

NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

When the 2019/2020 Editorial Collective announced the theme for Volume 47 of the Melbourne Historical Journal 'Narratives and Power' we had little sense of the greater significance this theme would take on, as the world stood on the brink of global pandemic and a popular movement for racial justice that is still increasing in pitch. Questions about who holds power, and who may tell our stories are both perennial and evolving. Increasingly, we look to history to understand how these questions may be answered in our contemporary context. Postgraduate and Early Career Historians play an important role in these conversations, and, in the face of the new challenges facing academia, nurturing a platform for these voices is more important than ever.

This edition of Melbourne Historical Journal features a range of research articles, reviews, lectures, and interviews which offer fresh perspectives on our chosen theme. Each asks different questions of what we may mean by narratives and power, exploring themes of justice, representation, heritage, memory and honour.

The edition opens with a feature article contributed by Mary Tomsic who explores cultural representations of forcibly displaced children and children affected by war. Undertaking a close reading of Polish video game *This War of Mine* she demonstrates the ways in which powerful ideas about childhood, innocence and care are perpetuated, and critically interrogates the political significance of these narratives. Her article raises powerful questions about who may tell the stories of displaced children and children in conflict zones, and the role a historian can play not only in explaining and understanding the nature of particular cultural ideals in their appropriate context, but also in centring and empowering the voices of children and other marginalised groups.

Our Postgraduate and Early Career Research articles open with Nayree Mardirian's consideration of the nature of apology in post-war Lebanon. By exploring key public apologies, Mardirian highlights the ways in which these speech acts have been integrated into Lebanese civil war discourse, and their cultural and political impact. Her article is a significant and timely intervention in studies of transitional justice, and the role historians may play in this space.

Adelaide Greig's article analyses the works and reception of fifteenth-century Welsh poet Gwerful Mechain. Grieg demonstrates the ways in

which Mechain's poetry challenged contemporary gender norms, and how this impacted the reception of her works among her contemporaries and in subsequent centuries. Grieg challenges the use in history writing of terms such as 'exceptional', 'modern' and 'extraordinary', arguing for a change in the language used to describe female figures from the past. Her article highlights the significant and potentially long-lasting influence of historians' language choices in the construction of historical narrative and memory, as well as the potential trivialisation of the achievements of women within their respective historical contexts.

This year's winner of the Greg Denning Prize is Elizabeth Tunstall's 'Of Honour and Innocence: Royal Correspondence and the Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots'. The Greg Denning Prize is annually awarded to a graduate article published in the MHJ that best engages with the broad themes and methodologies that were resonant in his work and ideas. Tunstall's article considers a direct relationship between the language and narratives of Queen Elizabeth of England and King James VI of Scotland, and the nature of royal power. By taking seriously traditions of innocence, honour, mourning and modesty Tunstall offers fresh perspectives on a notorious period of geopolitical conflict. Through a critical and considered reading of letters between the King and Queen, her article suggests new avenues of understanding vibrant and contested source materials.

In "Posh People Love Gangsters' Contested Heritage: Preservation Debates at the Former Pentridge Prison Site: 1993-2014" Mali Rea explores the connections between heritage, preservation, commercial interests and dark tourism. Taking as her subject the notorious Pentridge Prison, Rea's article raises questions of memory, identity, ownership and social history. The prison site, which today are luxury apartments with views of a bluestone panopticon and former cellblocks and marketed as a 'heritage experience', is both a unique and a classic example of the ways in which public histories of trauma and state violence are contended with in a commercialised context. Rae offers a critical perspective of current heritage practices which will prove meaningful for many historical sites.

Dr Sabine Cotte's 'Mosaic, gold, and frilly skirts: Mirka Mora's legacy in Melbourne' examines the material practice of Mirka Mora and her unique place in Melbourne's history. Mora was a bohemian icon who revolutionised the contemporary art scene in 1950s Melbourne. Cotte explores the legacy of material culture she left in the city, from her bold,

famous murals to the new artistic and social places she established. This rich work of cultural and art history adds to our understanding of Mora's range of artistic techniques, her use of material culture to shape her personal narrative, and the ways in which she was connected to, and shaped, the artistic and urban landscape of Melbourne.

The Melbourne Historical Journal traditionally publishes the text of the annual Greg Denning Memorial Lecture. This year, this task was particularly fitting, as the lecture was given by three Early Career Researchers. Each paper offered a different perspective of the theme 'Listening Across Boundaries', and meaningfully reflected on the legacy and methodology of Denning. Nat Cutter's talk explored the lives of three 'little people' in the early modern Maghreb. Henry Reese introduced us to the auditory world of rural Victoria around the turn of the century. Fallon Mody considered the experience of 'Arthur Deery' an 'Alien Doctor' working in Victoria at the height of the Cold War. Each took a creative approach to their chosen subjects, and found joy, community and humour within these often-overlooked social worlds.

This year the Melbourne Historical Journal, for the first time, published a series of interviews with historians. Exploring the connections between public history, narratives and power, and the contemporary role of the historian: these interviews survey the world of history beyond academia and celebrate the many paths young historians may take. Beginning with Carolyn Fraser, our first interview introduces readers to the revitalised exhibition spaces of the State Library of Victoria, including some of Fraser's own memories of her time as an Early Career Researcher. Our interview with Sophie Couchman explores the connections between professional and family historians and suggests the ways in which breaking down these traditional barriers may offer new insights into transnational histories. Finally, we conclude this series of interviews with the hosts of popular history podcast *Queer As Fact* who discuss the challenges and ambitions they hold as young historians seeking to present queer history in a meaningful and accessible way. This series of interviews represents a new direction for Melbourne Historical Journal, and an opportunity to engage in a conversation between a diverse range of historians, all of whom offer different perspectives, ambitions and passions for the world of historical studies, and, in particular public histories.

Our reviews section this year includes new publications and new exhibitions. We hope that taken together, and alongside the issue's interviews, they offer insight into the diversity of the contemporary historical landscape, and the

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responsibility of historians to consider the range of cultural, social and political contexts in which their work intervenes.

We hope you enjoy this collection of postgraduate and early career scholarship, and thank you for supporting the Melbourne Historical Journal.

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