Principles were in the warp and weft of early modern thought. There are books about the principles of nature, principles of reason, principles of chemistry, principles of painting, principles of law and government, principles of morality, principles of theology, principles of navigation, of hunting, midwifery, taste, and writing. Principles were everywhere. Moreover, principles were central to the assessment of character: it really meant something to be a woman or a man of principle.

It is hardly surprising then, that once I started to look for principles in the thought and writings

of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, I soon found myself overwhelmed with materials to work on. This is a rich seam in the history of philosophy, the history of science, the history of religion and art that to date has never been mined. Thanks to the faith and generosity of the Australian Research Council and the support of the University of Sydney, I have spent the last four years as a Future Fellow surveying, setting up various mineshafts, and drilling down and extracting from this precious vein of ore.



(above)
Montage using article figures.

(far right)
The title page of a rare annotated first edition of Newton's *Principia*, 1687.

REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF RARE BOOKS AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY LIBRARY.

And precious it is. There is a reason why the most valuable book in the Rare Books and Special Collections Library at the University of Sydney — indeed one of the most valuable books in Australia — is the annotated first edition of Isaac Newton's *Principia*. For this book introduced to the learned world a new set of principles, namely, the laws of motion and the law of gravitational attraction, which would transform the study of nature for centuries to come and which are still taught today in secondary schools the world over.

Yet for the historian of philosophy, the really interesting feature of Newton's *magnum opus* is the way in which his laws of nature came so quickly to be called principles. It may come as a surprise to learn that the notion of laws of nature as we know it today only emerged in the seventeenth century. The key figure here was the French philosopher and mathematician René Descartes (1596–1650). He effectively introduced the modern notion of laws of nature into natural philosophy (what we now call science), and he too regarded them as a kind of principle and argued that his two primary laws of nature derived from the immutability and simplicity of God.¹ This is because the idea of principles was at the very heart of the early modern view of how one acquires and builds a systematic body of knowledge.

The core idea was that to be a science, such as chemistry, optics, theology or morals, is to be a systematic body of knowledge founded on a small set of principles. Once the principles are in place, one then uses a method of demonstration — something like a set of knowledge generating procedures — to deduce all that can be known about the subject. The model, of course, was Euclidean geometry, which from a set of only five postulates generated an enormous number of theorems, many of which were entirely unexpected. It was as if the postulates or principles were so fertile, so fecund, that they contained within them all sorts of wonderful new truths.

To many in the early modern period, the newly discovered laws of nature seemed to function in the very same way: they seemed to enable one to generate knowledge. For example, Newton's laws were used to 'deduce' Kepler's laws of planetary motions. And it was not only in the

study of nature that principles had work to do. For some thinkers, such as the leading English philosopher John Locke (1632–1704), believed that it was possible to deduce a science of morality from a handful of principles, analogous to Euclidean geometry. Locke never undertook this task, but it was attempted by others.

Talk of moral principles brings to mind propositions like 'Love your neighbour as yourself' and 'One ought to keep one's promises'. These are normative principles that are concerned with what we ought to do. However, as one reads more and more moral philosophy from the period it becomes clear that, by the mid-eighteenth century, the discourse about moral principles undergoes a significant change. Instead of attempting to base morality on normative principles, philosophers, such as David Hume (1711–76) and Adam Smith (1723–90), argued that it is based on principles about human nature, and, in particular, human psychology. Thus, Hume had little interest in foundational normative claims. Instead he argued, on the basis of the observation of human nature, that 'morality is determined by sentiment'. Virtue, for Hume, is what gives the 'pleasing sentiment of approbation' and vice the opposite.² Nevertheless, Hume, like Locke before him, was committed to the standard view that to be a science is to be a structured body of knowledge based on principles: it is just that he disagreed with Locke about the nature of those principles.

With so much talk about principles in the air, it is hardly surprising that some scholars attempted to develop theories of principles. These theories were sometimes concerned with what qualifies a proposition to be a principle. Thus, the French logician Peter Ramus (1515–72) proposed three laws that principles had to conform to. They had to be universal, essential and convertible, as in 'All humans are rational animals'. It was also believed that there were different types of principles, such as common principles that pertained to all the sciences, and proper principles that were applicable only to one science. Some philosophers, such as some of the leading lights of the Berlin Academy in the 1740s and 1750s, argued that the ultimate principles of all the sciences were metaphysical, that is, principles about the nature of being itself.

(far right)

Portrait of Jean Le Rond d'Alembert by Maurice Quentin de La Tour, musée de Louvre.

REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION.

Indeed, some francophone philosophers claimed that, in fact, there is just one fundamental principle from which all other principles and ultimately all the sciences can be derived.

Jean le Rond d'Alembert (1717–83), Pierre-Louis Moreau de Maupertuis (1698–1759) and Étienne Bonnot de Condillac (1714–80) each claimed to have found such a principle, though ironically their principles all differ. In his article on the 'Elements of the Sciences' in the massive *Encyclopédie* project of the French *Philosophes*, d'Alembert claims:

if we were able to observe without interruption the invisible chain that links all the objects of our knowledge, the elements of all sciences could be reduced to *one unique principle*, whose consequences would be the elements of each particular science.³

D'Alembert believed that this single foundational principle can be found *a priori*, that is, without the use of observation and experiment. Experiment, however, was absolutely central to the early moderns' attempts to discover and establish principles. For example, in his *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751), Hume claims 'we can only expect success, by following the experimental method'.⁴ That experimental method was the method of a new movement in the study of nature called Experimental Philosophy, which first emerged in the nascent Royal Society of London in the 1660s. The impact of this new approach to science on the quest to establish principles was profound. And perhaps the best way to illustrate this is through the experimental philosopher *par excellence*, Robert Boyle (1627–91).

Boyle is known today as the father of chemistry, and that epithet provides a nice entrée into the centrality of principles to his thought. His most famous book *The Sceptical Chymist* (1661) is also something of a treasure — a first edition recently sold at auction for £362,500. In that work Boyle uses the term 'principle' 270 times. His purpose in the book is to argue against various theories of chemical principles in favour at the time, such as the Aristotelian four element theory and the Paracelsian *tria prima* of salt, sulphur and mercury. The second, 1680, edition of the book was published in



conjunction with a work that continues his polemical strategy. It is entitled 'Experiments and Notes about the Producibleness of Chymicall Principles'. Boyle argued there that the chemists' principles were ultimately reducible to more fundamental principles, namely, the shape, size, motion and texture of the underlying tiny material bodies, or corpuscles. He called this his Corpuscular Philosophy and he attempted to back up his claim with appeals to numerous chemical experiments.

Experimental philosophers were adamant that, in order to understand the structure and behaviour of nature, we need to derive its principles from observation and experiment. Thus, they were opposed to those who eschewed experiment and began with untested principles and hypotheses. This is precisely what John Locke opposes in the opening book of his famous *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), which argues against the popular view that the mind at birth is furnished with innate principles. It is also what Newton opposed in his famous dictum *Hypotheses non fingo* — I feign no hypotheses.⁵

Now, it can hardly have escaped the reader's notice that the term 'principle' referred to a variety of things in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Laws of nature are very different to chemical principles, which, in turn, do not have much in common with normative claims such as 'You should keep your promises'. Part of the challenge of understanding the idea of principles in this period is to make sense of the variety of uses or types of principles that were appealed to. It really does seem to be a family resemblance concept rather than something for which one can give a simple definition. Nevertheless, there is a fairly natural division between principles that are things in the world, such as chemical principles, and principles that are propositions, such as those we find in morals or logic or geometry.

A fascinating example of the use of principles in geometry is Brook Taylor's *New Principles of Linear Perspective*, which appeared in 1719. Taylor was the first to set out the principles of two-point perspective drawing. The work itself is technically demanding but its application is relatively intuitive and was already being applied by architectural artists. Perhaps the high-water mark of architectural painting in the eighteenth century is the work of the Venetian painter



(left)

Brass cast by Carl Reinhold Berch of an ivory medallion of Robert Boyle made by Jean Cavalier in 1690.

PRIVATE COLLECTION

Canaletto (1697–1768), who perfected two-point perspective painting in his marvelous scenes of Enlightenment Venice. In his painting of St Mark's Square below we can see the manner in which he has used two vanishing points to create a vista that cannot be seen in real life.

If there was a true man of principles in the early modern period, it would have to be G.W. Leibniz (1646–1716). This extraordinary polymath — co-inventor of the calculus, historian, philologist, diplomat, natural philosopher and metaphysician — was known above all for his Principle of Sufficient Reason. The principle claims '[T]here can be found no fact that is true or existent, or any true proposition, without there being a sufficient

(below)

Piazza San Marco looking South and West, by Canaletto, 1763.

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reason for its being so and not otherwise.⁶ A second fundamental principle for Leibniz was the Law of Non-Contradiction, namely 'No proposition and its negation can be true at the same time'. Together these two principles for Leibniz were the basis of human reasoning.

The Principle of Sufficient Reason is an explanatory principle. It underlay Leibniz's view that this world is the best of all possible worlds. After the devastating Lisbon earthquake in 1755, the French *philosophe* Voltaire (1694–1778) famously took issue with Leibniz's claim, mocking it in his satirical novel *Candide*.

Terrified, confounded, thoroughly distraught, all bleeding and trembling, Candide reflected to himself: 'If this is the best of all possible worlds, then what must the others be like?'⁷

about his laws of nature and these laws were very quickly appropriated for other purposes. A case in point is the role that they came to play in natural religion. The view that there is a natural religion, constituted by principles, as distinct from revealed religion, emerged in the second half of the seventeenth century. It is found, for instance, in John Wilkins' *Of the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion* of 1675. The kernel of natural religion is a set of principles discoverable by human reason and available to everyone. These principles include such things as 'that there is a just and holy God, and a wise Providence, and a future State of Rewards and Punishments'.⁹

In the early eighteenth century, some mathematically competent theologians who understood Newton's achievement realised that his laws could be used as support for the

THUS, HUMANS SEEM TO HAVE FOUND A ROLE FOR PRINCIPLES IN AN ENORMOUS VARIETY OF DISCIPLINES IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES.

Yet some of Leibniz's other explanatory principles fared much better. One extremely popular explanatory principle, that Descartes made famous and Leibniz promoted, was the view that all explanations of change in nature should be analogous to the functioning of machines: all explanations should only appeal to the shapes, sizes and motions of the parts of the objects involved. This was at the core of what was called the Mechanical Philosophy, an approach to nature that was enormously popular and highly controversial. It was largely on the basis of this explanatory principle, for example, that Descartes could claim that animals are merely very sophisticated machines, the doctrine of the *bête machine*.⁸ This principle was also the primary motivation for Leibniz to reject Newton's claim about universal gravity. Gravity seemed to Leibniz and many others to be a violation of the fundamental mechanical nature of the natural world, a mysterious form of action at a distance. He regarded it as an occult quality that violates the principles of the mechanical philosophy.

Now, while some had doubts about the nature of Newtonian gravity, few had any reservations

principles of natural religion. William Whiston (1667–1752), for example, who succeeded Newton as Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge — the chair recently held by Stephen Hawking — argued that the principles of natural religion were themselves derived from more fundamental principles, namely, Newton's laws of motion and gravitational attraction. The title of his book *The Astronomical Principles of Religion, Natural and Reveal'd* (1717) says it all: the principles of natural religion are founded on astronomical principles, namely, the principles discovered by Newton! Samuel Clarke (1675–1729) makes a similar claim in the famous Leibniz–Clarke correspondence, which was published in the same year as Whiston's book. Where Descartes had earlier based his laws on the immutability of God, Whiston and Clarke argued for the existence of God from the laws.

Thus, humans seem to have found a role for principles in an enormous variety of disciplines in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They appear in everything from natural philosophy and its sub-disciplines, to theology and morals. And principles still have a central place in many disciplines today. For

some, the mark of a mature or developed science is the fact that it has clearly articulated and well-supported principles. Nevertheless, the quest for certain and necessary principles from which knowledge can be derived is no longer universal in the natural sciences. Inductive reasoning now has a very prominent and secure place in the way in which we generate knowledge. Moreover, the grip of the Euclidean model has significantly weakened. Looking back at the early modern period, I believe, there is a principled reason why we can say that that was the heyday of principles. ¶



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» CHRIS ANDREWS



(above)

Anzac Bridge,
Sydney.

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Two Bridges

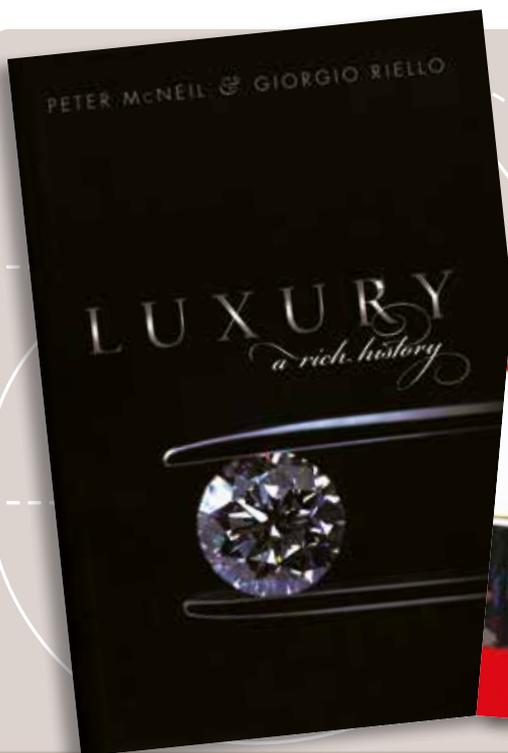
A fish plops back into the river.
A woman on the bridge who kisses
each slice of bread before she sends it
spinning away through the gnatty air.
The rake is set at a new angle
in its rain-pocked bunker, and the cars
idle over the incoming tide.
I believe what the scrum master says:
the future belongs to the agile.

I'm just not sure about agile: good.
A jackhammer jars its backhoe arm.
A wet demolition saw cuts in.
A crumpled youth interminably
tuning his ukulele beside
the cash machine, preparing to sing
for his ibuprofen is perhaps
the still middle-point of this ripping
up and down and out to fill the skips.

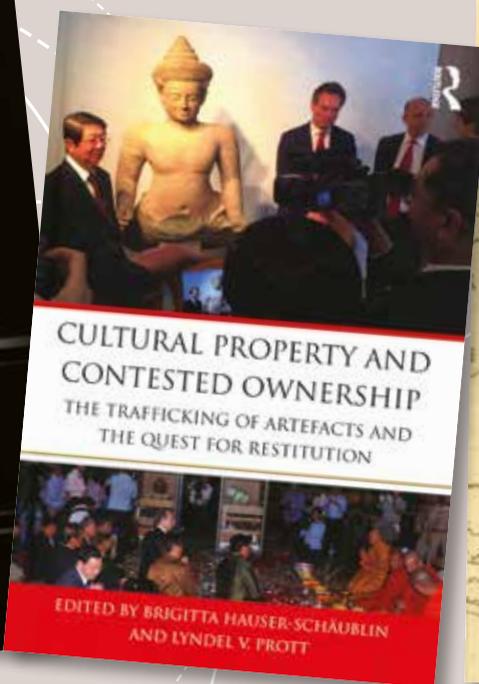
What if it's more agile to outsource
the enforcement of paralysis?
A man on the railway bridge who counts
rolls of steel. A student of English
as a third language eventually
inferring that *Ikn* means *I think*.
What carbs escape this ibis probing
will be discovered when brightness falls
and the netways of ratwork go live.

Ex Libris

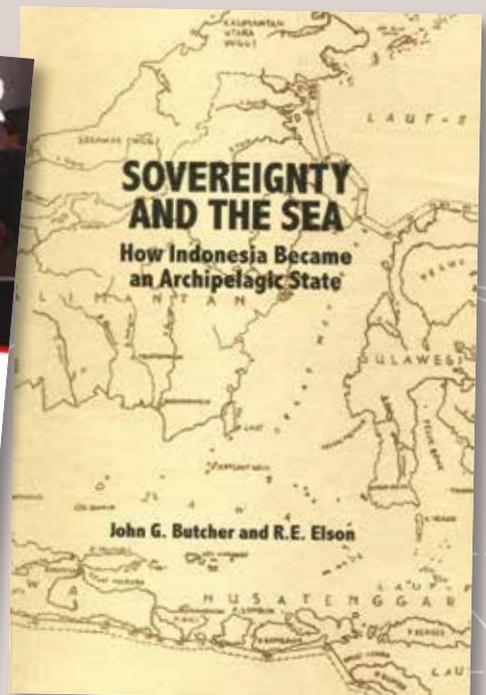
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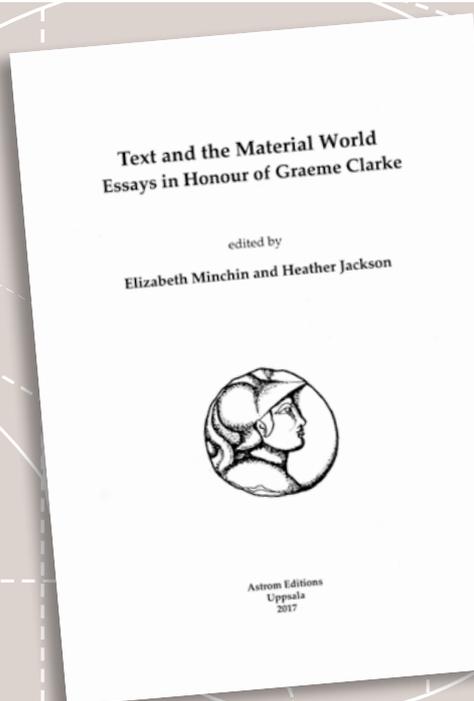


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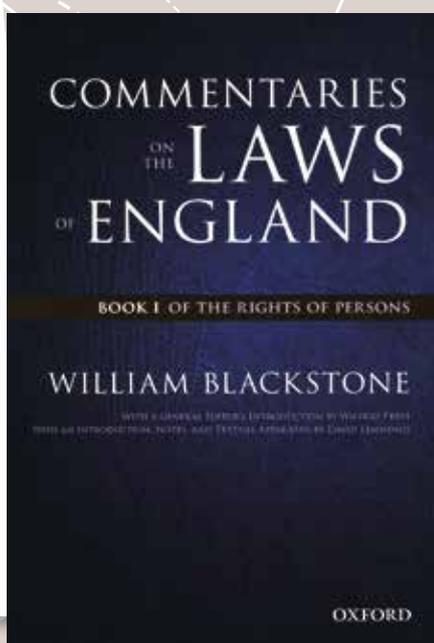


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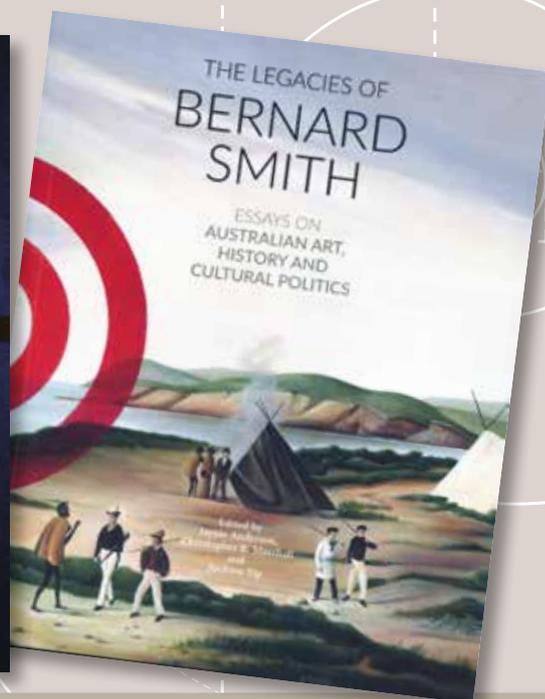
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