NARRATIVES & POWER

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Narratives & Power

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. Greig 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. Greig 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 Dening Prize is Elizabeth Tunstall's 'Of Honour and Innocence: Royal Correspondence and the Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots'. The Greg Dening 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.

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 Dening 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 Dening. 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

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.

The MHJ Collective (Jessie Matheson, Jennifer McFarland, Stephen Jakubowicz, Jonathan Tehusijarana, Luke Yin, Max Denton and Bronwyn Beech Jones)

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FEATURE ARTICLE

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Gaming, History and the Care and Protection of Children

Mary Tomsic

Introduction

In researching visual representations of forcibly displaced children and children affected by war, I have been interested in exploring what sources by, for and about children can tell us about the past and the present. Since I began working with materials such as drawings by children, picture story books about and for children, as well as Instagram posts by adults who were child refugees, I have reflected on the different ways that narratives about children in war and displaced children circulate, who creates these narratives, and what ideas about children and childhood are mobilised through them.[1] In carrying out this research, some ideas I have seen repeatedly are of children being primarily understood as apolitical, innocent and requiring protection and care. This is not to say that these ideas are applied equally to all children, but nonetheless they are ideas that seem to hold considerable power in sources and materials about children, war and forced displacement.

The work of scholars including Miriam Ticktin, Margaret R. Higonnet and Liisa Malkki reveals how the categories of children and childhood are constructed in particular times and places, and the influence of dominant Western ideologies in producing particular children as archetypal figures of innocence.[2] Research like this shows the boundaries this places on how children can be understood,

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[1] Mary Tomsic, 'Children's Art: Histories and Cultural Meanings of Creative Expression by Displaced Children,' in *Children's Voices from the Past: New Historical and Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, eds. Kristine Moruzi, Nell Musgrove, and Carla Pascoe Leahy (Springer, 2019), 137-58; Mary Tomsic and Claire Marika Deery, 'Creating "Them" and "Us": The educational framing of picture books to teach about forced displacement and today's "refugee crisis"', *History of Education Review* 48.1 (2019): 46-60 https://doi.org/10.1108/HER-11-2018-0027; Mary Tomsic, 'Sharing a Personal Past: #iwasarefugee #iamarefugee on Instagram,' in *Visualising Human Rights* (Perth: UWA Press, 2018), 63–84; Mary Tomsic, 'The Politics of Picture Books: Stories of Displaced Children in Twenty-First-Century Australia,' *History Australia* 15.2 (2018): 339-56, https://doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2018.1452156.

[2] Miriam Ticktin, 'A World without Innocence,' *American Ethnologist* 44.4 (2017): 577-90, https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.12558; Liisa Malkki, 'Children, Humanity, and the Infantilization of Peace,' in *In the Name of Humanity: The Government of Threat and Care*, eds. Ilana Feldman and Miriam Ticktin (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 58-85; Margaret R. Higonnet, 'Child Witnesses: The Cases of World War I and Darfur,' *PMLA* 121.5 (2006): 1565-76.

what ideals and expectations are imagined for children and how quickly, in some political contexts, some child-aged people can be excluded from the category of children.[3] In contrast to idealised notions of apolitical children, scholars including Kirsi Pauliina Kallio, Jouni Häkli and Janette Habashi have examined the explicitly political agency, engagements and actions of children.[4] Despite the scholarly work on constructions of children and childhood as well as children's actions, there remains an everyday approach to seeing many children as apolitical, innocent and in need of care and protection.

In researching and writing from Australia and thinking about war and forced displacement across the globe in an Australian context, there are two forces which require consideration as part of any analysis. One is the ongoing colonial project of the Australian nation; and the other is the Australian border-protection regime. These two forces have long histories and are certainly not the same, but they intersect and interact personally, politically and structurally around the nation state.[5] They create distinctions between people as well as hierarchies of people. Particularly significant are the starkly different ideas, standards, and practices of state sanctioned care for children from particular backgrounds. A demonstrable lack of care is afforded to Indigenous children in, for example, the ongoing removal from families as well as through detention in prisons.[6] There is also a clear lack of care afforded to children who are seeking asylum or born to parents who are seeking asylum.[7] As historian

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[3] Carly McLaughlin, '"They Don't Look like Children": Child Asylum-Seekers, the Dubs Amendment and the Politics of Childhood,' *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44.11 (2018): 1757-73, https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1417027.

[4] Kirsi Pauliina Kallio and Jouni Häkli, 'Are There Politics in Childhood?,' *Space and Polity* 15.1 (2011): 21-34; Kirsi Pauliina Kallio and Jouni Häkli, 'Tracing Children's Politics,' *Political Geography* 30.2 (2011): 99-109; Janette Habashi, 'Language of Political Socialization: Language of Resistance,' *Children's Geographies* 6.3 (2008): 269-80; Janette Habashi, 'Children's Agency and Islam: Unexpected Paths to Solidarity,' *Children's Geographies* 9.2 (2011): 129-44.

[5] See for example, Anna Haebich, *Spinning the Dream: Assimilation in Australia 1950-1970* (Perth: Fremantle Press, 2008); Amy Nethery, '"A Modern-Day Concentration Camp": Using History to Make Sense of Australian Immigration Dention Centres,' in *Does History Matter?: Making and Debating Citizenship*, eds. Gwenda Tavan and Klaus Neumann, (Canberra: ANU Press, 2009): 65-80.

[6] For example: Melissa O'Donnell, Stephanie Taplin, Rhonda Marriott, Fernando Lima and Fiona J. Stanley, 'Infant Removals: The Need to Address the over-Representation of Aboriginal Infants and Community Concerns of Another "Stolen Generation"', *Child Abuse & Neglect* 90 (April 2019): 88-98, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.01.017 and 'Royal Commission into the Protection and
Detention of Children in the Northern Territory' report at https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/20181010003051/https://childdetentionnt.royalcommission.gov.au/Pages/Report.aspx [accessed 11 September 2019].

[7] For example: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), *A Last Resort? National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention*, (Sydney: HREOC, 2004); Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), *The Forgotten Children: National Inquiry into Children in*

Jordana Silverstein has shown in her analysis of the history of Australia's *Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act* (1946), the care and control of unaccompanied refugee children has always been tied to the political control of the nation, through which particularly racialised and normative ideas of children, family and parenthood are endorsed.[8] Structural and cultural racism and xenophobia, delivered by the state through politics and policies, as well as by individuals, institutions and communities, continue to make up a complex set of imaginaries and understandings of children from various social and cultural backgrounds.

In this piece I want to consider one cultural representation, a digital game called *This War of Mine*, wherein a group of civilian adults and children are living through war and conflict. I want to examine how people playing the game are positioned, and have positioned themselves, in relation to the game and the children within the game. This provides insight into how children are understood and the types of relationships of care that are constructed. I am also interested in these representations as historically and culturally specific artifacts, showing how the past is mobilised and on what terms history is considered.

THIS WAR OF MINE

This War of Mine was first released in 2014 by 11 bit studios. The studio was founded in Poland in 2009 by a self-described 'bunch of veterans of polish gaming industry'.[9] This was the second game 11 bit studios made and on their website they describe it as 'A game that could matter' and 'a game that had a potential to touch people'.[10] The focus on civilians in *This War of Mine* marks this game as different. Having civilians as playable characters is not common in digital war games. Most digital war games usually focus on combat and do this from the perspective of an individual who is controlling a weapon. In contrast, the creators of *This War of Mine* described their motivation as being

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Immigration Detention (Sydney: AHRC, 2014).

[8] Jordana Silverstein, '"I Am Responsible": Histories of the Intersection of the Guardianship of Unaccompanied Child Refugees and the Australian Border,' *Cultural Studies Review* 22.2 (2016): 65, https://doi.org/10.5130/csr.v22i2.4772; Jordana Silverstein, '"The Beneficent and Legal Godfather": A History of the Guardianship of Unaccompanied Immigrant and Refugee Children in Australia, 1946–1975,' *The History of the Family* 22.4 (2017): 446-65, https://doi.org/10.1080/1081602X.2016.1265572.

[9] 'Our Story,' 11 bit, http://www.11bitstudios.com/about-us/ [accessed 1 July 2017].

[10] Ibid.

to show 'the real picture of war', which they see as being war from a civilian's perspective.[11]

The game itself is a survival/resources/time management one that focuses on civilians surviving while a city is under siege in the fictional European city of Pogoren in Graznavia. The geography is constructed through the urban location and the type of characters in the game. For example, initial characters are Bruno (a cook), Pavle (an ex-football star), Marko (the football star's best friend), and Katia (a journalist). To play, gamers point and click to control characters to survive during the war. The characters have physical and psychological needs that the gamer needs to attend to, but not everything is within the player's control, characters might die or become ill, and items in their possession might be stolen. Movement within the game is determined by day and night – characters hide during the day and can only go out under the cover of darkness. All decisions that the person playing the game makes are serious, involving 'life-and-death decision[s] driven by your conscience'. The aim is to 'Try to protect everybody for your shelter or sacrifice some of them for longer-term survival'. In this context 'During war, there are no good or bad decisions; there is only survival'.[12] *Guardian* reviewer Mary Hamilton described playing *This War of Mine* as teaching 'you how far you'd go to survive, where you'd draw the line' when, for example, making a decision to either rob an elderly couple or go without food.[13] Within the context of the game, sociologist Elisabeta Toma has noted that morally 'good' choices, like providing medicine to someone, does not necessarily produce the 'correct winning strategy' for the game.[14]

In terms of historical research, one of the writers of the game, Pawel Miechowski, said 'We started by looking at the siege of Sarajevo … We also looked at the conflicts in Kosovo and then historically wider: the Warsaw uprising of 1944 and the siege of Leningrad. We wanted stories that described what life was like during those conflicts – stories about specific situations or choices people

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[11] Karol Zajaczkowski in 'This War of Mine: The Little Ones - Dev Diary: The Kids,' IGN, October 26, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwKWg2v8iYQ [accessed 23 June 2017].

[12] 'This War of Mine', Steam, https://store.steampowered.com/app/282070/This_War_of_Mine/ [accessed 10 September 2019].

[13] Mary Hamilton, 'This War of Mine - gaming's sombre antidote to Call of Duty,' *Guardian*, October 10, 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/oct/10/this-war-of-mine-gamings-sombre-antidote-to-call-of-duty [accessed 8 September 2019].

[14] Elisabeta Toma, 'Self-Reflection and Morality in Critical Games. Who Is to Be Blamed for War?,' *Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology; Bucharest* 6.1 (2015): 214.

had to make in order to survive'.[15] Overall, the creators did not want the game to be set in a particular city in a particular time, rather they wanted to create a generic Eastern European city.[16]

So, while a number of historical events have been identified that influenced the developers, in other online discussions the game is often presented more singularly as being inspired by the siege of Sarajevo which took place between 1992 and 1996 during the Bosnian War. The visual is important in constructing this perception. For example, an image in the game that is continually used is of a tall city building on fire. This image is used in the transitions between days in the game and refers to a well documented image of the city of Sarajevo during the siege.[17] One person responded to a YouTube gameplay video, recognising the building and taking the time to comment, saying 'This game is made by the story that happened in my town Sarajevo, there is parlament [sic] building in picture when days are changing [sic] "Day 3" etc. i would rly like to play this game'. In a reply to this comment the gamer continued 'That was war between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, where in game "sniper" was Serbians soldiers here are the pictures' and links were included to three photographs online.[18] While these comments on YouTube are not representative of all the online conversations, they do show how people recognise their histories and homes in games such as these.

Alongside the video game, on YouTube there are a series of launch trailers for the game. One of these reveals the ways the multiple personal and childhood connections to war that the videogame elicits. One titled *The Survivor* is a film about Emir Cerimovic and his experiences being 9 years old and living in Sarajevo on the day before the siege began in 1992.[19] Cerimovic, an artist, graphic designer and game developer, was a consultant for *This War of Mine*

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[15] Ed Smith, 'War games: POV switches from shooting to emotional impact,' *Observer*, July 30, 2015, Factivia Document OB00000020150730eb7u0005l.

[16] Jordan Erica Webber, 'Inside a virtual war: can video games recreate life in a conflict-ridden city?,' *Guardian*, November 29, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/nov/29/this-war-of-mine-video-game-about-life-cities-war [accessed 8 September 2019].

[17] Nic Robertson, 'Sarajevo: Then and Now,' CNN, https://edition.cnn.com/2015/06/05/europe/sarajevo-then-and-now/index.html [accessed 2 July 2017].

[18] Amer Ćorović comment on 'This War of Mine Gameplay - Part 2 - CHILDREN IN NEED!,' AndrewOscarDelta, November 22, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmsxVmuwCjw [accessed 23 June 2017].

[19] Cerimovic and his family sought relative safety with his maternal Grandmother in Zenica (north west of Sarajevo) and eventually escaped to France, Daniel Starkey, 'Harrowing Game Exposes War's Impact on Children,' *Wired*, January 30, 2016, https://www.wired.com/2016/01/this-war-of-mine-the-little-ones/ [accessed 10 September 2019].

as well as contributing artwork to the game and appearing in this trailer.[20] It is one of the responses to this trailer, by Mirza Lych, that I want to focus on here. Lych explains that he is from Bosnia and was 5 years old when the war started. While he did not live in Sarajevo, the town where he lived 'was razed to ground level by the Serb forces'. He said:

> My family had to flee and leave everything behind ... Some of our neighbors who decided to stay before the shelling started didn't survive even for a month. Some of them were slaughtered in their houses because they believed the soldiers would spare the civilians ... I just wish that this never happens to anyone, and this trailer almost made me cry, even if I'm a full grown man.[21]

The personal and emotional impact of the war, as well as the nature of the conflict, is articulated alongside the game and the connections between events and the game are clearly expressed.

In some ways there is an ambiguous relationship to the history presented and supported through *This War of Mine*. As a historian I would argue that time, place, chronology, historical evidence as well as detailed attention paid to cultural, political and social beliefs are crucial for our discipline – but this is not the discipline of the creators of the game. The creators were looking to real events to make a meaningful game about what they see to be the most significant aspect of war. One of the game's creators, Przemyslaw Marszal, the art director, said:

> We were struck by the fact that physical challenge is not the worst thing people face in war – the emotional toll is much greater … We knew that that was a good idea for a game, but it would only work if we took it seriously and created an experience that was properly respectful. It didn't need to be 'fun'. This was a serious topic and we wanted to approach it in a proper way.[22]

Wojciech Setlak, a writer of the game, also stated that the research the 11 bit studio team carried out '[confirmed] the knowledge ingrained in us by the war stories every Polish family has: that war bears down most heavily on those

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[20] 'This War of Mine Launch Trailer - The Survivor,' YouTube, 11 bit studios, November 14, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gotK5DLdVvI [accessed 10 September 2019]; Matthew Gault, 'True Stories Inspired the Best War Survival Game,' *Medium* November 26, 2014, https://medium.com/war-is-boring/true-stories-inspired-the-best-war-survival-game-40c840271995 [accessed 10 September 2019]; Emir Cerimoric website, http://emircerimovic.com/#video [accessed 10 September 2019].

[21] Comment by Mirza Lych, on 'This War of Mine Launch Trailer - The Survivor'.

[22] Smith, 'War games'.

least capable of influencing its outcome'.[23] It is because of the focus on civilians and the seriousness with which war should be addressed as articulated by the creators of *This War of Mine* – as well as seen in gamers engaging with it online – that I suggest that this game should be thought of as an anti-war cultural creation. Here a political, rather than historical, argument is primarily being made through the game. A sociological reading has articulated the game's potential to be a 'counter pedagogy of war' and a game that diminishes playfulness and moves more towards art.[24] Yet despite these qualifiers, the game is also a historical recreation of sorts, which provides an opportunity for historians to consider the ways in which the past is invoked in this type of digital leisure space.

TAKING CARE OF INNOCENT CHILDREN WITH *THE LITTLE ONES*

Following the initial release, an expanded version of the game was released for PC, gaming consoles and mobile devices in 2016. This version included children as playable characters in the game. This version of the game (or in-app purchase of this part of the game) is called *This War of Mine: The Little Ones*. The game's creator, Karol Zajaczkowski, said with this that *This War of Mine* presented war without any 'fancy stuff ... just the hell like it is'. But according to Zajaczkowski, this picture was incomplete prior to the expansion: with The Little Ones the 'we're adding the one final missing puzzle [piece] to the board'.[25]

In terms of the children within the game, children can arrive on their own and the gamer can decide whether they will let them stay. Alternatively the gamer can select a child character to be included in their group of civilians trying to survive. There are six child characters and all are based on the children of the games' creators at 11 bit studios. Pawel Miechowski has explained that 'eventually I agreed to have my kid in the game because I'm crazy, I'm passionate about this game and I want to make it as real as possible'.[26] The creators of the game described developing a child artificial intelligence system for the child characters' responses, and it includes 3,500 elements that can influence conditions and behaviours of the children.[27] This development of including children is presented as significant both in and out of the game: Karol

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[23] Webber, 'Inside a virtual war'.

[24] Toma, 'Self-Reflection and Morality in Critical Games,' 222.

[25] Karol Zajaczkowski in ' This War of Mine: The Little Ones - Dev Diary: The Kids'.

[26] Realness here refers to the physical movement of the child characters in the game, in Ibid.

[27] 'Being a Kid – Dev Diary #3,' December 18, 2015, http://www.thiswarofmine.com/being-a-kid-dev-diary-3/ [accessed 3 July 2017].

Zajaczkowski explained that 'For you as a parent, keeping the kid alive and … keeping it safe and keeping it happy will be the most important challenge you'll have to face in war and in our game'.[28]

I want to turn now specifically to how child characters are positioned in the narrative and structure of *This War of Mine: The Little Ones*. This is useful to help us see how children are understood and what positions they are afforded within this particular cultural engagement with war.

In terms of iconography, the cover of the game and advertising material includes looking at the back of a small child in a bright red coat. This links this game to the young girl in the red coat in Steven Spielberg's Holocaust film, *Schindler's List* (1993). In *Schindler's List*, the girl in the red coat stands out visually in the black and white film. She is also significant in terms of the narrative, her presence during the liquidation of the ghetto is noticed by Oskar Schindler, and after seeing this he decides he must actively work against the Nazi regime. In a similar way, the child in the red coat in *This War of Mine: The Little Ones* is presented to seek action from the gamers. The caption asks the question explicitly: 'How far will you go, to protect the little ones?'[29] Here the idea that children require individual adult protection is clearly presented.

The launch video for *This War of Mine: The Little Ones* begins with a little boy, drawing with chalk, talking about super dad, and superhero actions. The child says that his super dad cannot be hurt by bullets and keeps everyone safe from evil. The boy's father comes in when the boy is asleep and the father says that he envies his son's black and white view of the world. Distinctions are drawn here between a child's and adult's view. The father explains that his world is not black and white but

> mine is made up of all kinds of different shades, there are no signs to
> show you the right way, so you have to trust your guts and hope that
> you've done the right thing [pause] whatever that means now.[30]

In this narrative there are clear distinctions made between children and adults – children are created as fundamentally different in their thoughts to adults. This division fits within modern Western conceptions of childhood: children are supposed to be segregated from an adult world and 'inhabit a safe, protected

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[28] 'This War of Mine: The Little Ones - Dev Diary: The Kids'.

[29] 'This War of Mine: The Little Ones,' http://www.tlo.thiswarofmine.com [accessed 30 June 2017].

[30] 'This War of Mine: The Little Ones - Launch Trailer,' 29 January 2016 http://www.thiswarofmine.com/premiere-of-this-war-of-mine-the-little-ones/ [accessed 1 July 1907].

world of play, fantasy and innocence'. Despite living in a siege, the children within the game remain positioned as intellectually distinct from adults and primarily in a realm of play, fantasy and innocence. Scholar Susan Moeller has argued that since the feminist movement of the 1970s, children, rather than women, are 'the public emblems of goodness and purity': children 'are the moral referent'.[31] The distinctly moral, and innocent, position of children can also be seen in this game.

This construction of children is a historically specific one in which hierarchies of innocence are invoked, all civilians are innocent, but children are more innocent, and children are understood to be in need of adult care.[32] One of the developers articulates a particular understanding of the relationships between parents and children, saying that they can be complex, there is sadness and happiness, but 'everything is all around child's innocence. And in the Little Ones you try to protect your child when everything around is falling apart'.[33]

The primacy of caring for children is even seen in an evil playthrough of *The Little Ones* by a gamer called TheSparrowsJourney, whose game can be seen in a recording on YouTube. TheSparrowsJourney selected a child Kalina to be one of his playable characters. He also created himself as a character. He said for this playthrough, he would be evil, and he thought Kalina looked evil too, that she would give him nightmares. There were, however, clear limits to his evilness. He said 'I won't hurt this child but I will be evil in other ways'.[34] While TheSparrowsJourney is not playing the game in the manner the creators publicly articulated it to be done, he nonetheless still complied with the role of adults taking care of children.

This division between adults and children is seen too in the structure of the game. There are particular boundaries for the child characters that are

[31] S. D. Moeller, 'A Hierarchy of Innocence: The Media's Use of Children in the Telling of International News,' *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 7.1 (2002): 38, doi:10.1177/1081180X0200700104.

[32] See for example, Moeller, 'A Hierarchy of Innocence'; Ticktin, 'A World without Innocence'; Karen Wells, 'Child Saving or Child Rights: Depictions of Children in International NGO Campaigns on Conflict,' *Journal of Children and Media* 2.3 (2008): 235-50, https://doi.org/10.1080/17482790802327475; Karen Wells, 'Narratives of Liberation and Narratives of Innocent Suffering: The Rhetorical Uses of Images of Iraqi Children in the British Press,' *Visual Communication* 6.1 (2007): 55-71, https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357207071465.

[33] In trailer clip on 'This War of Mine: The Little Ones,' Metacritic, http://www.metacritic.com/game/playstation-4/this-war-of-mine-the-little-ones [accessed 28 November 2019].

[34] 'Let's Play This War of Mine: The Little Ones DLC (PC) - Evil Playthrough [Part 1]' YouTube, TheSparrowsJourney, June 9, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Z-CQ5houXw [accessed 23 June 2017].

not imposed on the adults. The children cannot scavenge outdoors 'they are simply too small', one of the developers said.[35] Children can, however, scavenge indoors. When adults in the shelter spend time with a child character, either through playing or talking with the child, then a bond between the two characters is created. Child characters cannot fight or guard, but can be taught to make particular items like toys and craft as well as use a rainwater collector or gather food.[36]

Another significant factor is that the child characters cannot die in the game. A reviewer on *gamespot*, Justin Clark, explains this concern in detail:

> Should you fail in your duty to protect and provide for the child in your care, that child will be whisked off somewhere safe, and that's the end of that. None of the adults ever skate this easily. Suicide, criminal activity, starvation, and freezing to death are just a few of the myriad, emotionally devastating ways a playthrough can come to an end, and it's what drives you to keep them consistently healthy and happy. I'm not lamenting that we don't see skeletal children weeping their eyes out until a bandit comes to finish the job starvation couldn't, but the lack of consequence should you fail undercuts the strength of the game as a statement on the nature of war as a monstrous force. If there are no tangible stakes to failing to care for the child and there's always the emotional cushion of 'they'll be fine,' there's less real impetus for caring for them more than for the endangered adults living under the same roof.[37]

Here we can see the structure of the game and the narratives created through it reflecting contemporary standards of desired children's engagement with the world. Historian Peter Stearns argues that international standards now clearly deem that it is not proper 'for children to be involved in military service', but there is a long history of children's involvement in war and a range of ways this involvement with violence has been understood.[38] While *This War of Mine* is not about children's military activity, it is a created war-zone that constructs children as requiring adult care, as innocent and only having a limited understanding of the conflict and violence that they are living through.

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[35] Trailer clip on 'This War of Mine,' Metacritic.

[36] See summary of what characters can do, 'Playable Characters,' This War of Mine Wiki, http://this-war-of-mine.wikia.com/wiki/Kalina [accessed 2 July 2017].

[37] Justin Clark, 'This War of Mine: The Little Ones Review,' *GameSpot*, January 29, 2016, https://www.gamespot.com/reviews/this-war-of-mine-the-little-ones/1900-6416341/ [accessed 2 July 2019].

[38] Peter N Sterns, *Childhood in World History* (New York & London: Routledge, 2006), 115.

Conclusion

There are powerful ideas that circulate, in both an abstract and a general sense, about the need to protect and care for children, which are linked to constructions of children as innocent and apolitical. Some of these can been in the structure of the game *This War of Mine: The Little Ones*, in terms of what child characters can and cannot do. It is also seen in the examples of the ways that people play the game, which have been examined here. Linked to this game, there are also examples of how children who lived through war, and saw their experiences connected to this game, were deeply affected by it, and the ways they remember and articulate these experiences. For example, Emir Cerimoric, from the *This War of Mine* trailer who contributed to the game, has said of his memories of the day before the siege began, 'I've been thinking about what I saw ever since'. Cerimoric has also spoken about remembering the 'ambient stress from adults' but it is 'mostly I remember being a kid'.[39]

Historian Mona Gleeson cautions scholars when employing the analytic categories of children's voice and children's agency, which are commonly used in childhood studies. She notes the importance of avoiding clear binary delineations between child/adult, good/bad, powerful/powerless and instead suggests reading for the more complicated 'messier "in between" of more nuanced and negotiated exchanges between' all ages and groups of people in historical sources.[40] In examining *This War of Mine* and the responses to it, we can see that in the public discussions, it is largely simplistic and hopeful distinctions and approaches to children and childhood that are animated. This is clearly shown in writer Daniel Starkey's description of the way he felt about the child, Sergei 'who couldn't have been more than 10 years old' and was part of his gameplay. Sergei asked to stay with Starkey's groups of survivors to which Starkey 'couldn't say no'. Starkey continued 'It was Sergei, in his innocence, that kept me going…Sergei didn't understand war.' Starkey explained 'My motivation for playing *This War of Mine* shifted towards wanting to get him through the war. Maybe he could walk out with his optimism intact. On the 44th day, Sergei had left, to go find his family'.[41]

Through this example we see present day understandings of idealised children and childhood being placed onto the child character in the game. My aim here

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[39] Starkey, 'Harrowing Game'.

[40] Mona Gleason, 'Avoiding the Agency Trap: Caveats for Historians of Children, Youth, and Education,' *History of Education* 45.4 (2016): 448-49, https://doi.org/10.1080/0046760X.2016.1177121

[41] Starkey, 'Harrowing Game'.

is in no way to admonish the creators and players of *This War of Mine*, but rather to consider how dominant ideals circulate in cultural artifacts and people's uses of them, for historians in particular to be able to reveal the ways these powerful narratives circulate. I mentioned at the start of this piece the significance of working from Australia, and from an Australian perspective. When cultural representations such as *This War of Mine* position their work outside of specific times and places and in more general realms, there is a considerable loss that should be noted. The specific political, cultural and social ideals that influence possibilities, acts and actions in the past and present are hidden. From the perspective of an historian, it is through our historical research and critical readings of a wide variety of sources that we work to uncover generalisations, consider offering expanded and fuller interpretations, and seek to more fully interrogate ongoing relationships between the past and the present.

ARTICLES

MHJ

APOLOGIES IN POST-WAR LEBANON: AN EXAMINATION

Nayree Mardirian

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Following the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) the country entered into a period of 'collective amnesia' whereby the Lebanese avoided discussing the conflict at all costs. This amnesia was encouraged by Lebanon's key politicians and elites, who were often perpetrators of violence or leaders of militias. However, since 2001, a series of political apologies have occurred in Lebanon. These apologies have been discussed and debated in the Lebanese press; they have also encouraged various responses from the public regarding motives and sincerity. Using examples of apologies between Lebanon's Christian community and Palestinian refugees, this article will highlight how apologies are becoming part of the country's civil war discourse. Art, the press and film will also be examined, as they are other areas which have linked apologies to civil war memory and discussions.

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This article examines the emergence of apologies in Lebanon's civil war discourse. In the last two decades several politicians, political groups and different forms of media have either apologised for the civil war or referred to apologies in some way, displaying a significant break from the country's period of *state sanctioned amnesia* in the 1990s. The terms *state sanctioned amnesia* and *collective amnesia* have become widely linked with post-war Lebanon and this is partly due to a lack of consensus regarding the causes of the conflict, as well as fears of reigniting sectarian divisions. This article will examine how Lebanon's elites, including political organisations, former warlords and members of militias, used apologies to address the Civil War. It will also demonstrate how apologies concerning the Civil War era are now being explored and demanded by the Lebanese people themselves through a number of mediums.[1]

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[1] The author would like to thank the reviewers of this piece for bringing the work of Nadia Anne Harb to their attention. This article originally formed part of my MA thesis in History at the University of Melbourne (2016). The thesis was titled, 'Feeling Sorry? An Examination of Apologies Given for Civil War Atrocities in Lebanon (1975-2014).'

Oren Barak, '"Don't Mention the War?" The Politics of Remembrance and Forgetfulness in Postwar Lebanon', *Middle East Journal* 61 (2007): 50; Sune Haugbolle, 'Public and Private Memory of the Lebanese Civil War', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East,* 25 (2005): 193. Barak notes the scholars to first coin these terms. He mentions Carole Dagher (an activist and scholar) who spoke of a "national amnesia" in Lebanon, and Michael Young, (an opinion editor in Lebanon's *Daily Star* newspaper) who argued that Lebanon's post war society "has been rebuilt on a foundation of state-sponsored amnesia." Barak also notes

The Lebanese Civil War saw a number of terribly violent incidents, which etched themselves on the nation's psyche. The Karantina, Damour, Tel-al Zataar and Sabra Shatilla massacres, which took place from 1976 to 1982, continue to cause feelings of resentment amongst sectarian groups (namely Maronite Christians and Muslims.) [2] With foreign intervention the 1990 Taif Accord ended the Lebanese civil war and addressed issues of Lebanon's identity. Militias were to be disbanded and Lebanon was classified and viewed as Arab in identity, yet the Accord made no attempt made to address measures of reconciliation and redress. The 1991 General Amnesty laws also prevented former militia members and leaders from being prosecuted for violent acts committed during the Civil War. The amnesties were given even though militia members did not have to provide information about their involvement in atrocities. Instead, policies were directed towards reintegrating militia members into Lebanese society. Discussions concerning the past were avoided at all costs and the discussion of the Civil War became a taboo subject amongst Lebanon's citizens. After nearly sixteen years of conflict, the government and its members, who had nearly all participated in the war, preferred to leave the past behind them. They feared that an examination of the past could lead to another deadly conflict and also feared being implicated.[3]

Lebanon's failure to embrace apologies and reconciliation practices contrasted with the emergence of reparation politics elsewhere in the world, whereby governments and organisations around the world made forms of redress a priority. From the late 1980s to the present day, apologies have become the central element in the politics of reparation.[4] Recognition of past suffering is identified as the most crucial element in post-conflict reconstruction. The act of apologising is supposed to be an affirmation of the suffering of a tormented group. This can open discussions amongst grieving parties, which can in turn lead to progress in, and even the achievement of, reconciliation between formerly opposed groups. Jean Hampton writes that recognition 'un- states

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Samir Khalaf's coining of the term "collective amnesia."

[2] The literature concerning the Lebanese Civil War is extensive. The following works are but some examples that trace the conflict: David C. Gordon, *Lebanon: The Fragmented Nation* (London: Hoover Institution Press, 1980) and Itamar Rabinovich, *The War for Lebanon, 1970-1985*, Second ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

[3] Dima de Clerck, 'Ex-Militia Fighters in Post-War Lebanon', *Accord Magazine,* (24) 2012. Accessed at https://www.c-r.org/downloads/Accord24_ExMilitiaFighters.pdf ; Lynn Maalouf, Habib Nassar and Marieke Wierda, 'Early Reflections on Local Perceptions, Legitimacy and Legacy of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon', *Journal of International Criminal Justice* 5 (2007), 1070.

[4] Karen Grainer, Louise Mullany and Sandra Harris, 'The Pragmatics of Political Apologies', *Discourse & Society* 17 (2006): 716.

[the] moral worthlessness,' that often follows when recognition is not accorded to groups that have experienced atrocities. To deny a group's suffering is an act of 'moral contempt', the likes of which 'can be as devastating as the original wrong itself'. Hence, Hampton argues that to not recognise pain is equivalent to repeating the violent act itself because it again subjects victims to trauma:

> Although an apology cannot undo a wrongful act, it can "un-state" the implicit claim that the wronged person has no moral worth and merits no moral consideration. It is the cancellation of this profoundly insulting and potentially humiliating message that can inspire the ending of anger and resentment on the part of the victim.[5]

Apologies can signify a new era, a progression of thought whereby value is placed on reconciliation practices and past sufferings are recognised by perpetrators of violence.[6] They also allow for the identities of perpetrators to be reformulated, since those that were once violent can be seen as initiators of peace. Apologies create a new vantage point from which wrongdoing can be judged and can usher in a new era for both apology makers and recipients.[7] In post-war societies, these sentiments and re-inventions are invaluable and are directly linked with a country's future peace and stability.[8]

Once recognition is granted the wheels of change begin to turn, wherein discourse concerning the past can suddenly flourish in a formerly constrained society. These discussions can potentially create a process of transitional justice for past wrongdoings. This is why apologies have become a crucial element in propelling transitional justice practices; an apology signifies recognition, which can help quell anger and promote the crucial discussions needed to ignite judicial recognition of past wrongdoings.[9]

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[5] Wilhelm Verwoerd and Trudy Govier, 'The Promise and Pitfalls of Apology', *Journal of Social Philosophy* 33 (2002): 70.

[6] Emil B. Towner, 'Apologising for Genocide: The Subtleties, Significance and Complexity of Contrition in Rwanda's Reconciliation', in *Thinking and Practicing Reconciliation: Teaching and Learning Through Literary Responses to Conflict,* eds. Leo W. Riegert, Jill Scott, Jack Shuler (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 74.

[7] Graham G, Dodds, 'Government Apologies and Political Reconciliation: Promise and Pitfalls', in *Peacebuilding, Memory and Reconciliation: Bridging Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches (Studies in Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding),* eds. Bruno Charbonneau and Genevieve Parent (New York: Routledge, 2012), 174.

[8] David Bloomfield, Teresa Barnes and Luc Huyse (eds.), *Reconciliation After Violent Conflict: A Handbook*, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), 2003.

[9] Brenda Coughlin and Jeffrey K. Olick, 'The Politics of Regret: Analytical Frames', in *Politics and the Past: On Repairing Historical Injustices*, ed. John Torpey (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2003), 42.

This process did not begin in Lebanon until the year 2000. On the 10th February 2000, Assad Shaftari, once a senior member of the Lebanese Forces (a Christian militia) publicly apologised to those he had tormented during the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990). The intelligence that Shaftari provided to his senior commanders concerned the deaths of hundreds of Lebanese and Palestinians, mostly Shia or Sunni Muslims. Shaftari had wanted to 'destroy' his Muslim foes and for the first ten years after the war ended, gave no sign of any remorse for his actions. However, Shaftari went on to declare a public apology to those affected by his hate: 'I apologise for the horror of war and for what I did during the Lebanese civil war in the name of "Lebanon", the "cause", and "Christianity"'.[10] Similarly, in perhaps the most astonishing apology of all, one of Lebanon's most controversial politicians (and former Christian militia leader), Samir Geagea, apologised for his actions during the civil war period: 'I fully apologise for all the mistakes that we committed when we were carrying out our national duties during past civil war years', he said. 'I ask God to forgive, and so I ask the people whom we hurt in the past. I want to tell those who are exploiting our past mistakes to stop doing so because only God can judge us'.[11]

I have elsewhere written about Shaftari and Geagea's apologies, with a particular emphasis on how these former warlords used apologies as a way of being reintegrated into society.[12] The present article highlights the *general* change in discourse that has occurred within Lebanon over the last twenty years, particularly amongst Lebanon's Palestinian refugee and Christian populations. In order to achieve this, this article will first trace the apologies exchanged between the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Christian representatives and examine how apologies have become linked to the Palestinian and Christian experience. Second, the way in which the Lebanese media has called for apologies will be noted, displaying a change in discourse within Lebanon's post-Civil War environment. Art will also be examined, as apologies are now present within forms of satire and Civil War remembrance.

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[10] Michael Young, 'The Politics of Saying, I'm Sorry', *Daily Star*, 21st February 2000. Accessed at http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Commentary/2000/Feb-21/104715 thepolitics-of-saying-im-sorry.ashx ; Rachel McCarthy, 'After the Lebanese Civil War, An Apology', *The Story*, 26th September 2013. Accessed at http://www.thestory.org/stories/2013-09/after-lebanese-civil-war-apology.

[11] Hussein Abdullah, 'Geagea Apologises for LF's Wartime "Mistakes,' *Daily Star*, 22nd September 2008. Accessed at http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2008/Sep-22/50570-geagea-apologizes-for-lfs-wartime-mistakes.ashx

[12] Nayree Mardirian, "Lebanon's 'Age of Apology' for Civil War Atrocities: A Look at Assad Shaftari and Samir Geagea," *ANU Historical Journal II,* 1 (May 2019): 137-157.

In order to undertake this analysis, newspapers will be used to assess public opinion towards apologies. Historian Roger Owen has noted that while there is 'no substitute for original documentation' newspapers are 'rich and rewarding' sources in their own right.[13] Indeed, newspapers and media sources are crucial when studying Lebanon. For a country that struggles with its Civil War memory, newspapers allow historians to examine discussions of the past and how the Lebanese people have approached their trauma: they highlight changes in public opinion and sentiment.

By examining the link between apologies and Civil War memory, this article will challenge previous assessments that the Lebanese public has largely ignored apologies.[14] Furthermore, although Nadia Anne Harb has examined apologies in *Political Forgiveness as Conflict Resolution: A Case of Post War Lebanon*, her study traced the likelihood of forgiveness after apologies. It also used a combination of quantitative and qualitative data to assess the role of apologies in promoting forgiveness between sectarian groups. Harb's 2010 study argued that apologies in Lebanon were far too limited in scope to be impactful amongst ordinary Lebanese citizens but that there was a willingness to forgive amongst sectarian groups.[15] However, this article will provide additional examples of how apologies are being demanded, explored and even mocked within Lebanon. By doing so, it will argue that apologies are becoming a part of the civil war discourse.

The PLO and Christian Groups

The relationship between the Lebanese (both Christian and Muslim) and the Palestinians is complex. In post-war Lebanon, Palestinians are predominantly viewed negatively by the Christian community and are treated as if they are either 'potential terrorists or wanted criminals'.[16] Their participation in the Lebanese Civil War led to resentment among the Maronites, due to their alliance with Lebanon's Muslims. Christians used the Palestinians' presence in Lebanon as justification for arming themselves and forming military

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[13] WM. Roger Louis, 'Britain and the Crisis of 1958', in *A Revolutionary Year: The Middle East in 1958*, eds. WM. Roger Louis and Roger Owen (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 8. Louis' research also concerned Lebanon and Middle Eastern politics throughout the 1950s (with a focus on the 1958 Marine deployment to Beirut.)

[14] Sune Haugbolle, *War and Memory in Lebanon* (New York: Cambridge University Press), 151-159.

[15] Nadia Anne Harb, 'Political Forgiveness as Conflict Resolution', (MA Thesis, American University of Beirut, 2010), 134-138.

[16] Qassem, Qassem, 'Lebanon in the Eyes of Palestinian Refugees', *al-Akhbar*, 24th November, 2011. http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/1799

organisations. Due to their alliance with Lebanon's Muslim-leftist factions, they were viewed with suspicion and, as such, were subjected to severe violence. The Palestinians were also the vanguard of the Arab nationalist movement, a movement which further exacerbated Maronite resentment. In terms of the Palestinians' position in post-war Lebanon, the Palestinians were (and remain) ostracised from society. Firstly, the PLO was excluded from the 1991 amnesty laws and its mistakes were not forgotten, unlike those of others who participated in the war.[17] The Lebanese Government implemented widespread restrictions on Palestinian employment and property rights.[18] With thousands being left homeless because of the destruction or evacuation of Palestinian camps during the Civil War, refugees were (and continue to be) unable to re-establish themselves in Lebanese society due to 'the spatial, economic, social and political marginalisation imposed by the Lebanese government'.[19] There are no prospects of citizenship, and they have become stuck in permanent limbo. Distinct lines of division have been drawn between communities. 'There are no shared resources or social services, no shared ideology, and very little socialising', writes academic Julie Peteet.[20] Lebanon's Palestinian community often refers to their treatment in post-war Lebanon as 'strangulation'.[21] In an interview with Peteet, a young Palestinian man spoke of the disenchantment that the new generation of Palestinians is feeling in the country. He told her that 'We are the new generation and we have a new sense of what we want. We want respect and to leave Lebanon. We are fed up with this treatment at the roadblocks. They shout at us "Get Down!" "Give me your identity card!" "What are you looking at?" We just want to be treated with respect'.[22] Indeed, the Palestinians have always been treated with scepticism and suspicion, and the constant restrictions regarding their employment and living situations in Lebanon exemplifies this phenomenon.[23]

Along with these political frustrations comes the issue of past violence between the PLO and the predominantly Maronite militias. The past remains

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[17] Are Knudsen and Nasser Yassin, "Political Violence in Post- Civil War Lebanon," in *The Peace in Between: Post-War Violence and Peacebuilding*, eds. Mats Berdal and Astri Suhrke (New York: Routledge, 2012), 120.

[18] Lisa Khoury, 'Palestinians in Lebanon: 'It's like Living in a Prison', *Al Jazeera*, 16th December, 2017. This article highlights how Lebanon *continues* to persecute Palestinians and the extent of their living conditions within the country.

[19] Julie Peteet, 'The Dilemma of the Palestinians in Lebanon', in *Lebanon's Second Republic: Prospects for the Twenty-first Century*, eds. Kali C Ellis (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2002), 87.

[20] Ibid, 87.

[21] Ibid, 82.

[22] Ibid, 78.

[23] Ibid, 82.

a key issue among the Palestinian community: 'We don't like those who took part in killing us', said Fadi Muhammad, a Palestinian refugee from Bourj el-Barajneh camp. Muhammad, a college student, named the Lebanese political parties that participated, one way or another, in carrying out massacres against Palestinians. 'The Phalange party destroyed Tel al-Zaatar refugee camp. The Lebanese Forces committed the Sabra and Shatila massacre and the Amal movement conducted a devastating war on the camps'.[24] When asked about past relations between the Palestinians and the Lebanese, another student gave the following response, 'I used to hear my parents say that the Lebanese Forces committed the Sabra and Shatila massacre and that my mother survived because she was able to run inside the camp before they were able to get to her'.[25] He did not wish to meet a member of the Lebanese Forces 'because I don't know what my reaction would be towards him'.[26] These statements display the hostility the Palestinian community continues to feel towards the militias that attacked them during the war. In an attempt to try and bridge ties with the Lebanese population, the Palestinian Declaration for Lebanon was issued on the initiative of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, and issued by Abbas Zaki, the representative of the PLO in Lebanon, on 7th January, 2008. In the Declaration, the PLO apologised for 'any damage [the Palestinians] have caused to our dear Lebanon whether intentionally or not, since 1948'.[27] The document also urged the Lebanese to improve the living conditions of the Palestinian refugees and outlined the PLO's proposals for its future relations with Lebanon. Issues regarding the resettlement of Palestinian refugees were also discussed.[28] According to *Initiatives of Change International:*

> the document emphasised Palestinian respect for Lebanon's independence and sovereignty and stated their wish that all weapons in possession of the various Palestinian factions, whether inside or outside Palestinian refugee camps, should be subject to Lebanese laws and not used in any inter-Lebanese conflict.[29]

In response to the PLO's Declaration forty-four Christian Lebanese (whose names and political associations have been extremely difficult to obtain) signed a letter, headlined *Appeal to our Palestinian Brothers in Lebanon*, which appeared

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[24] Qassem, 'Lebanon in the Eyes of Palestinian Refugees', *al-Akhbar*, 24th November, 2011.
[25] Ibid
[26] Ibid.
[27] 'Palestinian Apology Draws Lebanese Response', Initiatives of Change International, last modified 28th May, 2008. http://www.iofc.org/de/node/2386
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

in the *An-Safir* newspaper on 12th April, 2008, the thirty-third anniversary of the outbreak of the Lebanese war. It read:

> We Lebanese Christians must recognise that some of us committed unjustified acts during that long war which resulted in the death of innocent fellow Palestinians. This hurts us and we would like to apologise, asking God to show us how to compensate, if possible, for the injustice perpetrated. We call on our fellow Palestinians to enter into relations and dialogue with us in the service of a decent, secure and fraternal life for us all. We are confident that what we express here is shared by many of our fellow Lebanese.[30]

The difficulty in obtaining a transcript of the forty-four Christian leaders' apology must be addressed: this particular apology was not widely accessible on the Internet, nor could a transcript be obtained in Arabic or English when researching this article. This raises questions regarding the apology's purpose. If an apology cannot be widely documented for the public, is it any use at all? How will the public be able to establish the exact names of the forty four leaders? How will they know who apologised? Perhaps the apologies were a form of political opportunism for each community and a way for each group to rebuild their reputations. Despite these hurdles, the apologies provided by these two groups are still significant, especially the events that followed.

In response to this apology letter the PLO representative in Lebanon made the following statement:

> We are very pleased with the exchanged apologies, which reflect the respect of the Palestinians for the Lebanese, and the respect of the Lebanese for their fellow Palestinians, as well as the recognition of the sanctity of the causes of the two peoples which are vulnerable to oppression and which have suffered over a long period due to political maps imposed on the region. These apologies constitute a good beginning for mutual understanding of the need for the Lebanese for stability and the need for Palestinians to return to their homes. On our part, we stress after this Declaration, that we place ourselves at the disposal of Lebanese unity and the stability of Lebanese security. We will not let anyone disturb our good relations with the Lebanese state and people.[31]

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[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.

This exchange of apologies is noteworthy because though Geagea and Shaftari's apologies were undoubtedly significant they did not directly address the issue of Palestinian and Christian hostilities. Based on the history of mutual violence between these two groups, such statements of regret are significant. They have allowed dialogue to take place amongst these two groups, which can aid in initiating psychological healing amongst victims of violence. Their publication in *An-Nahar* newspaper allowed for a wide distribution of readers to view the apologies and has even allowed an 'Openness and Reconciliation Conference' amongst representatives of the Phalange, Palestinian and Muslim-leftist forces.[32] It was at this conference that Zaki explained that by giving an apology, 'We adopted an [approach] of existence in Lebanon - we recognised the temporary nature of our presence, strive to refrain from interference in Lebanese affairs, and maintain equal distance from all internal Lebanese [factions]'.[33] Amin Gemayal, the Maronite leader, also went on to stress the importance of unifying Palestinian refugees and Lebanon's citizens:

> We should - rather than remember the battles and heroism that occurred between us and the Palestinians - recall the relationship between Lebanon and Palestine before the Naqba [of 1948] ... the social, cultural, and spiritual proximity between our two peoples that made Palestine, of all Arab states, closest to Lebanon.[34]

The apologies by both the PLO and the Christian leaders marked a shift in the relationship between these groups. Narratives were re-constructed to try and turn former enemies into allies, and apologies were used by the PLO and the Christian forces to carry out this task. There are varying responses to these apologies and Lebanon's Palestinian population has not simply ignored them. For example, a Palestinian refugee, Abu Mustafa Taqa, gave the following statement to journalist Qassem Qassem: 'Samir Geagea apologised for what happened during the civil war and Abbas Zaki apologised for what we did. That's why we should open a new page'. 'Everyone apologised for what they did during the civil war except Nabih Berri. He did not apologise for what he did to us during the War of the Camps', Taqa said.[35] Berri is a prominent member of Lebanon's Amal Movement, whose forces battled against the Palestinians throughout the civil war. The mention of Berri's *lack* of apology demonstrates

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[32] Anthony Elghossain, 'Gemayal, Zaki Headline Reconciliation Confab', *Daily Star,* 16th April, 2008. http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2008/Apr-16/49033-gemayel-zaki-headline-reconciliation-confab.ashx

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Qassem Qassem, 'Lebanon in the Eyes of Palestinian Refugees', *al-Akhbar*, 24th November, 2011.

just how relevant apologies have become in Lebanese society and how they are not simply dismissed, but are often welcomed by their recipients.

It is true that these apologies have not become a panacea for Christian-Palestinian hatred. Despite participating in the 'Openness and Reconciliation Conference', Christian leaders are still reluctant to incorporate a large number of Palestinian refugees into Lebanese society and to allow Palestinians to obtain Lebanese citizenship. Amin Gemayal openly stated at the conference that while the Palestinians in Lebanon were welcome as political refugees, 'any surrender of the right to return is a failed vision'.[36] This statement reflects the sectarian imbalance that Christians fear could result if Palestinians are granted citizenship. The right of return refers to the Palestinians' desire to return to, and to claim, their properties in present day Israel and the occupied territories. In order to achieve this, Palestinians must remain refugees and not integrate into Lebanese society. This support for the Palestinians' right to return could be an attempt to prevent an increase in Lebanon's Muslim (in particular, Sunni) population, which would undoubtedly occur should refugees be allowed to become citizens. Such an occurrence could help thwart the balance of Lebanon's current confessional system.[37] Once again, true motives cannot be thoroughly dissected, but the inclusion of Gemayal's remark at the conference is significant. Palestinians, in return, are still frustrated by Lebanon's restrictive social, economic and political system, and sectarian divisions prevent them from leading stable, functioning lives. One resident of the Burj-al-Brajneh Refugee Camp in Beirut said 'We want to feel we are alive, because honestly we don't feel that way'.[38] 'When our kids graduate, where are they going to work? There are no jobs. It is all about connections, clientelism, and racism. Unqualified people. We just want to make a living and feel secure'.[39] Lebanon's current Christian leadership continues persecuting Palestinians; the insistence of Palestinian work permits by former Labor Minister Abu Sleiman (a member of the Lebanese Forces) raised suspicions amongst the Palestinian community, who protested against such measures in July 2019.[40] When such circumstances

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[36] Anthony Elghossain, 'Gemayal, Zaki Headline Reconciliation Confab', *Daily Star*, 16th April, 2008.

[37] An exploration of Lebanon's confessionalist system can be found in the following article: Maurice Obeid, 'A Lebanese Confession: Why Religious Politics is Bad for Lebanon', *Harvard Kennedy School Review* 10 (January 2010): 104.

[38] Romesh Silva et al., *How People Talk About the Lebanon Wars: A Study of the Perceptions and Expectations of Residents in Greater Beirut* (Lebanon: International Centre for Transitional Justice, 2014), 21.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ali Younes, "Why Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon are Protesting," *Al Jazeera*, 20th July, 2019. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/07/palestinian-refugees-lebanon-

are plaguing the lives of Palestinian refugees (and they continue to be used for political expediency), it is difficult to grasp the real impact and effectiveness of any apology given. There is also an element of elitism in these apologies and their delivery. Are representatives of a community able to apologise on behalf of a particular group? These are relevant points that impact the efficacy of such apologies.

Nonetheless, it is significant that there were apologies at all, as well as the fact that the community at large has discussed them. It shows that apologies are not being ignored, but rather are integrated into the discourse surrounding the Civil War era. A recent film by Ziad Doueiri, *The Insult,* highlights this. In the film, a Palestinian refugee, Yasser, is subjected to Lebanon's harsh living conditions and is sued for insulting and assaulting a Maronite Christian named Tony, a vehement Lebanese nationalist. The plaintiff demands an apology from the Palestinian man and what ensues is a brutal exploration of the realities of Palestinian life in the country and the civil war itself. 'You know what? You people are lousy bastards', says Tony to his Palestinian foe. '…Otherwise you would have apologised. That explains your bad reputation'.[41] Doueiri was inspired by his experiences of the civil war era:

> …It's something that we lived through, all the dynamics that you saw in the film, we are very familiar with it. You know, the Palestinian point of view, the Christian point of view. These are things that are so familiar to us. You know it's this thing that we grew up eating and drinking and living. We were stopped at checkpoints, we hid under the bombs, we lived in shelters in Beirut in the 70s and the 80s and the 90s. So that all kind of like go[es] into your USB hard disk and then you memorise it and then you register and it makes you who you are today. The film is, in a way, autobiographical.[42]

The Insult was controversial in Lebanon and some Palestinians (and Muslims in general) boycotted the film. Doueiri received criticism due to his history of filming in Israel, and his depiction of Palestinians as perpetrators of violence only exacerbated resentment amongst Lebanon's Palestinian and Muslim

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protesting-190719194412471.html

[41] *The Insult*, directed by Ziad Doueiri (Beirut, Lebanon: Ezekiel Films, 2017), DVD. Doueiri's 1998 film, *West Beirut,* also examines the civil war era and has become a classic in Lebanese cinema.

[42] Jennifer Hijazi, 'The Insult, Lebanon's First Oscar Nominated Film, Examines a Country's Deepest Wounds', *PBS,* 4th March, 2018. https://www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/the-insult-lebanons-first-oscar-nominated-film-examines-a-countrys-deepest-wounds.

population. An article published in Lebanon's *Al-Akhbar* noted how 'Ziad Doueiri is not entitled to show his film in Lebanon'.[43] However, the Lebanese government did not challenge the release of the film, and it was ranked number one in the country's box office.[44] It was also nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Film. Regarding its ability to help promote reconciliation between grieving parties, Lebanon's *Daily Star* remained sceptical: 'Cinema doesn't have a great record in achieving national reconciliation. It is unlikely that 'The Insult' can change that. At the end of the day a film is judged by other criteria', wrote Jim Quilty, a reporter for the newspaper.[45] Nevertheless, *Al-Monitor* reporter Chloe Domat captured the film's impact on some of its Lebanese audience. Domat interviewed several spectators, including a storekeeper named Nour Khoder, who noted that she cried 'several times' while watching. 'The narrative is so strong, it really shakes you. It brought back memories of the war, the massacres, what my family went through. I'm very moved', she said. A student, Daniel Abboud, was also interviewed for the piece: 'It feels so real…What happens in that film — it could happen now, right now, in this street'.[46]

While the film might not have led to any broad reconciliation movements, its exploration of apologies and civil war trauma is noteworthy and another example of how apologies and the civil war era are becoming linked.

The media

Along with film, Lebanon's media has also played a part in emphasising apologies. In 2007, Lebanon's *An-Nahar* newspaper released a statement in a special supplement that covered the Civil War era: 'Leaders who took part in the 1975-1989 civil war owe the Lebanese an apology for the direct as well as indirect damage they have caused to both their country and countrymen'.[47] The paper demanded apologies from Druze leader Walid Jumblatt, Free Patriotic

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[43] Jonathan Broder, **"Ziad Doueiri's Controversial Film 'The Insult' Is Nominated for an Oscar After Boycotts in Lebanon,"** *Newsweek,* 26th January 2018**.** https://www.newsweek.com/2018/02/09/ziad-doueiris-controversial-film-insult-nominated-oscar-after-boycotts-lebanon-791547.html

[44] Ibid; Hijazi, 'The Insult'.

[45] Chloe Domat, ''The Insult' Tops Box Office in Lebanon', *Al Monitor,* 6th October, 2017. https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/10/insult-tops-box-office-in-lebanon.html Quilty's article was referenced in Domat's piece.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Unlike other sources from *The Daily Star* newspaper, no information was provided as to the author and date of publication for this article. The link to said article is, http://www.dailystar.com.lb/GetArticleBody.aspx?id=48944&fromgoogle=1 and the date of access was 22nd October, 2015.

leader Michel Aoun and Samir Geagea. While Samir Geagea apologised the following year, Jumblatt and Aoun have refrained from saying sorry. Walid Jumblatt was the leader of the Progressive Socialist Party and acted as allies in the Lebanese National Movement alongside the Palestinians against the Maronite militias. He acknowledged that he had made 'many mistakes' during the Civil War period, but stated he would only apologise for his actions if he would be well received.[48] 'Apologies and regrets cease to make any sense if the recipients fail to accept them', he said.[49] Michel Aoun also refused to apologise for his actions during the civil war period. Aoun was a Maronite army general who notably went against Geagea and the Syrian Army in the early 1990s. He states that the actions he undertook during the war 'were acts of self-defense, I never attacked anyone'.[50]

Jumblatt and Aoun's responses provide an interesting insight into how other former warlords perceive apologies. Although Jumblatt invited the former leader of the Maronite church to a reconciliatory meeting in 2001, he refused to apologise for his Civil War 'mistakes'.[51] Jumblatt viewed discussions with his former foes as necessary, yet apologies appeared to be a step too far for him. Although Aoun has not undertaken such reconciliatory measures as Jumblatt, his statement is also striking. He only sees apologising as an admission of guilt and does not wish to express such statements for actions he undertook in 'self-defence'.[52] The fact that these men are reluctant to make such statements suggests that both of them understand the political and social value placed on apologising. Apologies are complicated and, by their very nature, acknowledge some form of responsibility for the past. Based on Jumblatt and Aoun's responses, this is not a responsibility that all Civil War leaders wish to undertake. They view the social and political ramifications that accompany apologies as too complicated to confront, which is why they are best avoided. Apologies generate discussion and debate and not every leader is willing to subject themselves to such examinations. Hence, if forgiveness cannot be guaranteed and a militia leader is still criticised for their past, what is the benefit of expressing such statements?

Indeed, Jumblatt and Aoun's statements (and the demand for apologies by *An-Nahar*) display the conflicting attitudes surrounding apologies and their importance. While some emphasise the ritualistic aspect of apology-making

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[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.

and see it as a necessary step to healing old wounds, others do not see the benefit in making such statements if forgiveness cannot be guaranteed. Some civil war leaders relish their roles as sectarian leaders and to admit wrongdoing would only diminish their roles as defenders of their respective communities. Nonetheless, these discussions and opinions regarding apologies are now part of the discourse and signify a significant break from the amnesia that gripped the country's post-war environment.

Members of the public and cultural society have also chosen to apologise for their role in the Lebanese Civil War. Lebanese Non-Government Organisationss and civil society groups, such as *Memory at Work*, have made an effort to record any apologies given and to include transcripts of them on their website. The inclusion of these apologies signifies the importance such organisations place on these statements of regret.[53] Apologies have also been used as a form of satire. In his 2007 exhibition, *I, the Undersigned*, Lebanese artist, playwright and actor, Rubin Mroue, apologised for his part in the war. His 'sorrow' was expressed through a visual exhibition, in which the artist looked at a screen and apologised for the past. According to T.J. Demos,

> The language he (Mroue) uses suggests legal testimony, although its seeming straightforwardness gradually unravels in unexpected directions. His apologies veer from the just plausible ("for all I have done during the Lebanese civil war") to the absurd ("for not being kidnapped or assassinated."

Demos also notes how the wording of Mroue's apology connotes a sense of absurdity: he is somewhat mocking the tragedy of events that occurred to highlight the fact that they were unnecessary.[54]

Yet, the fact that apologies have been used as a way to display his feelings of frustration regarding the Civil War era is significant. Unlike Shaftari, Geagea, the Palestinians and the media, Mroue's 'apology' is not used as a way to bridge ties; it is used to highlight the absurdity of the tragic events that happened during the Civil War. This displays the sense of ambivalence that is accompanied with apologies in Lebanon: apologies can be viewed as false

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[53] These apologies can be found at,
http://www.memoryatwork.org/index.php/itemYear/1/22/10289/2008
[54] T.J. Demos, 'Rubin Mroue: Bak, Basis Voor Actuele Kunst, Utrecht, the Netherlands', *Artforum International* 49 (2010): 320, An English translation is available at, http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Rabih+Mroue%3A+BAK,+basis+voor+actuele+kunst,+utrecht,+the+Netherlands.-a0236980200

gesture and not a reconciliatory tool. Nonetheless, they are being associated with the Civil War and used to promote discussion about the past.

Conclusion

From the growing number of apologies since the year 2000 it is clear that apologies have been used to promote discussion about Lebanon's past. Media organisations have promoted them as useful tools for reconciliation. The press has also used apologies as a benchmark for assessing a politician's regret. At the same time, the subsequent exchange between the PLO and the forty-four Christian leaders displays how apologies have become valued in Lebanese society. Films and artwork have also examined apologies for Lebanon's civil war.It is clear that far from being ignored or cast aside, apologies are becoming part of the country's Civil War discourse.

The Extraordinary Medieval Woman: Responding to the Critical Reception of Gwerful Mechain's Poetry

Adelaide Greig

Gwerful Mechain was a female Welsh poet during the fifteenth century. While little is known about her life, scholars generally agree she hailed from amongst the lower nobility of Montgomeryshire, a district of Wales, and was married to John ap Llywelyn Fychan, with whom she had a daughter. She is the author of the largest body of poetry by a medieval Welsh woman to remain extant for modern readers. While also the author of religious work, she is best known for her poetry which explored the feminine condition, including experiences of sex and marriage.[1] The reception of Gwerful's work within literary scholarship from the twentieth century onwards has ranged from the ambivalent, to the delighted, to the downright derogatory. The first half of this article will examine the reception of Gwerful's work both within her own time and contemporary scholarship, and argue ultimately that it is her status as a female poet most notable for her writing regarding women's experiences that has led to such divergent responses. I aim to establish Gwerful Mechain as an example of a historical woman who broke the mould expected by her society and continues to deviate from our modern assumptions of what a medieval woman might be. Having done so, in the second half of this article I discuss whether using terms such as 'extraordinary', 'bold' and 'modern' to describe such historical women, is helpful in the pursuit of rewriting history without a patriarchal lens. An androcentric record of history has promoted the idea that women who were outspoken, vital, self-assuredly sexual, and cognisant of the world were indeed rarities, extra-ordinary in the literal sense of being divergent from the standard, and not-of-their-time. I argue that to finally acknowledge the immeasurable number of women who are unrecognised by the historical record it is necessary to adjust the language used when discussing those whose lives have been, as least in part, remembered.

To begin a discussion of both medieval and contemporary attitudes towards Gwerful's work, I will begin with responses not of aversion or admiration, but rather those of apathy. Passive dismissal on behalf of the scholarly field has not been due to Gwerful's status as a poet or even a medieval poet, but

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[1] Dafydd Johnston. *Llên yr Uchelwyr: Hanes Beirniadol Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg 1300 –1525.* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005), 412.

rather due to her being a female medieval poet. Poetry is of great import to the Welsh cultural identity and therefore to the scholarship which discusses it. It is easy therefore to discount Gwerful's choice of literary form as the source of indifference towards her work. A touch of 'Celtic magic', as Gywm Williams wrote, pervades the Welsh art form; an 'awareness at the same time of contrary seasons and passions, a mood in which the poet brings into one phase the force of love and war, or summer and winter, of holy sacrament and adulterous love', distinguishes it from the work of the English.[2] As a region, society and culture, Wales has faced centuries of invasion and disruption from its more powerful neighbours, and poetry has served as a uniting force in preserving the identity of Welshness, a voice singing boldly in the face of this oppression. Despite this deep significance of poetry to Welsh culture, female poets were not exempt from pervasive patriarchal attitudes which deemed their work to be of less importance than their male counterparts. As Nia Powell comments, 'This elusiveness in such a central element of Welsh culture indicates a more general and long-standing marginalisation of women in matter of importance in Welsh society'.[3] It is possible that the lack of extant texts from female poets is because their work stayed more firmly within the oral tradition; as the parchment and ink required to record writing were precious resources they were more likely to be channelled into preserving the work of men.[4] Even when their work was textually recorded, an issue faced by literary historians is the large lapse of time between the supposed composition of the work and its publishing in manuscript form. This, along with the anonymity with which the work of female writers was often published, makes it difficult to establish the identity or lives of the women behind the small amount poems that are extant.[5] *Y Mynegai i Farddoniaeth Gymraeg y Llawysgrifau (*The Index to Welsh Poetry in Manuscript), contains records of over four thousand Welsh poetry manuscripts from before the nineteenth century and only sixty-six of these can be reliably attributed to women writers.[6]

It is also unlikely that lack of interest for Gwerful's work is due to her being a writer from the medieval period. The Welsh poetic tradition continued

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[2] Gwyn Williams. *Welsh Poems: Sixth Century to 1600*. (London: University of California Press, 1974), 9.

[3] Nia Powell. 'Women and Strict-Metre Poetry in Wales', in *Women and Gender in Early Modern Wales*, eds. Michael Roberts and Simone Clarke (University of Wales Press: 2000), 129.

[4] Lloyd-Morgan, Ceridwen, 'Women and their poetry in medieval Wales', in *Women and Literature in Britain 1150 –1500,* ed. Carol M. Meale (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1993), 188.

[5] Ibid, 185.

[6] Ibid, 184.

throughout the late-fifteenth century in which Gwerful was writing, albeit with a focus on hopeful patriotic prophecies for the new Tudor dynasty by bards such as Dafydd Nanmor.[7] The fifteenth century in Wales also saw a shift towards secular book production, often completed by the poets themselves, in efforts to have their work recorded and codified, in copies kept in the libraries of their patrons.[8] In scholarship surrounding English literature, writing from the medieval period has traditionally suffered dismissal due to its supposed frivolity and romanticism[9]. In contrast, since the beginning of the twentieth century and the establishment of modern literary scholarship, medieval poetry has occupied a principal position in the study of the Welsh art form. The late Middle Ages are considered a "golden age" for Welsh bardic tradition, during which the art form reached the peak of its development.[10] In 1944, when Thomas Parry published the first comprehensive history of Welsh poetry from the sixth to twentieth centuries he provided a 'literary canon that not only defined the aspirations and identity of a cultural group but a nation into being.'[11] Parry's book devoted an entire third of its chapters to work from the early to late medieval period, and in doing so, as Helen Fulton notes, 'records, but also constructs, a canon of medieval Welsh literature… works and authors considered to be hallmarks of literary greatness and absolute evidence of the genius of Welsh-language writing from the sixth to the fifteenth centuries'.[12] Gwerful's status as a poet from within the medieval period has not been the source of an academic apathy towards her, but rather a self-fulfilling cycle in which less work by female writers is textually recorded. Therefore the overall body of work affirmatively attributed to women is insignificant enough to be ignorable, and thus is follows that women do not receive recognition as significant writers within a canon, and are less likely to be acknowledged or studied.

While the past thirty years has seen an influx of scholarship regarding Gwerful, notably the work of Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan and Dafydd Johnston who are

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[7] Philip Schwyzer, *Literature, Nationalism, and Memory in Early Modern England and Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 17-18.

[8] Helen Fulton, 'Literary Networks and Patrons in Late Medieval Wales' in *The Cambridge History of Welsh Literature*, eds. Geraint Evans and Helen Fulton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 142.

[9] Larry Scanlon, "Introduction" in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature 1100 – 1500*, eds. Larry Scanlon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 4.

[10] Dafydd Johnston, *Llên yr Uchelwyr: Hanes Beirniadol Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg 1300-1525* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005), xi.

[11] Helen Fulton, 'Matthew Arnold and the Canon of Medieval Welsh Literature', *The Review of English Studies* 63, no. 259 (2012): 204.

[12] Ibid, 205

referenced throughout this article, she has received considerably less attention within the scholarly field than her male counterparts. A complete scholarly edition of Gwerful's work did not appear until 2001, *Gwaith Gwerful Mechain ac Eraill* by Nerys Ann Howell, and an English translation was not published until 2018, *The Works of Gwerful Mechain*, translated and edited by Katie Gramich. In Joseph P. Clancy's book, *Medieval Welsh Poems*, published 2003, a glossary which provides ample information on almost every other (male) writer chosen for the volume, the summary of Gwerful is limited to, simply, 'the only woman poet of note in this period'.[13] Not only is this statement misleading, and should read perhaps, 'the only female poet of this period of whom a considerable amount of work remains extant', but the lack of any other given information about Gwerful's life and legacy is, at best, careless and, at worst, impertinent. An obvious comparison can be made to another medieval Welsh poet, Dafydd ap Gwilym, who, writing only half a century or so prior to Gwerful, was also a lower member of the aristocracy and is most well-known for his romantic and introspective reflections on his loves and lusts. These works include "Merched Llanbadarn", regarding going to church on Sunday to ogle women and "Cywydd y Gal", a poem in praise of the penis. The erotic nature of his poetry has not prevented Dafydd ap Gwilym from being considered as one of Wales' greatest ever writers. While his more erotic works were omitted from earlier collections, for example that of Thomas Parry, an English translation of his work, *Dafydd ap Gwilym: the poems*, was published by Richard Loomis in 1982, almost forty years before such a feat was achieved for the poet who could be considered his direct female counterpart.[14]

Dafydd ap Gwilym's status as a canonical writer of Welsh poetry was not questioned by twentieth century scholarship, despite the sexual and personal nature of his work; this is particularly intriguing when compared to the reception of Gwerful's poetry. Scholarly work which, rather than ignoring the existence of Gwerful, treats her disparagingly, focuses specifically on the sexual content within some of her poems. One of the earliest academic mentions of her work comes from a 1933 University of Wales masters' thesis by Leslie Harries, but any mention of Gwerful was omitted when the thesis was published in book form[15]. Furthermore, while her work is discussed in the original thesis, Harris denounces her as a writer who 'should not be

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[13] Joseph P. Clancy, *Medieval Welsh Poems* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), 302.
[14] Dafydd Johnston, 'Rhagair' in *Cerddi Dafydd ap Gwilym* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010), xiv.
[15] Katie Gramich, 'Introduction', in *The Works of Gwerful Mechain*, ed. Katie Gramich (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2018), 10.

judged in the light of the moral principles of this century'. She is 'in the light of the twentieth century …nothing more than a whore' and 'the tendencies and principles of her own age are those which determine the standard of her work'.[16] The 'Blue Books Report' of 1848, a study conducted by Westminster into the state of education in Wales which concluded that the Welsh were immoral and lowly, resulted in attempts by the general Welsh population to present themselves as chaste and respectable.[17] Harris's marked and ostentatious distaste for the erotic nature of Gwerful's poetry is very possibly a misogynistic view of sexually empowered women combined with his desire to appear disapproving of her lustful heathenry. Gwyn Williams, in writing *An Introduction to Welsh Poetry* (1953), comments 'we occasionally find women who master the rules of versification' before mentioning Gwerful, but rather blushingly excuses himself from any in-depth discussion of her work 'and whether she and Dafydd ap Gwilym (some scholars have argued the two were romantically involved) exchanged the *englynion* to each other's private parts, which are still extant' as these are 'questions which can hardly be discussed and settled whilst the material is considered unprintable. [my parentheses]'[18]. The sexual nature of Dafydd ap Gwilym's poetry and his reputation as a man who 'made love in almost every part of Wales'[19] does not prevent him from being discussed and analysed as a great and deeply respected writer throughout the rest of William's book.

The aspects of Gwerful's work, namely her womanhood and sexuality, that left her either unconsidered or vilified by scholarship written prior to the rise of feminism within academia in the 1980s, have made her a figure of interest since then. In the introduction to her English translation edition of Gwerful's work, Katie Gramich writes, 'It is refreshing to hear such a bold and uncensored voice speaking to us from over five hundred years ago,'[20] Similar sentiments can be seen in Angharad Price's review of the Gramich's book, stating 'Gwerful is the boldest, most accomplished and most combative female poet of medieval Wales… This important edition… bring[s] her extraordinary voice to the attention of a wider audience'[21]. In *The History of Women's Writing*,

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[16] Leslie Harries, *Barddoniaeth Huw Cae Llwyd, Ieuan ap Huw Cae Llywyd, Ieuab Dyfi, a Gwerful Mechain*, trans. Katie Gramich, (MA Thesis, University College of Wales, Swansea, 1933), 26.

[17] Katie Gramich, 'Introduction', in *The Works of Gwerful Mechain*, ed. Katie Gramich (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2018), 9.

[18] Gwyn Williams, *An Introduction to Welsh Poetry* (London: Faber and Faber, 1953), 12, 131.

[19] Ibid, 130.

[20] Gramich, 'Introduction', 17.

[21] Angharad Price, "Review of *The Works of Gwerful Mechain*," review of *The Works of Gwerful Mechain*, by Katie Gramich, back cover, 2018.

700-1500, a discussion of Gwerful concludes with exactly the same phrasing of Gramich, stating 'Roughly three hundred years before Ann Griffiths composed her hymns orally, female poets [were writing poetry]… often with a high level of wit and intelligence providing viewpoints which strike us as *surprisingly modern* [my emphasis]'.[22] Dafydd Johnston describes Gwerful's secular poems as 'gerddi beiddgar am rywioldeb benywaidd [bold poems about female sexuality].[23] In *Medieval Bodies*, Jack Hartnell writes that Gwerful, expresses a femininity divergent from her peers, she 'clearly felt empowered enough to writing witheringly of her counterpart male authors'.[24] It is not difficult to understand why terms such as 'extraordinary', 'refreshing', 'bold' and 'modern' spring to mind when reading Gwerful's poetry. Her poetry shows her to be, in many ways, the antithesis of what a medieval woman is generally supposed to be.

Gwerful appears 'extraordinary' and 'modern' to one reading her now as an outspoken and active woman, as she subverts the common conception of medieval women as passive. In her deconstruction of female heroes and heroines within chivalric romances, Maureen Fries observes:

> 'Romance, as a depiction of the warrior class's idealisation of itself, actually centres upon male heroes and not female love-objects. As was consistent with medieval religious, political and moral theories, men are the agents of the action and women- when they are the heroines – the instruments… Romance females are patriarchally predicated by passive verbs; to romance males belong active ones.'[25]

Gwerful's writing, however, demonstrates that she was far from passive and silent when she believed there was something that needed to be said, even in the context of directly challenging a man from within her society. Her dialogue with her male poet contemporary Ieuan Dyfi is an excellent example of this. Dyfi, having been 'scorned' by a woman named as Anni Goch and allegedly assaulting her in response, wrote a misogynistic missive regarding the fickleness of all women. Gwerful responds to Dyfi's writing with a mastery of the *cywydd* poetry form and righteous pride in her gender. The piece titled 'I

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[22] Jane Cartwright, 'Women Writers in Wales', in *The History of British Women's Writing, 700-1500*, eds Liz Herbert McAvoy and Diane Watt (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 69.
[23] Johnston, '*Llên yr Uchelwyr'*, 413.
[24] Jack Hartnell, *Medieval Bodies*. (London: Wellcome Collection, 2018), 206.
[25] Maureen Fries, 'Female Heroines, Heroines, and Counter-Heroines: Images of Women in Arthurian Tradition', in *Arthurian Women*, ed Thelma S. Foster (New York: Routledge, 2000), 63.

ateb Ieuan Dyfi am gywydd Anni Goch' (A response to Ieuan Dyfi's poem on
Red Annie) is wonderful to read:

> Susanna yn sôn synnwr,
> Syn a gwael oedd sôn y gwyr,
> …Mwy no rhai o'r rhianedd,
> Gwell no gwyr eu gally a'u gwedd.
> Brenhines, daeres dwyrain,
> Sy' abl fodd, Sibli fain,
> Yn gynta' 'rioed a ddoede
> Y down oll gerbron Duw Ne':
> Hithau a farn ar yr anwir
> Am eu Gwaith, arddoedyd gwir.
> Dywed Ifan, 'rwy'n d'ofyn,
> Yn gywir hardd, ai gwir hyn?

> …Susanna was good and full of good sense;
> The men's rumours of her were to give offence.
> Girls are the mildest of creatures,
> They're better than men, in skill and features.
> Queen and heiress of the Orient
> Was the Sibyl, most excellent,
> She was the very first to say
> That 'fore God there'd be a Judgment Day;
> For her wisdom all revered her
> She was named truth-teller of the future.
> Tell me, Ifan, I'm asking you,
> Tell me now, isn't all of this true?
> (70-71)

In this piece, Gwerful shows herself to be educated in classical, biblical, and
Welsh history, as well as a skilful poet. While thirty-four manuscript copies
of Dyfi's original piece are extant, and only five for Gwerful's response, the
existence of any textual recording of her work shows that she was an active
participant in the poetic community of her time: she was able to present a
response to him that was popular enough to be recorded, even if for fewer
times.[26] Gwerful's more explicit work, the most infamous being "Cywydd y
cedor" (Ode to the Vagina), makes for an equally delightful read:

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[26] Cerdiwen Lloyd-Morgan, 'The 'Querelle des Femmes': A Continuing Tradition in Welsh
Women's Literature', in *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain: Essays for
Felicity Riddy*, eds. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al., (Turnhout: 2000), 107.

> Am hyn o chwaen, gaen geryff,
> Y prydyddion sythion sydd,
> Gadewch yn hael, gafael ged,
> Gerddau cedor I gerdded.
> Sawden awdl, siden ydiw,
> Seem fach len ar gont wen wiw,
> Lleiniau mewn man ymannerch,
> Y llwyn sur, llawn yw o serch,
> Fforest falch iawn, ddawn ddifreg,
> Ffris ffraill, ffwrwr dwyfaill deg,
> Pant yw hwy no llwy yn llaw,
> Clawdd iddal cal ddwy ddwylaw.
> Trwsglwyn merch, drud annerch dro,
> Berth addwyn, Duw'n borth iddo.
>
> So I hope you feel well and truly told off,
> All you proud male poets, you dare not scoff,
> Let songs to the quim grow and thrive,
> Find their due reward and survive.
> For it is silky soft, the sultan of an ode,
> A little seam, a curtain, on a niche bestowed,
> Neat flaps in a place of meeting,
> The sour grove circle of greeting,
> Superb forest, faultless gift to squeeze,
> For a fine pair of balls, tender frieze,
> Dingle deeper than hand or ladle,
> Hedge to hold a penis as large as you're able,
> A girl's thick glade, it is full of love,
> Lovely bush, you are blessed by God above.[27]

The intention of this article is not to say that the appeal of Gwerful's work for modern readers should not lie in the joy of reading something composed over five hundred years ago which comprises of a women writer presenting witty ripostes to a male writer's sexism, or that Gwerful's work is not or should not be seen as relatable for the modern reader. Rather, I argue that labelling Gwerful as 'extraordinary' or 'modern' due to this reaction limits the abilities of a historian to create a more nuanced discussion regarding of the lives of women

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[27] Gwerful Mechain, *The Works of Gwerful Mechain*, trans. and ed. Katie Gramich (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2018), 44.

such as Gwerful who have remained at least partially remembered within the historical record. The use of the term 'extraordinary' further ingrains the notion created by a patriarchal recording of history that historically intelligent, opinionated, and talented women were few and far between, an anomaly of their time. As the 'modern' is established in contrast to the 'medieval', using such language also carries the implication that the silencing and disregard for women's voices are forces which only occur in the past, from which a 'modern' woman is emancipated.

More than fifty years ago in 1976, Susan Mosher Stuard reflected on the impact of creating 'extraordinary' medieval women within the academic consciousness:

> an unbridgeable gulf lay between work by and about women and the serious concerns of the academic community. Few women bridged that gulf. They learned their lesson far too well and simply refused to reach for that deeper level of comprehension which integrates women's position into the texture of social history… In fact, the most remarkable women from the medieval period are the victims of this tendency... Usually, the notable woman is viewed as an anomaly, extraordinary in vigour and ambition, an exception to her age. More pertinent issues such as why these remarkable figures were produced and tolerated in their age and the nature of the social context which fostered their talents, were seldom raised.[28]

Stuard's writing preceded a growing interest in the study of medieval women throughout the late twentieth century which continued into the 2000s, nonetheless her comments remain relevant. If women who exist within the historical record are remarked upon only for being an 'exception to their age', the possibilities for finding new insights about their lives, and the lives of other women who are unrecorded within extant sources, are limited. This is particularly pertinent for medieval historians for whom producing an anti-androcentric historical narrative can prove a certain challenge. The main historical accounts of the period were produced by monks with a keen focus on political, religious, and military history—realms which feature almost exclusively wealthy men. By overlooking women within their records, monks and clerics have prevented modern historians from accessing their lives and stories. Feminist scholarship has attempted to fill these gaps with a greater focus on social and familial history, fields in which woman were granted a

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[28] Susan Mosher Stuard, 'Introduction', in *Women in Medieval History and Historiography*, ed. Susan Mosher Stuard (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), 2.

larger role, but this has not necessarily deterred the idea of the 'extraordinary' medieval woman.[29]

Instead, discussions of how few women exist within the historical consciousness have inevitably led to varying opinions as to why this is the case. Specifically, in relation to female authors, scholars such as Alexandra Barratt have argued that as the written word had authority, as a tool of God, and women were told they were unsuited to holding authority, medieval women were psychologically and socially conditioned to avoid writing as an endeavour. Others such as Lauren Finke have argued, often framed within the famous quotation by Virginia Woolf, 'Anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was often a woman', that women did write, and they did play a substantial role in society, but the issue is that their achievements were not equally appreciated and therefore not equally documented.[30] I contend that is reasonable to take a middle ground within these two approaches. It is correct to say that women are the traditionally oppressed gender within Western society, and that during the medieval period, women of varying classes were denied the opportunities and agency of some of their male counterparts. It is reasonable to claim that this oppression was most likely internalised, as it still often is, and medieval women limited themselves as they believed it was their role to do so. Due to these same social prejudices, it is also justifiable to state that even when women succeeded beyond the constrictions placed upon them, or within the womanly endeavours to which they were set, a patriarchal chronicling of history would have rejected their efforts as inconsequential. Medieval women were for the most part both oppressed and otherwise ignored. Describing the medieval women whose lives and achievements have survived in the record as 'extraordinary' and 'modern' exacerbates the well-established assumption that is a rarity for a medieval woman to have lived a dynamic and complex existence.

Women, even in the medieval period, played an integral role in the fabric of society. There would have been countless remarkable medieval women who lived productive and fascinating lives. As Rubin commented in 1998, 'These women of secular life, embedded in families, facing the dangers of child-

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[29] Miri Rubin, 'A Decade of Studying Medieval Women, 1987-1997', *History Workshop Journal*, no. 46 (1998), 213.

[30] Rebecca Krug, *Reading Families: Women's Literate Practice in Late Medieval England* (London: Cornell University Press, 2002), 209

bearing, the tensions of matrimony, the contradictory demands of community and church, were always at work'.[31] The description of extant medieval women as 'extraordinary' serves a doubly negative purpose. Such rhetoric reduces the women who are labelled thus as notable only as anomalies, and in Gwerful's case her life inseparable from her work. It also disregards that extraordinary women were not in fact few and far between, they were simply ignored by an androcentric historical record which considered their lives unimportant.[32]

Labelling Gwerful as 'modern' falls into a wider argument regarding the construction of modernity as the antithesis to the medieval. There exists an anxiety within modernity to establish itself in opposition to the era most commonly associated with archaism, muck, and prejudice. As Trigg and Prendergast comment, '[a]s modern subjects it is absolutely crucial to distinguish ourselves from the medieval and yet there often arises an uncanny and uncomfortable recognition that we are not so different after all'.[33] I argue that the desire to describe Gwerful as 'modern' springs from this uncomfortable recognition. Gwerful writes an admonishment to her husband for beating her:

> Dager drwy goler dy gallon--- ar osgo
> I asgwrn dy ddwyfron;
> Dy lin a dyr, dy law'n don,
> A'th gleddau i'th goluddion
>
> A dagger through the collar of your heart--- on a slant
> To the bone of your chest
> Your knee breaks, your hands peels
> And your weapons to your entrails[34]

Gwerful is rightfully infuriated in this passage, nor does she censor herself, or remain silent for fear of retribution. Her voice is active and free of patriarchal constraints. In claiming her for the 'modern', it reinforces our belief that now is better than then, that a woman capable of expressing her anger could only

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[31] Rubin, 'A Decade', 214.
[32] Paula M. Rieder 'The Uses and Misuses of Misogyny: A Critical Historiography of the Language of Medieval Women's Oppression', *Historical Reflections* 38, No. 1 (Spring 2012), 4.
[33] Thomas A. Prendergast and Stephanie Trigg, *Affective Medievalism* (Manchester University Press: 2019), 11.
[34] Gwerful Mechain, *The Works of Gwerful Mechain*, trans. and ed. Katie Gramich (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2018), 88-89.

do so if representative of some premature harkening of a better, later time in which women are allowed to speak of their reality. It is more uncomfortable to recognise Gwerful as a medieval woman who suffered and railed against domestic violence, a situation in which many modern women still find themselves. It is a fact that Gwerful lived as a medieval woman, not a modern one, even if it is disconcerting that in some ways the plights of the latter have not changed since those of the former.

For historians' attempts to write accounts of medieval women's lives it is particularly pertinent to be as precise as possible to counteract the lack of sources within the historical record. This includes being careful with language and, as I have argued, rethinking the use of terms such as 'extraordinary' and 'modern'. For a concluding example of writing I turn not to Gwerful but one of the pieces signed 'anon', as Woolf once said. Although it is impossible to confirm the writer of this medieval Welsh lyric, the content heavily implies it was composed by a woman:

> Drwg am garu, drwg am beidio
> Drwg am droi fy nghariad heibio,
> Dwrg am godi'r nos i'r ffenest';
> Da yw bod yn eneth onest.
>
> Drwg am garu cudyn crych,
> Drwg am wisgo amdanai'n wych,
> Drwg am fynd i'r llan y Sulie,
> Drwg a gawn pe 'rhoswn gartre.

> Blamed for courting, blamed for not,
> Blamed for throwing over my lover,
> Blamed for getting up at night to the window,
> The right thing to be is a virtuous girl.
>
> Blamed for falling in love with curly hair
> Blamed for dressing smartly,
> Blamed for going to church on Sundays,
> Blamed I'd be if I stayed at home.[35]

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[35] Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan, 'Women and their poetry', 184.

These words, as much as they could have been written yesterday, do not necessarily make their writer anything other than an everyday medieval woman. There is no era in which women were incapable of articulating critiques of their society, and of living full lives in which they loved and lusted and considered their place in the world. In his chapter, 'Irregular Histories: Forgetting Ourselves' Smith reflects on the duty of the historian attempting to find and bring previously unheard voices to the forefront of the historical record:

> New approaches to the Middle Ages would have to assume that new kinds of history can be written by looking at the edges of memory, by examining what traces are left of events that the Middle Ages did not choose to regard as memorable. We would have to grapple with the problem of discussing texts and events that are not, in the medieval terms, memorable, that are not fit subjects for the practices of deliberate memory, shadowy events at the margins of texts that are not part of the enduring memory of medieval culture. In one way or another, they have been deliberately forgotten. Recalling these is part of the obligation we have as readers of the distant past.[36]

In recalling these deliberately forgotten memories, it is also necessary that we give them the credit due. Women such as Gwerful, along with all the women writers whose names we will never know, if considered as 'extraordinary' and 'modern', lose what is their true significance: they lived as medieval women within a medieval society and, despite their dismissal by both the medieval historical record and early medievalist studies, spoke with voices true and strong enough to remain, if only fragmentarily, extant for readers centuries later. To deem them anything but does a disservice to their memory and to the memory of women from all ages who, despite being left unrecorded by pen, paint, or artefact were, indeed, extraordinary.

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[36] D Vance Smith, 'Irregular Histories: Forgetting Ourselves', in *Medieval Literature: Criticism and Debates*, eds Holly Crocker and D Vance Smith (New York: Routledge, 2014), 218.

OF HONOUR AND INNOCENCE: ROYAL CORRESPONDENCE AND THE EXECUTION OF MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS[1]

Elizabeth Tunstall

This article considers the diplomatic tension caused by the discovery of Mary Queen of Scots' involvement in the Babington Plot and how it was negotiated in the correspondence of Queen Elizabeth of England and King James VI of Scotland. Rhetorical strategies of honour and innocence were utilised within these letters to create narratives that sought to balance the needs of both monarchs and their kingdoms. While the correspondence did not prevent the suspension of relations between the kingdoms following Mary's execution, they did play a vital role in restoring it shortly before the coming of the Spanish Armada in 1588.

The discovery of Mary Stuart's involvement in the Babington Plot, and her resultant trial and execution was the defining concern of Anglo-Scottish diplomacy for roughly two years. Throughout this period the fate of Mary was debated and discussed not only by ambassadors in London, but also personally by Queen Elizabeth I of England and King James VI of Scotland who sought a way to resolve the problem in a mutually satisfactory manner through their correspondence. This article will focus upon the letters exchanged between the two monarchs over a two-year period. Through doing so it will explore the rhetorical tropes of honour and innocence that featured prominently within the letters at this time as each monarch sought to establish narratives within which their actions could be understood and accepted, or at the very least not easily rejected. While the correspondence between the two monarchs was significant to the Anglo-Scottish alliance established in 1586, it was also vulnerable, as its virtual suspension following Mary's execution demonstrated. However, it was also the royal correspondence that restored the fractured diplomatic relationship shortly before the coming of the Spanish Armada in 1588, an event which reminded both parties of the necessity of the Protestant Anglo-Scottish alliance for mutual defence from their continental Catholic opponents.

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[1] This article is adapted from a chapter of the author's thesis *The Correspondence of Elizabeth I and James VI in the context of Anglo-Scottish Relations, 1572-1603*, (University of Adelaide: Master of Philosophy Thesis, 2015).

During the sixteenth century the main means of communication besides face-to-face conversation was the exchange of correspondence. The exchange of letters was no simple process, with custom and protocol influencing all aspects of the correspondence, such as the spacing of the elements within the letters, the rhetorical framing of the composition, the colour of the seal, the reception of the letter and the importance of continuing an exchange once commenced.[2] Gary Schneider has argued 'The basic logic of letter writing - that is, the timely reciprocity of exchange - presupposed that correspondents strove to maintain stable social intercourse and communicative continuity.'[3] It is for this reason the continuing flow or the halting of an established correspondence could be highly significant, as shall be explored below. The specific correspondence exchange that forms the focus of this article, that between Elizabeth I of England and James VI of Scotland, presents another element that needs to be outlined, that is the difficulty of transporting letters between the two royal courts during the second half of the sixteenth century. The two main methods of transporting royal letters were through the hands of diplomats and private messengers, or through the postal service. Either method was slow, with the postal service between London and Edinburgh taking on average one week, but could be significantly slower and was often unreliable.[4] Even with the difficulties of transportation, the correspondence between Elizabeth and James was significant. From its commencement in 1572 until Elizabeth's death in 1603, two hundred and sixty letters have survived with fifty-five per cent of these being written by the monarchs' own hand.[5] The royal correspondence between Elizabeth and James spaned almost thirty-one years, and formed an important element in Anglo-Scottish diplomacy that requires close consideration.

The letters of Elizabeth and James have long been known but only in the past twenty years been given scholarly attention.[6] The rhetoric of the letters was first analysed by Janel Mueller in her article considering the role of the correspondence in regards to James' place in the succession and early modern letter writing practices.[7] While Mueller's work was significant in considering

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[2] James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-Writing, 1512-1635* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 10-11.

[3] Gary Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500-1700* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 84.

[4] Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity*, 82; Rayne Allinson, 'The Letters of Queen Elizabeth I and King James VI: Kingship, Kinship and the Politics of Counsel' (MA Thesis, 2006: University of Melbourne), 31-2; Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England*, 142-143.

[5] Allinson, 'The Letters of Queen Elizabeth I and King James VI', 19.

[6] Grant G. Simpson, 'The Personal Letters of James VI', in *The Reign of James VI*, eds. Julian Goodare and Michael Lynch (Phantassie: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 143-144.

[7] Janel Mueller, '"To My Very Good Brother the King of Scots": Elizabeth I's Correspondence

the correspondence in its own right, it is the work of Rayne Allinson that more fully explores the exchange between the two strong-willed monarchs and the importance of the correspondence to their kingdoms' relationship.[8] The correspondence again featured in a chapter by Susan Doran where she reintegrated the correspondence into the wider Anglo-Scottish diplomatic exchange, rather than placing it outside the other channels of diplomacy.[9] The work by Mueller, Allinson and Doran form the foundation of this present study, one which seeks to consider the personal correspondence between Elizabeth and James during a highly fraught time of their relationship, the trial and execution of Mary Queen of Scots. Through close reading of the letters exchanged during this two-year period the rhetoric utilised by these two highly educated monarchs will be analysed to explore their use of established frameworks, or their adaption of such frameworks to suit the unorthodox situation which had occurred. The two elements that featured prominently were those of monarchical honour and Elizabeth's adaption of modesty rhetoric to present her innocence following Mary's execution.

The situation of Mary Stuart had been a long-running problem for Elizabeth and her council. Following her forced abdication of the Scottish throne, Mary fled to England in 1568. She had expected to receive support in reclaiming her crown, but this was not viable in the complex political environment of the time. Instead she was provided with the privileges accorded to exiled monarchs and guests of the English crown.[10] Her conditions worsened, and her freedoms were further curtailed following her participation in a number of plots against Elizabeth's crown and life. However, Elizabeth refused to countenance Mary's execution without absolute evidence of her personal involvement. In 1586 Sir Francis Walsingham, Elizabeth's Principal Secretary, detected traces of a fresh plot being constructed by Anthony Babington and the French ambassador. He established a manner for those involved to communicate in apparent secrecy,

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with James VI and the Question of the Succession', *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 115, no. 5, (2000): 1063-1071.

[8] Allinson, 'The Letters of Queen Elizabeth I and King James VI'; Rayne Allinson, "These Latter Days of the World': The Correspondence of Elizabeth I and King James VI, 1590-1603', *Early Modern Literary Studies* Special Issue 16 (2007); Rayne Allinson, 'Conversations on Kingship: The Letters of Queen Elizabeth I and King James VI', in *The Rituals and Rhetoric of Queenship: Medieval to Early Modern*, eds. Liz Oakley-Brown and Louise J. Wilkinson (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009); Rayne Allinson, *A Monarchy of Letters: Royal Correspondence and English Diplomacy in the Reign of Elizabeth I* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

[9] Susan Doran, 'Loving and Affectionate Cousins? The Relationship between Elizabeth I and James VI of Scotland 1586-1603', in *Tudor England and its Neighbours*, eds. Susan Doran and Glenn Richardson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 203-234.

[10] John Guy, *My Heart is My Own: The Life of Mary Queen of Scots* (London: Fourth Estate, 2009), 437.

yet one he could observe without their knowledge.[11] After an exchange of letters on the subject Mary gave her approval for the proposed plot and its intention to kill Elizabeth in a letter dated 17 July 1586 composed for her by her secretary.[12] With this letter Mary revealed her intentions and provided the evidence against her which had previously been lacking, initiating one of the more fraught episodes of Anglo-Scottish relations during Elizabeth's reign.

In an autograph letter from Elizabeth to James dated 4 October 1586 the first traces of the discovered plot against Elizabeth were introduced into the correspondence.[13] Elizabeth did not discuss the plot in detail, nor did she name anyone involved. This in itself is not unusual with Elizabeth's letters to James, as she often left individuals unnamed and referred to them indirectly. The practice of leaving certain specific details out of letters was not uncommon and was used during the early modern period to ensure the security of information.[14] The messengers entrusted to transport the letter to its recipient would usually fill in the resultant missing information orally.[15] Thus, Elizabeth commented on the most recent plot against her in an indirect manner, writing:

> And do render you many loving thanks for the joy you took of my narrow escape from the chaws of death, to which I might have easily fallen but that the hand of the Highest saved me from that snare.[16]

Her letter continued to place the origin of the plot on the actions and the encouragement of the Jesuits who appear to have encouraged the murder of Protestant monarchs. In her letter Elizabeth appeared shaken, or at least keen to utilise this as an opportunity for diplomatic advantage, as she concluded by urging James to move against any Jesuit or their supporters in Scotland for the defence of himself as well as herself. She wrote: 'For God's love, regard your surety above all persuasions, and account him no subject that entertains them! Make no edicts for scorn, but to be observed. Let them be rebels…'.[17] The full exposure of the plot's details was quick, and it soon became apparent

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[11] Penry Williams, *The Later Tudors: England 1547-1603,* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995), 313.

[12] Guy, *My Heart is My Own*, 483.

[13] 'Elizabeth to James', 4 October 1586, in *Elizabeth I: Collected Works,* eds. Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 286-7

[14] Jonathan Gibson, 'Letters', in *A New Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, Vol. 2, ed. Michael Hattaway (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 457.

[15] Ibid., 457.

[16] 'Elizabeth to James', 4 October 1586, in *Elizabeth I: Collected Works,* eds. Marcus, Mueller and Rose, 286.

[17] 'Elizabeth to James', 4 October 1586, in *Elizabeth I: Collected Works,* eds. Marcus, Mueller and Rose, 287.

that Mary Stuart was the unnamed conspirator. The period between the trial of Mary during October 1586 and her execution in February 1587 was a time of intense diplomatic exchange through royal correspondence and diplomatic personnel, and it severely tested the monarchs' alliance.

The direction and volume of the correspondence between Elizabeth and James reveals which of the monarchs found Mary and the Babington Plot to be more diplomatically significant. For the period covered by this article, Mary dominated Elizabeth's letters. Elizabeth wrote four letters to James concerning Mary before her execution on the 8 February 1587 and following the execution she would write another dated 14 February.[18] James, in comparison, wrote only two letters to Elizabeth before Mary's death, dated 16 December 1586 and 26 January 1587.[19] Another letter dated either late February or early March followed Mary's execution.[20] The pattern of James' letters on this subject warrants some scrutiny as he did not send any personal correspondence to Elizabeth while Mary's trial proceeded and did not write until following the pronouncement of her guilt. The frequency of James' letters increased as the news from England indicated even more strongly that his mother's life was in danger and that there was a real prospect of her execution. Elizabeth wrote more consistently regarding Mary's trial and situation, taking the initiative in their personal correspondence. Her letters are dated 4 October 1586, 15 October 1586, January 1587 and 1 February 1587.[21] This is most likely because she was aware that Mary would be unlikely to survive her involvement in this latest plot and was concerned about the diplomatic fallout should Mary be executed. From the exchange of letters, it is possible to conclude that Elizabeth thought that this matter warranted a significant element of personal diplomacy in addition to the more public usage of diplomats than was the case with James.

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[18] 'Elizabeth to James', 14 February 1587, in *Elizabeth I: Collected Works,* eds. Marcus, Mueller and Rose, 296-7.

[19] 'James to Elizabeth', 16 December 1586, in *Letters of King James VI & I*, ed. G.P.V Akrigg, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 79-80; 'James to Elizabeth', 26 January 1587, in *Letters of King James VI & I*, ed. Akrigg, 81-3.

[20] 'James to Elizabeth', Late February 1587, in *Letters of King James VI & I*, ed. Akrigg, 84-5.

[21] 'Elizabeth to James', 4 October 1586, in *Letters of Queen Elizabeth and King James VI of Scotland: Some of them printed from originals in the possession of the Rev. Edward Ryder, and others from a MS which formerly belonged to Sir Peter Thompson, KT.,* ed. John Bruce, Camden Society, Vol. 46, (London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1849), 37-9; 'Elizabeth to James', 15 October 1586, in *Queen Elizabeth I: Selected Works*, ed. Steven W. May, (New York: Washington Square Press, 2004), 175-8; 'Elizabeth to James', January 1587, in *The Letters of Queen Elizabeth,* ed. G.B. Harrison, (London: Cassell, 1935), 184-5.; 'Elizabeth to James', 1 February 1587, in *Elizabeth I: Collected Works,* eds. Marcus, Mueller and Rose, 294-6.

James' response to Mary being discovered as a conspirator against Elizabeth, and then being placed on trial, was initially reserved. James wrote in December 1586 in placating tones that suggested sympathy for Elizabeth's position, saying: 'I know well enough how hardly ye are pressed by the objecting the peril of your own life unto you, and therefore I never blamed yourself directly of these proceedings'.[22] His words seemed to indicate that while he had a personal interest in the unfolding events he would not hold the outcome against Elizabeth. He also wanted to ensure that his claim to the English succession went unaltered as a result of his mother's actions. It appeared at this point that James felt that the diplomatic discussions on the topic could be managed adequately through other means of diplomacy such as his representatives already present in London.

James' position became more definite in his correspondence with Elizabeth as it became clearer that Mary's execution was the most probable outcome of events. His letter written on the 26 January 1587 was different from his previous letter in tone and content. This letter argued strongly in defence of Mary's life and stated that her execution would 'peril my reputation amongst [my sub]jects'.[23] The approaching execution had stirred up Scottish politics to such a point that it was untenable for James simply to observe or lightly object to Mary's execution, and he was then required to petition Elizabeth strongly for his mother's life.[24] Indeed he continued to argue his case, elaborating on his difficulty by writing:

> What thing, madame, can greatlier touch me in honour that [am] a king and son than that my nearest neighbour, being in straitest [friend] ship with me, shall rigorously put to death a free and sovereign prince and my natural mother, alike in estate and sex to her that so uses her, albeit subject I grant to a harder fortune, and touching her nearly in proximity to blood.[25]

James' appeal was based primarily upon honour, and he supported this by referring to the divine right of kings. These were two ideologies that the monarchs shared, that of royal honour and of the divine right of a monarch to rule, and in calling on these shared beliefs he placed the strength of his appeal for Mary's life. James also called upon their ties of kinship, though his use of

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[22] 'James to Elizabeth', 16 December 1586, in *Letters of King James VI & I*, ed. Akrigg, 79-80.
[23] 'James to Elizabeth', 26 January 1587, in *Letters of King James VI & I*, ed. Akrigg, 81-3.
[24] Susan Doran, 'Revenge her Foul and Most Unnatural Murder? The Impact of Mary Stuart's Execution on Anglo-Scottish Relations', *History* 85, (2000): 592-3; Pauline Croft, *King James*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 22.
[25] 'James to Elizabeth', 26 January 1587, in *Letters of King James VI & I*, ed. Akrigg, 81-3.

kinship rhetoric was strictly conventional for royal letters.[26] The ties of kinship between Elizabeth and James included their shared status as monarchs, their blood relation and Elizabeth's role as his godmother.[27] However, James' appeal was unsuccessful and several days after the letter's composition, Mary was executed.

In the letter discussed above the idea of royal honour is an important element. In itself 'honor is the good opinion of people who matter to us, and who matter because we regard them as a society of equals who have the power to judge our behaviour.'[28] During the early modern period concepts of honour were gender specific and were constructed differently for each gender.[29] Women, including female monarchs, maintained their honour and received praise for demonstrations of piety, chastity and modesty.[30] Elizabeth, as explored below, used the associations of modesty and the rhetorical frameworks of it in expressing innocence following Mary's execution. Elite men would preserve their honour through strength in battle and keeping their word.[31] The concepts of honour and personal dignity were of significance to both Elizabeth and James. Elizabeth had referred to a monarch's honour code as being 'the law of kingly love.'[32] James used the mutually held importance of royal honour in his appeal for his mother's life as he sought to recast the issue into one of honour in place of political necessity.

Mary Stuart was executed on the 8 February 1587 and Elizabeth reacted furiously when she learned of it, as while she had signed the warrant, she had not ordered for it to be issued. William Davison, the junior Secretary of State, who had been entrusted with the signed warrant was sent to the Tower. He remained incarcerated there for eighteen months.[33] Most of the Privy Council fell into disgrace for four months.[34] William Cecil, Lord Burghley and her most trusted councillor, was not spared from her displeasure, and as a result he was not received at court for four weeks. His return to court did not mean that the

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[26] Mueller, '"To My Very Good Brother the King of Scots"', 1068.

[27] Allinson, 'The Letters of Queen Elizabeth I and King James VI', 66-7.

[28] James Bowman, *Honor: A History* (New York: Encounter Books, 2006), 4.

[29] Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 3rd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 48; Carole Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1994), 76.

[30] Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 25; Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King*, 76.

[31] Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King*, 76.

[32] Allinson, 'The Letters of Queen Elizabeth I and King James VI', 57; Allinson, 'Conversations on Kingship', 143.

[33] Williams, *The Later Tudors*, 315.

[34] John Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 336.

situation returned to normal and Elizabeth maintained her hostility towards him for four months following the execution, as she did with her other Privy Councillors.[35]

Historians, with little agreement, have debated the sincerity of Elizabeth's reaction to Mary's execution and generally two opposing views have been expressed. R.B. Wernham argues that, while there was possibly some genuine grief involved, many of Elizabeth's actions were intended for diplomatic show.[36] Wallace T. MacCaffrey concurs, though argues firmly that the majority of Elizabeth's actions in the wake of the execution were concerned with face-saving gestures.[37] The strength of her response to Mary's execution, however, indicates otherwise and that it was not a show put on for the benefit of her diplomatic relations. As Penry Williams argued:

> While there was probably an element of calculation at times, particularly in the treatment of Davison, it is unlikely that her rage and grief were merely a performance staged to impress James and other monarchs. Burghley, who knew her well, was deeply frightened by her anger.[38]

Williams' position is similar to G.R. Elton who stated that Elizabeth expressed genuine sorrow and anger following Mary's execution.[39] John Guy is more circumspect, merely arguing that Elizabeth had not intended for the signed warrant to be used.[40] Elizabeth's reaction to the execution of Mary may indicate genuine distress at the event and likely combined with anger at the execution occurring without her complete approval. However, her personal feelings did not remove the diplomatic necessity of publicly demonstrating her position as the risks to England's diplomatic relationships from the execution had been a significant part of Elizabeth's hesitation in signing the warrant and had been ignored by her councillors in its dispatch. Elizabeth's domestic expression of anger towards her councillors for the dispatching of the execution warrant was not on its own a sufficient expression of horror and innocence for her diplomatic relationships, especially regarding Scotland. She was well aware of the impact Mary's death would have on Anglo-Scottish relations and she

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[35] R.B. Wernham, *Before the Armada: The Growth of English Foreign Policy 1485-1588* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1966), 382; Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), 371-379.

[36] Ibid., 382.

[37] Wallace T. MacCaffrey, *Elizabeth and the Making of Policy, 1572-1588* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 424-5.

[38] Williams, *The Later Tudors*, 315.

[39] G.R. Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 3rd edn. (London: Routledge, 1991), 368-370.

[40] Guy, *Tudor England*, 336; Guy, *My Heart is My Own*, 496.

sought to halt it through a personal expression of innocence to James through their correspondence.

On 14 February Elizabeth composed a letter to James in which she appeared disturbed by Mary's execution and the possible consequences of the event. This autograph letter is short, roughly half the length of her usual missives, but contains highly emotional language and a deep protestation of innocence in the entire matter. She wrote: 'I beseech you that – as God and many more know – how innocent I am in this case, so you will believe me that if I had bid aught I would have bid by it'.[41] This protestation was strong and she was clear that she would have stood by her order if she had intended it. Today it is difficult to untangle the threads of what did occur between her signing of the warrant and its dispatch, and impossible to know an individual's intent or honesty from the remnants of a correspondence that occurred over four hundred years ago. In many respects it falls to individual judgement of the evidence that survives. It is also clear that whatever her emotional response to this event was, it was necessary for Elizabeth to proclaim her innocence in the matter for diplomatic purposes.

Innocence was a trope of Elizabeth and James' correspondence, and formed an aspect of eleven letters that I have analysed. In most cases it was James who wrote of his innocence in reply to direct questions from Elizabeth or in response to rumours of his actions. This could indicate that Elizabeth was the dominant partner in the correspondence. Additionally, it implies that in the case of Mary's execution their usual roles had been reversed, at least temporarily, resulting in Elizabeth assuming James' position of the lesser partner of the correspondence, petitioning for her innocence to be acknowledged. It appears that proclaiming innocence made it difficult for the recipient of the letter to contradict the statement being made without solid evidence as it would have called into question kingly honour and the authority of the royal word, discussed above as central to both monarchs' ideologies of kingship.

Elizabeth's expression of innocence could have been founded upon the rhetorical trope of modesty utilised frequently in women's writing during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. After her ascension Elizabeth generally spoke and acted confidently as a monarch in place of the more traditional

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[41] 'Elizabeth to James', 14 February 1587, in *Elizabeth I: Collected Works,* eds. Marcus, Mueller and Rose, 296-7.

deferential modesty of a queen. However, she was also familiar with the rhetoric of modesty as demonstrated by her effective use of it in a speech she gave at Oxford University in 1566.[42] In this speech she said:

> Those who do bad things hate the light, and therefore, because I am aware that I myself am about to manage badly my opportunity in your presence, I think that a time of shadows will be fittest for me … For a long time, truly, a great doubt has held me: Should I be silent or should I speak? If indeed I should speak, I would make evident to you how uncultivated I am in letters; however, if I remain silent my incapacity may appear to be contempt.[43]

Elizabeth's use of rhetoric cannot be completely taken at face value as she was highly educated and capable, but she was also aware of when it was culturally proper for her to make such demonstrations. Traditionally, women were expected to be obedient to their husbands or fathers, chaste in behaviour and silent.[44] In such environments it could also be problematic for a woman to display rhetorical skill.[45] The expectations of behaviour for women in general were also applicable to female monarchs and they received praise for displaying appropriately feminine virtues, virtues that often conflicted with the requirements of a reigning monarch.[46] Patricia Pender has argued that the utilisation of modesty rhetoric was employed by women to manage the cultural restrictions placed on women writers, an application that Elizabeth would have been aware of. Pender writes: 'Early modern women often circumvented the charges of impropriety or indecency entailed in assuming the mantle of authorship by denying that they were authors at all.'[47] While denial of authorship was not the exact purpose of Elizabeth in her letter to James it could have served as a rhetorical foundation for her to express innocence in the execution of Mary.

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[42] Patricia Pender, *Early Modern Women's Writing and the Rhetoric of Modesty* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 1-2; Teague, 'Elizabeth I', 524.

[43] 'Speech of Elizabeth I', quoted in Pender, *Early Modern Women's Writing and the Rhetoric of Modesty*, 1-2.

[44] Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King*, 136.

[45] Linda S. Shenk, 'Queen Solomon: An International Elizabeth I in 1569', in *Queens & Power in Medieval and Early Modern England*, ed. by Carole Levin and Robert Bucholz (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 106.

[46] Sarah Duncan, "'Most godly heart fraight with al mercie': Queens' Mercy during the Reigns of Mary I and Elizabeth I', in *Queens & Power in Medieval and Early Modern England*, eds. Carole Levin and Robert Bucholz (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 33.

[47] Pender, *Early Modern Women's Writing and the Rhetoric of Modesty*, 3.

Elizabeth was fully aware of the rhetoric of modesty when she composed her letter to James in February 1586, as demonstrated in her speech at Oxford. Thus, modesty rhetoric was likely utilised as the framework for her rhetoric of innocence she expressed in her letter to James. In so adapting modesty rhetoric, it formed a deviation from the traditional rhetorical framework of modesty. It was not uncommon for Tudor women to deviate from traditional rhetorical models and adopt more individualistic approaches.[48] It also highlighted Elizabeth's anxiety over the issue as deviation could indicate uncertainty on the part of the writer while following rhetorical norms conveyed reassurance and stability.[49] Elizabeth was distressed by the execution of Mary as the disgrace of most of her council would attest. She wished to convey her innocence in the matter to James and the associations and conventions of modesty rhetoric were beneficial. Elizabeth needed her interpretation of the events of Mary's execution to be accepted by foreign powers such Scotland and France.[50] To resolve the issue Elizabeth sought to use her dissatisfaction with Mary's execution to express her innocence. Whether her innocence was real or not will never be known but the very fact that she expressed it so strongly following Mary's execution prompts one to conclude that her diplomacy with James required her to do so.

For almost one year following the execution of Mary the correspondence between Elizabeth and James slowed to a practically non-existent trickle compared to the previous exchange. During the two years before Mary's execution there were on average more than ten letters exchanged between the monarchs. However, between the execution and August 1588 James composed only one letter to Elizabeth. This letter gives the impression of strained emotions, where his words stick rigidly to the diplomatic protocols and phrasing. But the formality could also have been his way of satisfying the demands of his people as there were indications that he was privately relieved that Mary was dead.[51] James wrote that he:

> dare not wrong you so far as not to judge honourably of your unspotted
> part therein. So, on the other side, I wish that your honourable

[48] James Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 23.

[49] Peter Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002),116.

[50] Rayne Allinson, 'The Queens Three Bodies: Gender, Criminality and Sovereignty in the Execution of Mary Queen of Scots', in *Practices of Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe,* eds. Megan Cassidy-Welch and Peter Sherlock (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 105; Doran, 'Revenge her Foul and Most Unnatural Murder?', 593.

[51] Croft, *King James*, 22.

behaviour in all times hereafter may fully persuade the whole world
of the same.[52]

In this he indicated that while he would not question Elizabeth's honour, and
that he would accept her protestations of innocence, he warned her that in her
future actions she would need to be careful to protect her reputation of honour.
He demanded an unspecified satisfaction for Mary's death to 'strengthen and
unite this isle, establish and maintain the true religion, and oblige me to be, as
of before I was, your most lov*ing and dearest brother*'.[53] The italic elements in
the last quote indicate words not present in the autograph draft of the letter
but from a copy of that he eventually sent to Elizabeth and the amendment
could indicate the difficulty of his feelings to her at this time. It could also
indicate the input of an advisor, but it is difficult to be certain and is highly
unusual for a letter of this correspondence to be concluded in such a way. The
words themselves also indicate that there was a diplomatic break as a result of
Mary's death, and this required Elizabeth to make reparations to ensure that
the alliance, and indeed the relationship, survived.

While James wrote his acceptance of Elizabeth's innocence, the broader Anglo-
Scottish diplomatic situation was severely strained. Following the execution
there was a breach in relations between the two kingdoms and unrest on the
ever-problematic borders. Reports made their way to England of planned
reprisals for Mary's death that added to the government's anxiety as the Spanish
threat increased. The anger towards England was not limited to Catholic
Scottish nobles but was shared by their Protestant compatriots and they jointly
called for James to seek revenge for his mother's death.[54] The Scottish response
was strong enough for some of Elizabeth's experienced councillors to become
concerned about the possibility of war.[55] James, who viewed the alliance and
his possible succession to the English throne, as of more importance than
the idea of a war of revenge, did not share his kingdom's anger towards the
English as strongly.[56] He was, however, forced to make concessions to the
angry response of his people and did not ask for his pension, which he received
from the English government following the agreement of the Anglo-Scottish
alliance in 1556, to be paid in 1587 as it would have taken on the appearance of
'blood money'.[57] The anger within Scotland after the execution of Mary Stuart

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[52] 'James to Elizabeth', Late February 1587, in *Letters of King James VI & I*, ed. Akrigg, 84-5.

[53] Ibid., 84-5.

[54] Doran, 'Revenge her Foul and Most Unnatural Murder?', 599-600.

[55] P.J. Holmes, 'Mary Stewart in England', in *Mary Stuart: Queen in Three Kingdoms,* ed. Michael Lynch (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 214.

[56] Elton, *England Under the Tudors*, 370; MacCaffrey, *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy,* 245.

[57] Julian Goodare, 'James VI's English Subsidy', in *The Reign of James VI*, eds. Julian Goodare

was beyond all calculation of the English Privy Council and was part of what Elizabeth had feared.

The failure of the correspondence indicated that a key aspect of the diplomatic relationship between the two kingdoms had been broken, that of personal communication between their monarchs. Allinson argues that a personal royal correspondence was an important element in maintaining the relationships between two kingdoms in alliance. Breaking a correspondence of this type could therefore cause considerable damage to the diplomatic relationship as a wider whole.[58] The suspension of the Anglo-Scottish diplomatic relationship was significant and those historians who argue that Mary's death had little impact greatly underestimate the heightened feelings this issue incited within Scotland.[59] For the year following the execution diplomatic relations were practically suspended between the two kingdoms.[60] Strained diplomatic relations made the threat from Spain even more severe and as it became clearer that the Armada would soon set sail England looked to its defences. It was in the midst of England's preparations that Elizabeth sought to secure her postern gate against the Spanish as she had previously done against the French. To that end Elizabeth resurrected her correspondence with James.

Elizabeth had allowed the silence in the correspondence to stand and she did not write to James again following her protestation of innocence until events of the wider world prompted her to do so in May 1588. This letter expressed her willingness to overlook the recent past and said that she wished 'to turn my eyes to the making up of that sure amity and staunch goodwill…'[61] Elizabeth's language concerning the repair of the amity and the very length of time between her letters to James indicate how much of an impact the execution of Mary had on the relationship between England and Scotland. Yet Elizabeth's letter also indicated the strength of her desire to normalise relations between their kingdoms, promising that he would find her to be 'the carefullest Prince of your quiet government, ready to assist you with force, with treasure, counsel, or anything you have need of as much as in honour you can require, or upon cause you shall need'.[62] This declaration of support and assistance underlined her desire to repair relations, but it was motivated by something far more substantial than a simple wish for her innocence to be accepted by James. In

and Michael Lynch (Phantassie: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 112-14.
[58] Allinson, *A Monarchy of Letters,* 91.
[59] Doran, 'Revenge her Foul and Most Unnatural Murder?', 589-590.
[60] Doran, 'Loving and Affectionate Cousins?', 206-7.
[61] 'Elizabeth to James', 11 May 1588, in *The Letters of Queen Elizabeth,* ed. Harrison, 191-3.
[62] 'Elizabeth to James', 11 May 1588, in *The Letters of Queen Elizabeth,* ed. Harrison, 191-3.

May 1588 England was well aware of the assembly of the Spanish Armada and was diplomatically isolated from much of the continent on account of the kingdom's Protestantism. The execution of Mary had alienated Scotland and thus made James an unpredictable neighbour. It was this concern that prompted Elizabeth's wide-ranging promises in her letter to James, ones that seem to have been well received as a little over a month later Elizabeth sent another letter to thank James for his acceptance of the 'truth' and questioned James about what he wanted as satisfaction for Mary's execution. For his satisfaction James sought from Elizabeth an additional £1000 per year for his pension and her acknowledgment of him as her heir.[63] It also appears that James had recently expressed a commitment, as written by Elizabeth in her letter, to the 'constant defence of your country, together mine, from all Spaniards or strangers'.[64] The commitment to the joint defence of England and Scotland by James seems to indicate a thawing of the diplomatic tension between them and an intriguing move of James' to align with Elizabeth against Spain.

The alignment of James with Elizabeth in the face of the Spanish Armada was possibly more curious than it seems at face value. Following Mary's execution, during the suspension of relations between England and Scotland, James could have found support across most of Europe and from most Catholics to make a move against Elizabeth. Indeed, parts of Protestant Scotland itself were in favour of acting against England in the aftermath of the execution.[65] Instead, James chose to commit himself to the cause of Elizabeth's England. This was most likely in order to secure his claim in the succession and a possible increase in his pension.[66] However, his passive support in itself would have been sufficient for that purpose. Instead James declared in a letter written in August that he:

> offered unto you my forces, my person, and all that I may command, to be employed against yon strangers in whatsomever fashion and by whatsomever mean as may serve for the defence of your country. Wherein I promise to behave myself not as a stranger and foreign prince but as your natural son and compatriot of your country in all respects.[67]

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[63] Wernham, *Before the Armada*, 383.
[64] 'Elizabeth to James', 1 July 1588, in *Elizabeth I: Collected Works,* eds. Marcus, Mueller and Rose, 355-6.
[65] Doran, 'Revenge her Foul and Most Unnatural Murder?', 600.
[66] Wernham, *Before the Armada*, 383.
[67] 'James to Elizabeth', 4 August 1588, in *Letters of King James VI & I*, ed. Akrigg, 87-9.

His strong rhetoric was a declaration of alliance to Elizabeth and England, far more than the assurance that was necessary to maintain his position diplomatically, and therefore England could turn its attention to the Channel and its defence against the Armada assured of at least James' allegiance.

In 1588 the Spanish Armada failed disastrously in its attempt to invade England. This event was one of the few times in Elizabeth's reign that the threat of foreign invasion was more immediate than the concern of conspiracy and plots. It had also served to encourage England to rebuild its diplomatic understanding with Scotland. The dramatic confrontation that occurred off the south coast of England resulted in Spain's fleet fleeing and did not ultimately require Elizabeth to call upon James to make good on his rhetorical support. Elizabeth celebrated the achievement in a letter sent to James shortly following the Armada's dispersal. She wrote of the victory in the 'narrow seas' through the assistance of 'God's singular favour' before continuing to comment on how Philip II, the King of Spain, had given her the glory of a military victory through his attempts at duplicity rather than continue with the diplomatic alternative that they had been pursuing. As she wrote: 'even in the mids [sic] of treating peace, begins this wrongful war. He hath procured my greatest glory that meant my sorest wrack…'.[68] Her evident joy at the defeat of the Armada in the Channel did not remove her unease over English security, however, and she urged James to maintain his vigilance against the Armada that was returning to Spain by sailing around Scotland. Her concern was centred on the unreliability of the Catholic Lords in Scotland and the prevalent belief within England that they would align themselves with the retreating Spanish fleet.

The two years from the discovery of the Babington Plot in 1586 until the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 were amongst the most difficult for the Anglo-Scottish alliance during Elizabeth's reign. Mary's position within English custody had long been a delicate issue for Elizabeth's diplomacy but the discovery of her involvement in yet another plot had made it untenable. Elizabeth was torn between her personal beliefs in the rights of monarchs and the need to defend herself from the plots of others. While diplomats pleaded for Mary, James made direct appeals to Elizabeth calling upon her to act with honour and to uphold the divine right of kings, concepts that they both held in common. The appeals were insufficient to protect Mary and the warrant was eventually signed and dispatched. Through her correspondence with James she sought to express her innocence in the affair, using the rhetoric of modesty as a

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[68] 'Elizabeth to James', August 1588, in *Queen Elizabeth I: Selected Works*, ed. May, 181-3.

framework, and attempted to protect their alliance. The matter caused a strong outpouring of anger in Scotland towards England and for a year following the execution of Mary Anglo-Scottish diplomacy was effectively suspended. It was the threat of the outside world that again urged Elizabeth to look north towards Scotland and in the face of the Spanish Armada she sought to mend her connection with James and resume their correspondence. James, seeing his future more in England as Elizabeth's successor, rather than alongside her continental opponents, swore to uphold their alliance regardless of the recent difficulties between them, laying down some of the initial groundwork for the joining of England and Scotland upon his eventual succession.

'Posh People Love Gangsters'[1]

Contested Heritage: Preservation Debates at the Former Pentridge Prison Site: 1993-2014

Mali Rea

The former Pentridge Prison site in Coburg holds a place of notoriety in the collective memory of Melbournians. When it was closed in 1997, debates around which parts of the site are worthy of preservation began. Despite great tourist interest in former prison sites in Australia, commercial development was prioritised over tourism, due to the hugely profitable present state of the Melbourne real estate market. As dark tourism has not been taken up at Pentridge, this article focusses on the heritage and preservation debates at the former prison site. The way in which the site is preserved, what is prioritised and what has already been lost indicates more about the values of the present than what is worth preserving from the past. Through an exploration of the heritage debates around various parts of the Pentridge site; H-Division, Jika Jika, the burial sites and prisoner artwork, this article seeks to discover what makes a particular part of the site more worthy of preservation and protection. Once it was clear the state government were unwilling to preserve the entire site and it was sold to developers, only part of it would be preserved. This forced heritage advocates to decide on a hierarchy of the value of certain parts of the site. Ultimately, the age of a structure within the site and the previous tenancy of a celebrity prisoner always outweighed the socially historic aspects of the site. The article makes key judgements about the contextual nature of heritage and the complicated narratives that prisons leave behind, particularly in the Australian context.

Pentridge is undoubtedly a notorious icon in Melbournians' public consciousness. After one hundred and forty-six years as the main prison for Melbourne, Pentridge closed in 1997. Since then, it has gone from a place of incarceration to a place of residence and recreation. This article seeks to discover why the preservation of Pentridge has taken the form it does today through an analysis of heritage discourse and in particular, why only some parts of the former prison site are considered worth preserving. Previous scholarly work on the topic has focussed on the concept of dark tourism,

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[1] Mark 'Chopper' Read, *Last Man Standing* (Momentum, Sydney, 2013) in John Silvester, 'Posh People Love Gangsters', *The Age,* 3 October, 2013, https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/posh-people-love-gangsters-20131002-2uspn.html, Accessed 28 July, 2017.

with the assumption that Pentridge would become a tourist site, as many other former prison sites in Australia have, most notably Fremantle and Port Arthur. The primary scholar in this area is Jacqueline Wilson, who has written widely on Pentridge's post-closure existence, with a focus on dark tourism and cultural memory.[2] Since Wilson's research over ten years ago, tourism at Pentridge has declined, with only one division open for tours organised by an external company. It is not an organised whole tourist site like Fremantle or Port Arthur. The questions of preservation and protection have become important to reanalyse in the context of the commercialised historical former prison site. This article considers the preservation of the site through the lens of heritage, as I argue that the preservation decisions made reflect particular heritage valuations made due to the cultural and social concerns of present day Australians. In particular, how the concerns of those local to the prison site have come into conflict with their local council, the state government, property developers and in some cases, other heritage advocates. Ultimately, heritage valuations always choose older buildings over those where socially and historically significant events occurred, especially when those events put a government's past actions into question. These contextual factors show that heritage tells us more about what is important to us in the present, than what we collectively believe is important about the past.

For the purposes of this article, heritage is defined as any 'activity concerned with the preservation, restoration and interpretation of historic buildings, landscapes and environments'.[3] Historian David Lowenthal argues that history and heritage are entirely different with the defining factor of history being a testable account of the past.[4] He argues that heritage lacks the critical analysis of history and is instead centred on narratives which aim to form cohesive identities. In addition, historian of memory Raphael Samuel argues against the implication that heritage is a conservative practice which creates national identity through shallow portrayals of the past.[5] I am sympathetic to these critical definitions of heritage, as through my research I have noticed that what is considered worth preserving is highly dependent on the social

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[2] Jacqueline Wilson, *Prison: Cultural Memory and Dark Tourism* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008), Jacqueline Wilson, 'Representing Pentridge', *Australian Historical Studies* 36, no. 125 (2005): 113-133.

[3] Graeme Davison and Chris McConville, 'Preface', in *A Heritage Handbook*, eds. Graeme Davison and Chris McConville. (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1991), vii.

[4] David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 121.

[5] Raphael Samuel, 'Politics', in *The Heritage Reader*, eds. Graham Fairclough et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 274-294.

and cultural context of the time, and has no clear standard other than that it is important to someone or is sufficiently old.

Heritage performs a distinct function in post-colonial societies like Australia, where national identity is unstable and contested, as discussed by Australian historians Laurajane Smith and Graeme Davison. Smith argues that Australian interest in preservation since in the 1960s and 1970s is based in a 'conservation ethic'.[6] The conservation ethic assumes nothing we create now can ever possibly be as good as something that is being kept and preserved.[7] Davison argues that, for settlers, the nation lacked a grounding in a tangible deep time.[8] As more critical histories have shaken the white settler narrative of Australian history, the conservation of certain sites has become increasingly important so that marginalised histories are seen to be valued.[9] Heritage connects local communities and places with broader aspects of Australian identity and cultural memory. For Pentridge and the many former prison museums, this connection includes the theme of criminality. According to Wilson, criminality is associated with the key foundational aspects of Australian masculine identity, larrikinism and a casual rejection of authority.[10] Additionally, Australian historian Anne Bickford argues that '[t]he sites of former prisons have a particular fascination for Australians', as an extension of this preoccupation with convicts and criminality.[11] This often comes in the form of celebrity prisoners, for Pentridge these are figures such as Mark 'Chopper' Read (quoted in the title of this article), Ned Kelly, Ronald Ryan and Melbourne underworld identities such as Carl Williams.

The preservation of the former Pentridge prison site reflects how the commercialisation of a historical site leads to a shallow representation of its history that only exists due to pressure from local heritage advocates. This article first evaluates the heritage debates wrapped up in the closure of the prison and the questions brought up about the government's role in preservation. It then compares heritage discourse of the public ownership era with the new

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[6] Laurajane Smith, 'Towards a Theoretical Framework for Archaeological Heritage Management', in *The Heritage Reader,* eds. Graham Fairclough et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 65.

[7] Graeme Davison, 'Heritage Terminology', in *A Heritage Handbook.* Eds. Graeme Davison and Chris McConville. (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1991), 34.

[8] Ibid., 35.

[9] Smith, 'Towards a Theoretical Framework', 65.

[10] Jacqueline Z. Wilson, *Prison: Cultural Memory and Dark Tourism* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008), 181-182.

[11] Anne Bickford, 'Romantic Ruins', in *A Heritage Handbook,* eds. Graeme Davison and Chris McConville. (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1991), 84.

tensions brought up once the site was sold to private developers. Then, it explores how the issue of burial sites is symptomatic of a preoccupation with 'celebrity prisoners'. Lastly, it compares the preservation of the Ronald Bull mural with the murals from Jika Jika to ultimately argue that the architectural value associated with age will always trump interest in social heritage and the wants of local people.

The Closure: Local and Public Interest in Heritage

The closure of the Coburg Prison Complex (H.M. Prison Pentridge and the Metropolitan Remand Centre) is directly associated with two key events: the election of the Jeff Kennett led Liberal Victorian State Government (1992) and a series of controversies that came into the public eye (since the mid-1980s). The state government began discussing the closure of Pentridge in March 1993. The prison officially closed in 1997 and the site was sold to private developers in May 1999.

The closure of Pentridge had been seen as increasingly necessary and somewhat inevitable after the Jika Jika division fire in 1987. As early as 1983 an Office of Corrections Masterplan identified the tension between the historical value of the prison buildings and the unsuitability of these buildings for prisoner accommodation:

> The notion that existing facilities and accommodation should continue
> in use unaltered, simply because the structures are of historic interest
> is nothing less than obnoxious.[12]

The Kennett government was motivated to take on this complex task as it provided an opportunity to privatise the Victorian prison system in line with Kennett's extensive application of neoclassical liberal economic reforms.[13] Kennett's privatisation agenda would eventually result in the closure of three of Victoria's most outdated prisons: Pentridge, Fairlea and Sale, which were replaced with three new private prisons.[14] By April 1993, discussions in Victorian State Parliament indicated that problems at Pentridge were

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[12] Neilson Associates, *Office of Corrections Victoria, Corrections Master Plan Volume 1: Summary and Recommendations* (Melbourne: 1983), 441.

[13] Nicholas Economou and Costar, Brian. 'Introduction: The Victorian Liberal Model- A Kennett Revolution', in *The Kennett Revolution: Victorian Politics in the 1990s*, eds. Brian Costar and Nicholas Economou (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1999), xi.

[14] Linda Hancock, 'The Justice System and Accountability', in *The Kennett Revolution: Victorian Politics in the 1990s*, eds. Brian Costar and Nicholas Economou (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1999), 43.

unresolvable and suggested it be closed.[15] To discern the nature and extent of problems in Victorian prisons, the Minister for Corrections Pat McNamara commissioned an inquiry into the Victorian prison system (henceforth, the Lynn Inquiry) in August 1993.[16] The inquiry primarily considered the spread of drugs and corruption in prison, and concluded on Pentridge, that 'the integrity of all operations undertaken by Victorian Prison Industries Commission at H M Prison "C" is in question'.[17]

The official closure of Pentridge Prison in May 1997 (and Metropolitan Remand Division in December 1997) revealed the complicated relationship between local people and Pentridge, and the contrasting forms of remembrance by former prisoners as opposed to former prison guards. The closure involved a ceremony of five hundred current and former staff, representatives of the state government and media.[18] Notably, no former prisoners were invited to attend the ceremony.

After closure, local people began to stake their claim in the preservation of the Pentridge site, which begs the question, do posh people really love gangsters as Chopper Read suggested? The locals of Coburg have an ongoing complex relationship with the prison. A May 1997 front page article in the Moreland Courier on the closure of the prison illustrated the distaste in living near a prison for many locals:

> The suburb was renamed Coburg, but there was no escaping the massive gothic prison, looming over Sydney Rd. On Thursday the suburb came one big step closer to ridding itself of the institution.[19]

In the early 1990s, local people of the Coburg area became increasingly interested in the future of the site and asserted that they had a unique insight and connection to it. After meeting with McNamara, former Jesuit Pentridge Chaplain Peter Norden wrote an opinion piece in *The Age* arguing a preservation agenda. He identified the local and general Melbournian interest in the prison as an argument for heritage:

> Yesterday I met someone who had lived in Coburg all his life, right next to the prison, and he was intrigued to find out about life inside Pentridge… You don't have to live next door to Pentridge to want

[15] VIC, Parliamentary Debates, Legislative Council, Vol. 411, 29 April 1993, 561-562.
[16] 'Prison to Stay', *Coburg Courier*, 4 August 1993, 1.
[17] Peter Lynn, *Inquiry into the Victorian Prison System*, no. 39 (Melbourne: L.V. North Government Printer, 1993), 147. Prison 'C' refers to Coburg Prisons Complex.
[18] Nerida Hodgkins, 'Prison Doors Close for Good', *Moreland Courier,* 5 May 1997, 1.
[19] Ibid.

answers to these questions. Everyone in Victoria has a right to know.[20]

Norden was among the first to identify the unique position of Pentridge in Melbournian culture as a place of public interest and cultural significance. However, the prison's internal operations were not known about, even by those who lived next-door. Norden's statement that '[e]veryone in Victoria has a right to know'", indicates that the heritage and preservation of the Pentridge site was a matter of governmental transparency and public responsibility. In this statement, Norden is implying that while the history of the prison belongs to those who spend time there, as prisoners and as workers, it is a governmental responsibility to preserve the site, even if it means their mistreatment of prisoners is revealed.

At the beginning of 1994, members of the City of Coburg Council began to take interest in the future use of the site, though at this stage their priority was development, with the preservation of 'historically significant buildings' only as an afterthought.[21] This followed earlier news media speculation that the Pentridge prison site would be sold to housing developers to fund the building of the replacement private prisons, and that the bluestone buildings and walls would be protected by the National Trust.[22] These simplistic valuations of the structures of Pentridge reflects a heritage agenda only concerned with the oldness of buildings, rather than the social and cultural significance of them. As Davison argues, to preserve an old building in its 'original' form removes the ability of the building to tell the story of its life through its alterations.[23]

Tensions between local heritage and development continued through mid-1997 as debates continued over the future of the site. Local real estate agents began to promote the idea of development, to "change the whole view of people who regard Coburg as the place out near the jail (sic)" and to promote economic growth in the area.[24] Local resident Pat Burchell responded to the promotion of the 'new Coburg' by real estate agents and developers with a letter which insisted on the heritage of the site for Coburg's profile, where he said '[w]hen the prison goes, so does our place in public consciousness unless we do something to remember the history of the area'.[25] Burchell reflects a

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[20] Peter Norden, 'Prison Reforms Leave the Honest Brokers in Shackles', *The Age*, 8 December 1993, 15.
[21] City of Coburg Ordinary Meeting Minutes, 7 February 1994, 8.
[22] Mark Forbes, 'Death Warrant for Pentridge', *The Sunday Age*, 28 August 1993, 1.
[23] Graeme Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 2000), 141-145.
[24] Nerida Hodgkins, 'Prison Ideas Uncaged', *Moreland Leader*, 19 May 1997, 5.
[25] Pat Murchell, 'Pentridge Link', Letter to the Editor, *Moreland Leader* 9 June 1997, 14.

concern that while many Coburg residents had spent decades trying to distance their suburb from the prison, some were now concerned that without it, they would not have a unique identity within Melbourne. As heritage advocates began to see the inevitability of development, they started to compromise, in accepting that only some of the site could be preserved, the older buildings and bluestone were prioritised. Because local people were largely unaware of what occurred behind the prison walls, they have appealed to the apparently inherent value of old or 'original' buildings over the socially and historically significant parts of the prison that are more difficult to talk about and may bring past governments' actions into question.

Privatising Heritage: Developers, Locals and Heritage

As a result of Kennett's privatisation agenda, and a general impression that the public had funded Pentridge enough, the site was sold in May 1999. This section analyses how the heritage debate changed once the site was sold to private developers and which parts of the site, they were concerned with protecting to make profit out of or to appease local people and heritage advocates.

The Minister for Finance, Hon. R.M. Hallam justified the sale of the site as he argued it would be too expensive, at $2 million a year, for the state government to just keep the site in a safe condition.[26] The initial sale of the Pentridge site by the state government in May 1999 was opposed by heritage advocates due to fear that private ownership would afford less heritage protections and some felt that the former prison should remain a public asset. An *Australian* article reflected a degree of discomfort in selling off a public institution, noting that 'critics… make the point that Pentridge was a public asset.'[27] The National Trust criticised the sale of the site in general as the government was going 'against its own recommendations and (the) building protection agency' the recommendations being that of the 1996 Conservation Management Plan.[28] The Heritage Council objected to the sale of the site on the grounds that there was a complete lack of consultation and a concern that significant parts of the site had not been assured protection.[29]

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[26] VIC, Parliamentary Debates, Legislative Council, Vol. 436, 7 October 1997, 9.
[27] Stephen Lunn, 'Heritage Watch: Site Lines', *Australian,* 24 May 1999.
[28] National Trust of Australia (Victoria), 'Pentridge Under Threat', Media Release. September 10, 1998.
[29] Sushila Das, 'Prison Sale Sparks Heritage Outrage', *The Age*, 11 September 1998, 3.

When initial sale of the Pentridge site occurred in May 1999 to Stock Constructions, many heritage advocates, including the National Trust, objected to the sale, with concerns about heritage protections. However, local people initially approved of the buyer as the Stock Constructions' managing director, Tony Foti had grown up in Coburg.[30] In a media release, introducing the four year project titled 'Grandview Square', Foti legitimised his position as a local of Coburg.[31] Foti was interviewed in a *Moreland Courier* article where he claimed that he "did not want to be painted as a saviour but believed he understood the site's significance better than most developers."[32] Foti acknowledged heritage concerns by stating that he had already met with the National Trust and Heritage Victoria and reassured them that 'bluestone walls and heritage buildings from the prison complex will be integrated into the development plans…".[33] Statements of support for Foti's proposal in the *Moreland Courier* came from the Coburg Historical Society, the Mayor, Coburg Traders Association and local school principals.[34]

It is perhaps unsurprising that the local council was willing to cede the small amount of influence they held over the future of the site, noting Richard Broome's earlier observation that throughout the operational life of Pentridge 'the Coburg Council saw it as a blot on the city which brought no rate revenue'.[35] However, the council's negative impression of Pentridge appeared to change temporarily as curiosity about the inner workings of the prison peaked in the first few years after closure. This was short lived, as the local council came to sympathise with the state government's financial concerns over preserving the site and agreed with its sale.

In the first year of developer control of Pentridge "the prison's ugly face (was) being torn down" by removing razor wire and levelling some of the perimeter walls, in a Moreland Courier article from February 2000.[36] As one of the Pentridge Piazza developers, Luciano Crema said:

> If you can remove the fact that it was a prison and just think of it as
> a new beginning… The history of this place is what makes it different

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[30] National Trust of Australia, 'Pentridge Under Threat', Media Release, September 10, 1998.

[31] Foti, Tony. 'Heritage Values Integral to Coburg Prison Development.' Media Release. April 28, 1999.

[32] 'Scary Roots Inspire a Prison Developer', *Moreland Courier,* 10 May 1999, 9.

[33] Foti, 'Heritage Values Integral'.

[34] See Shelley Morrell and Hamish Carter, 'Patchwork Prison', *Moreland Courier,* 3 May 1999, 1. And Hamish Carter, 'Excitement of Prison Cell-Off', *Moreland Courier,* 10 May 1999, 8-9.

[35] Richard Broome, *Coburg*: *Between Two Creeks,* (Port Melbourne: Lothian Publishing Company, 1987), 291.

[36] 'Residents can Choose to Stay for Life', *Moreland Courier,* 7 February 2000, 8.

and I think people will want to live there once they understand the concept.[37]

Crema's comment reflects the form of heritage produced by development companies. In her article about aesthetics and the architecture of incarceration, Yvonne Jewkes argues that the turning of old prisons into housing and hotels is commonplace in modern society and reflects the architecture of new prisons.[38] Jewkes argues that through this transition the prison goes from 'source of pride' to a 'barely noticeable feature of the contemporary city skyline'.[39] This is achieved through the simultaneous effect of new prisons being built to camouflage into their cities and the increase in carceral features in urban design (e.g. gated communities).[40] Profit is the primary motivation for development companies and therefore reflections of Pentridge's past are created to refer to nostalgia, and tend to be a more sanitised version of events. The attitude that the past of the site must be sanitised to make it 'liveable' echoes the key tension between developers' heritage and the preservation argued for by heritage advocates. Heritage advocates are committed to heritage to make sure future generations know about their past, even if it is through a shallow portrayal.

High Security Heritage: The Bluestone of H-Division in Conflict with the Social History of Jika Jika

When Pentridge is referred to in the media, and in conversations with Melbourne locals, its bluestone walls and buildings are almost always mentioned. Stephanie Trigg explains that old buildings, laneways and walls made of bluestone are considered historically significant and aesthetically appealing in Melbourne.[41] The symbol of bluestone confirms Pentridge's place in the historical identity of Melbourne. As a City of Melbourne report into Bluestone in Melbourne streets and laneways asserts, 'Bluestone is synonymous with the character of Melbourne'.[42] The original Conservation Management Plan saw this cultural importance and based itself around the retention of bluestone

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[37] Farrah Tomazin, 'From Prison to Piazza, Pentridge gets a Makeover', *The Age*, 1 August 2002, 3.

[38] Yvonne Jewkes, 'Aesthetics and An-Aesthetics: The Architecture of Incarceration', in *The Arts of Imprisonment: Control, Resistance and Empowerment,* ed. Leonidas K. Cheliotis. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 36.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Trigg, Stephanie, 'Bluestone and the city: writing an emotional history', *Melbourne Historical Journal* 44, no. 1 (2017) 41-53.

[42] City of Melbourne, *Operating Procedure: Bluestone in Melbourne's Streets and Lanes,* 2017, https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/operating-procedure-bluestone.pdf Accessed 7 October 2017, 5.

structures.[43] Bluestone is heavily associated with convicts and prisoners, with several gaols and cemeteries made of bluestone. For Pentridge, the bluestone convict association goes deeper, as prisoners quarried and built the bluestone for the prison at the nearby Merri Creek Quarry.[44] In a survey conducted by Jacqueline Wilson in 2001 as part of her research into Pentridge, local residents of Coburg 'almost all at some point mentioned the bluestone in terms of its visual aesthetic, historical significance, perceived authenticity and/or its unique connection to the Coburg Area'.[45]

In this section I compare the preservation debate around H-Division and Jika Jika, as they are the successive high security divisions, with H-Division built in 1900 and Jika Jika built in 1980. H-Division is thought to have heritage value by heritage advocates for four key reasons: that it is an early building, built of bluestone, it was the location of the practice of rock breaking as punishment from 1958 to 1976, and because it was the location of Mark 'Chopper' Read's most notorious stories of Pentridge.[46] The practice of rock breaking and the poor conditions in the division were used as arguments for the preservation of the site by heritage advocates who believe that these events are significant in Melbourne history. Poor conditions within H-Division have been chronicled in several prisoner memoirs, popular media, scholarly discourse and by prison activists.[47]

The pointless activity of rock breaking was performed in solitude by new inmates of H-Division before they earned their way into the industry yards.[48] The solitude of this work and the free rein given to guards in H-Division meant that prisoners were noticeably 'broken' when they came out of H-Division.[49] Complaints about these conditions resulted in the 1974 Jenkinson Inquiry, which vindicated those who had complained of ill-treatment within

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[43] Allom Lovell & Associates, *Pentridge Conservation Management Plan*, Melbourne, 1996, xiii.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Jacqueline Z. Wilson, 'Representing Pentridge', *Australian Historical Studies* 36, no. 125. (2005): 125.

[46] Allom Lovell & Associates, *Pentridge Conservation Management Plan*, 137., Don Osborne, *Pentridge: Behind the Bluestone Walls* (South Melbourne: Echo, 2015), 63.

[47] See *Chopper,* Directed by Andrew Dominik, Produced by Michele Bennett (Melbourne: Australian Film Finance Corporation, 2000); Ray Mooney, *Everynight Everynight*, Directed and Produced by Alkinos Tsilimidos (Melbourne: Siren Visual Entertainment, 1994); Bree Carlton, *Imprisoning Resistance: Life and Death in Australia's Supermax* (Sydney: Sydney Institute of Criminology Series, 2007); Barry Ellem, *Doing Time: The Prison Experience* (Sydney: Fontana/Collins, 1984); Osborne, *Pentridge.*, Roberts, David Gregory, *Shantaram* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2004); Douglas Robinson, *H: The Division from Hell* (Melbourne, Dougbooks, 2005); Pentridge Workshop Collective, *Blood from Stone* (Melbourne: Abalone, 1982).

[48] Broome, *Coburg*, 289.

[49] Ibid.

H-Division.[50] Prisoners were then allowed access to the Victorian Ombudsman, John Dillion, who stopped the practice of placing new prisoners, naked, into observation cells and recommended the end to rock breaking in H-Division, which was enacted in 1976.[51] By the late 1970s H-Division was seen as outdated and its problems irreconcilable, which inspired the construction of Jika Jika. However, after the 1987 Jika Jika fire, H-Division was reopened as the high security division.

Heritage advocates also often cite criminal and popular culture figure Mark "Chopper" Read as part of their argument for preservation, as the connection with an Australian cultural figure and celebrity is likely to appeal to the public. The infamous story of Read having another prisoner cut off his ear to escape to the hospital division occurred in H Division.[52] It is from Read's books, especially Road to Nowhere, that the public were able to gain an understanding of the Pentridge experience.[53]

The defence of H-Division truly began in May 2014, when Heritage Victoria approved a permit to demolish some of the labour yards of H-Division and some internal dividing walls.[54] The permit approved the 'partial demolition of the "H" Division Labour Yards wing'. However, it stated that:

> Total demolition of the Labour Yards adjunct known as "H" Division is not required for the construction of Road "A" and therefore total demolition of the Labour Yards is not approved by this permit.[55]

Due to developer interest in the heritage of Pentridge being mostly motivated by profit, Heritage Victoria had to include clauses in their permits that counterbalanced the destruction of heritage buildings and walls with provisions that conservation work be completed at the expense of developers, Shayher Group.[56] In a Heritage Interpretation Masterplan commissioned by the Shayher Group however, they stated that 'Pentridge will be a commercial and residential hub and that, museums, as a rule, are not commercially viable', and a museum is already a provision of the Pentridge Village development

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[50] Kenneth Jenkinson, *Report of the Board of Inquiry into Several Matters Concerning H.M. Prison Pentridge and the Maintenance of Discipline in Prisons* (Melbourne: C.H. Rixon, Government Printer, 1974).

[51] Broome, *Coburg,* 297.

[52] James Morton and Susanna Lobez, *Gangland Melbourne* (Carlton: Victory Books, 2011), 157.

[53] Mark 'Chopper' Read, *Road to Nowhere: 23 Years and 9 Months in the Australian Prison System* (Sydney: McPherson's Printing Group, 2011).

[54] Timothy Smith, Permit No. P20564 'HM Prison Pentridge', H1551, 30 May 2014.

[55] Ibid, 1.

[56] Ibid., 2.

permit.[57] Note that by 2014, the site was split into three sections owned by different development companies: Shayher Group, Valad and Aberdeen Property Groups and Stock Constructions and Abbott & Dean Real Estate.

In contrast, Jika Jika's short, tumultuous but significant past was no longer preserved in its physical form in 2000 when it was demolished to make way for development. As soon as Jika Jika opened, it quickly became apparent that the prisoner separation and dehumanising security technology made for constant crisis as prisoners resisted the harsh conditions for its entire operational life.[58] The end for Jika Jika came on the 29th of October 1987, when five prisoners died after barricading themselves in their unit and lighting a fire. They were asphyxiated as the construction of the division prevented fresh air getting in.[59] The fire came after a year of protests from prisoners in the division, including 'bronzing up' protests, inspired by the H-Block prisoners in Northern Ireland.[60] Jika Jika closed as a high security facility on the 30th of October 1987. The 1989 Board of Inquiry Report on the Behaviour of the Office of Corrections (henceforth the Murray Inquiry) retrospectively justified the creation of Jika Jika due to the 'undesirable features' of the operation of H-Division.[61] Murray argued that the design was consistent with thinking at the time and 'enabled a good deal of separation between prisoners and prison staff'.[62] Murray's defence of the division's construction was necessary to counter the criticism that the 1987 fire was the fault of the design of Jika Jika. He argues that it was instead the fault of the Office of Corrections.[63]

The Conservation Management Plan (henceforth CMP, commissioned by the state government in 1996) recommended that Jika Jika should be preserved, inspiring much public criticism. It recommends Jika Jika be 'retained and conserved, at least in part' and that its future use be decided promptly, due to its cultural significance as a more recent example of penal design.[64] This recommendation of the CMP shows how the heritage of controversial places

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[57] Sue Hodges Productions for Shayher Group, *Former HM Prison Pentridge Interpretation Masterplan,* (Port Melbourne, 2013), http://pentridgecoburg.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Heritage_Interpretation_Masterplan.pdf Accessed 7 October 2017. 12.

[58] Bree Carlton, *Imprisoning Resistance,* 63, 125.

[59] Murray, *Report on the Behaviour of the Office of Corrections,* 1-3.

[60] Carlton, *Imprisoning Resistance,* 137-138; 'Bronzing up' refers to the smearing of excrement on cell walls as a form of protest.

[61] Basil Lanthrop Murray, *Report on the Behaviour of the Office of Corrections* (Melbourne: Academic Bookbinders, 1989), 3.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Peter Norden, 'Questions Linger in the "Electronic Zoo"', *The Age,* 10 October 1993, 14.

[64] Allom Lovell & Associates, *Pentridge Conservation Management Plan*, xiii.

that remain in living memory can be contentious. Heritage advocates argued that preserving the division acknowledges the suffering that occurred there, while prison reform advocates were concerned that its preservation would glorify the harsh conditions of Jika Jika.

In an article in the *Moreland Courier* on the 14th of October 1996, Peter Norden, said it was 'upsetting for the individuals involved' to preserve the division.[65] He also questioned the prioritising of Jika Jika over the burial sites at the prison.[66] Norden and Coburg lawyer Shelley Burchfield were concerned that preservation might result in glorification and would encourage new prisons to be built in a similar style.[67] Moreland Mayor Mike Hill responded to this criticism by arguing that preserving Jika Jika 'might serve as a reminder of penal theory that caused us to build something like that'.[68] Bree Carlton notes in the preface to her book *Imprisoning Resistance* that she was motivated to write the book to recognise past experiences of prisoners in Jika Jika as she was concerned that the demolition of the division would work to eradicate the public memories of the division.[69] Opponents of Jika Jika's preservation ultimately won the debate in 1997 when Moreland councillor Glenyys Romanes conceded that the future of the division was uncertain despite the CMP recommendation that the division be preserved.[70]

The decision to demolish Jika Jika reflects the hierarchy between heritage values, where aesthetic age is prioritised over all other values. It also shows how very strong and recent negative emotions about a site can impact heritage decisions. Despite the recommendation of the 1996 CMP that Jika Jika should be preserved as an example of modern prison design, Stock Constructions decided to demolish the Jika Jika division in early 2000.[71] Jika Jika was demolished to make way for the first major project on the Pentridge site, the residential estate.[72] The public were permitted one last chance to see inside Jika Jika, with the support of developer Foti, who argued, 'I felt it would be irresponsible of us to demolish Jika Jika without offering a final chance for people to see what it was like inside'.[73]

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[65] Nerida Hodgkins, 'Anger over Jika Jika Plan', *Moreland Courier*, 14 October 1996, 5.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Lisa Bigelow, 'No Glory for Jika Jika', *Moreland Courier*, 21 October 1996, 1.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Carlton, *Imprisoning Resistance,* 7-8.
[70] Nerida Hodgkins, 'Pentridge Plans Under Way', *Moreland Courier,* 15 December 1997, 6.
[71] Lunn, 'Heritage Watch', 17.
[72] 'Residents can Choose to Stay for Life',8.
[73] Hamish Carter, 'Prison set for Major Changes', *Moreland Courier,* 4 October 1999, 3.

The CMP reflected a common problem in quantifying heritage through an architectural lens, where aspects of a site are given value based on architectural significance and age. As Graeme Davison argues, these conservation plans often lead to more conventional forms of local history that is 'a history grounded less in a sense of community pride than an appreciation of the picturesque'.[74] Furthermore, the report advised that non-original alterations be removed:

> Generally it is recommended that the exteriors of the significant early bluestone and brick buildings… be restored and / or reconstructed, and that later additions and accretions be removed.[75]

Davison describes this conservation approach as 'treating the intervening layers of occupation as distortions of the historical significance', which in turn, diminishes the historical value of the building by taking away both the changing architectural additions and the impact of prisoners, which tell its story across time.[76] Even a comparably recent building as Jika Jika was said to be significant only 'to the extent of the original 1979-80 structures'.[77]

The state government appeared to welcome the demolition of Jika Jika. Victorian Assistant Planning Minister Justin Madden argued that 'most of the Victorian community would be happy to see (Jika Jika) go and I think it will be a significant moment in Victoria's history'.[78] His comments reflects the government's reluctance to see Jika Jika remembered, perhaps because who was at fault for the poor conditions that led to the fire in Jika Jika was still under contention. Madden posed for a photo swinging a sledgehammer into one of the walls surrounding Jika Jika, symbolising the end of Pentridge as a prison and the beginning of Pentridge as a housing estate and a commercial concern.[79]

Several newspaper articles noted that the developers intended to preserve a segment of Jika Jika as a museum or to keep some part of the building to become a part of a larger museum that was to be built on the Pentridge site.[80] The former location of Jika Jika is now made up entirely of new streets full of houses, with some acknowledgement of Jika Jika through street names. But as

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[74] Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*, 213.

[75] Allom Lovell & Associates, *Pentridge Conservation Management Plan*, xi.

[76] Graeme Davison, 'What Makes a Building Historic?', in *The Heritage Reader*, eds. Graham Fairclough et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 75.

[77] Allom Lovell & Associates, *Pentridge Conservation Management Plan*, xiii.

[78] Gabrielle Costa, 'Death Sentence for Pentridge's Jika Jika', *The Age,* 29 January 2000, 12.

[79] Hamish Carter, 'Pentridge- a Prison no Longer', *Moreland Courier,* 19 June 2000, 6.

[80] Hamish Carter, 'Jika Jika goes under in name of development', *Moreland Courier,* 3 March 2000, 7., 'Residents can Choose to Stay for Life', 8-9.

yet, no museum has been constructed nor are there any substantive plans to create one for any part of Pentridge, let alone Jika Jika.

BURIAL SITES: NED KELLY, RONALD RYAN AND CELEBRITY PRISONERS

The burial site debate shows how celebrity prisoners and their potential for profit were valued over the social history of the site, in the same way as older structures within the site have been prioritised over newer structures that hold recent and difficult memories. The burial sites at Pentridge became a concern for heritage advocates once they seemed under threat from developers. Burial sites are somewhat outside the normal heritage discourse around buildings, but I argue that they are significant in terms of which criminals' bodies are considered worth protection, and which have not entered the discourse. Burial sites create complicated issues for heritage as it is seen to be disrespectful to disturb a burial site or dead body. At Pentridge, the issue was further complicated by the reason people were buried there, at the time of burial, those hanged at Pentridge and Old Melbourne Gaol, including Ned Kelly, were not meant to have respect in their burial, as they were hanged criminals. The burial site behind D-Division included the bodies of the ninety-nine prisoners exhumed from Old Melbourne Gaol in 1924, the twenty prisoners who were hanged at Old Melbourne Gaol and the nine prisoners hanged at Pentridge.[81] For a short period residents and heritage advocates believed that the sale of the site was not possible due to an 1855 law that stated 'executed prisoners must be buried in unmarked graves, on unconsecrated Crown land, and the body was to remain the property of the Crown'.[82]

Local media coverage sparked renewed interest in Ronald Ryan who was buried at Pentridge after he became the last man hanged in Victoria in February 1967 following conviction for the murder of a warden during an escape in December 1965. Local media articles considered his potential innocence, his execution, the abolition of capital punishment, and included an interview with his former wife who had requested a memorial be created for Ryan and the others executed at Pentridge.[83] The 'celebrity prisoner' is a consistent theme in prison tourism and an often cited socio-cultural heritage value, with famous or historical figures always mentioned at tourist sites, regardless of how tenuous

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[81] Shane Jenkins, 'Pentridge Plans Hit Snag', *Coburg Courier*, 6 March 1995, 1.

[82] Shane Jenkins, 'Legal Hitch to Prison Move', *Coburg Courier*, 27 March 1995, 5.

[83] Shane Jenkins, 'Innocent' Another Warder 'Involved' in the Shooting', *Coburg Courier,* 15 May 1995, 1-2. Shane Jenkins, 'Ryan: The Final Hanging', *Coburg Courier*, 24 April 1995, 8., Shane Jenkins, 'Ryan's Grave Needs a Garden: Former Wife', *Coburg Courier*, 24 April 1995, 1-2.

the link to their life is.[84] The celebrity prisoner narrative gives a human face to the prisoners who used to inhabit the site, while simultaneously creating a division between celebrity prisoners and regular criminals.[85] In the burial site debate, Ned Kelly and Ronald Ryan were the key 'celebrity prisoners'.

The debate over who owned Ned Kelly's remains highlighted the profit interest of developers and difficulty of the heritage of burial sites. The site was able to be sold and subsequently dug up as the 1855 law was rescinded with the death penalty in 1975, and therefore there was no legal obligation to keep the bodies on crown land in unmarked graves.[86] Interest in finding the prisoners' remains picked up in 2008 and 2009 as a sense of urgency was caused by the increasing development on the Pentridge site.[87]

In what became international news, the remains found at Pentridge in the 'Mann Edge Tool Co.' box were confirmed to belong to Ned Kelly by the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine (VIFM) in 2009.[88] Controversy ensued as developer Leigh Chiavaroli attempted to lay claim to the remains.[89] He argued that because he owned the site he was entitled to keep the remains to put in the museum planned for the site. Developers had already begun to use Kelly's fame to profit from Pentridge, with one of the initial developments being modelled on the shape of Kelly's iconic helmet.[90] As Laura Basu argues, the finding of Kelly's bones in 2009 came during a peak in interest in Kelly and contributed to the commodification of his memory.[91]

The bodies of Ned Kelly and Ronald Ryan were returned to their families for cemetery burial in 2012 and 2007 respectively.[92] The State Government foiled Chiavaroli's plan to keep Kelly's bones by granting a new exhumation

[84] Wilson, *Prison*, 132; Randall Mason, 'Assessing Values in Conservation Planning', in *The Heritage Reader*, eds. Graham Fairclough et al., (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 104.

[85] Ibid., 148.

[86] John Dubois and Nerida Hodgkins, 'Experts to Rule on Ned's Remains', *Moreland Courier*, 22 July 1996, 3.

[87] Jeremy Smith, 'Bringing up the Bodies: The Search for the Lost Pentridge Burial Ground', in *Ned Kelly Under the Microscope*, ed. Craig Cormick (Collingwood: CSIRO Publishing, 2014), 45.

[88] Deb Withers, 'Forensic Experts Identify Ned Kelly's Remains', Media Release. September 1, 2011, http://www.vifm.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/VIFM-Media-Release-Ned-Kelly.pdf Accessed 7 October 2017.

[89] Grand McArthur, 'Secret Burial for Ned- Family Win Fight with Developer over Bushranger's Remains', *Herald Sun*, 2 August 2012, 3.

[90] Julian Kennedy, 'Plaza: Ned has Risen', *Community News- Moreland*, 5 November 2002, 3.

[91] Laura Basu, *Ned Kelly as Memory Dispositif: Media, Time, Power, and the Development of Australian Identities* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2012), 155-159.

[92] Nino Bucci, 'Peace at Last: Burial Planned for Ned Kelly', *The Age*, 30 October 2012., Hoare, 'Ronald Ryan's Body to be Exhumed',

license to the Kelly family, putting the remains in their possession.[93] This was quite a turn for the state government, as previously they had been reluctant to intervene between developers and heritage advocates. But for someone as iconic as Ned Kelly, they stepped in. The historic burial ground was built over and archaeologists returned to the Pentridge site to rebury the remaining bodies with new coffins in December 2012, in the area where previously only Ryan was buried.[94] The reburial of these former prisoners in unmarked graves reflects the division between celebrity prisoners and everyday prisoners, who do not gain the notoriety and respect of their celebrity counterparts. The burial sites debate shows how a shallow narrative of a site (in this case, the celebrity prisoner) is favoured over a comprehensive and difficult portrayal of the Pentridge site in its entirety.

PAINTED ON BLUESTONE AND CONCRETE: PRISONER MURALS AT PENTRIDGE:

Art is the exception to the rule that all alterations should be removed to bring a building back to its 'original state' to then be preserved. This section considers two case studies of the preservation of prisoner murals at Pentridge. I draw a comparison between the Ronald Bull mural in F-Division and the two murals from Jika Jika. I consider the intersecting issues of art heritage, Aboriginal heritage and the carceral context of the creation of these works. Primarily, I ask why the Jika Jika murals are on public display while Bull's mural remains hidden and unmaintained.

Art is valued highly within heritage discourse as it satisfies the criteria of aesthetic and socio-cultural values. Ronald Bull's mural in F-Division of Pentridge is the most notable piece of prisoner art in Pentridge. The mural was commissioned by Senior Warden Jack Elliott in 1962 during renovations of F-Division after he had noticed Bull's painting talent.[95] The mural depicts three Aboriginal men hunting and making a fire in a desert scene using bold orange and red tones.[96] The painting's location in a corridor where all F-Division prisoners and wardens would see it was also important as it acted as 'a symbol of hope'.[97] Prisoner murals are important in terms of prison culture as they allow prisoners to disrupt the oppressive surrounding of the prison and regain

[93] Grand McArthur, 'Secret Burial for Ned- Family Win Fight with Developer over Bushranger's Remains', *Herald Sun,* 2 August 2012, 3.
[94] Smith, 'Bringing up the Bodies', 50.
[95] Sylvia Kleinert, 'Hidden Heritage: Ronald Bull's 1962 Pentridge Mural', *Art Monthly* 245 (2011): 9.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Nerida Hodgkins, 'Plea for Prison Painting', *Moreland Courier*, 8 December 1997, 1.

their identity after being made anonymous through regimented prison life.[98] For Aboriginal prisoners within F-Division, Bull's mural perhaps held special meaning and value.

In response to the December 1997 article appealing for the continued protection of Bull's mural, friends and family of Bull advocated for the painting to be moved from Pentridge to the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV).[99] A debate began between Bull's family and friends who were advocating for the painting to be moved, and the CMP arguing that the painting should be preserved in its current position because of the spatial context of the work and the historical significance of its location.[100] Friend of the Bull family Peter Sparnaay argued that moving the painting would be possible without damaging the painting or the rest of the bluestone wall at a cost of about fifty thousand dollars, which he said would be easily raised through Aboriginal Affairs Victoria and private donations.[101] Ultimately, the bluestone wall that Bull painted on was considered more important than the socio-cultural value of Bull's mural, as it remains hidden in F-Division with no committed preservation attempts.

The CMP argues that F-Division is significant because it was the earliest substantial building at Pentridge, built in the late 1850s, of local bluestone.[102] Due to this recommendation, fear of harming the bluestone wall and the expense of moving the painting, developers have left it as it is for now.

The only parts of Jika Jika that have been preserved by developers are two murals. Originally located in Jika Jika exercise yards, the murals consist of two pieces of art. One mural depicts a rainforest scene entitled 'From the River to the Sea', which was painted on the outer wall of unit 3 by a group of women prisoners at an unknown date, in association with Melbourne artist Megan Evans.[103] Given that this mural was painted by women and Jika Jika was for the most part, a maximum security division for men, there are only a few instances in which it could have been painted: throughout 1982 when some of the 'most disruptive' women prisoners were transferred to Jika Jika or in 1983 when some women prisoners were sent to Jika Jika after a fire at Fairlea.[104]

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[98] Leonidas Cheliotis, 'The Arts of Imprisonment: An Introduction', in *The Arts of Imprisonment: Control, Resistance and Empowerment*, ed. Leonidas K. Cheliotis (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 3.
[99] Nerida Hodgkins, 'Move Bull Mural from Prison', *Moreland Courier,* 23 February 1998, 7.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Allom Lovell & Associates, *Pentridge Conservation Management Plan,* 203.
[103] Allom Lovell & Associates, *Pentridge Conservation Management Plan,* 236.
[104] 'Women in Prison Victoria 1970-2010: A Statistical and Policy Account 1970-2010', University of New South Wales Website, http://cypp.unsw.edu.au/women-prison-

The other mural was painted at an unknown location within Jika Jika at an unknown time, presumably by artists named C. Linton and W. Clancy (as signed on the painting). It depicts an Australian desert scene with a town in the background, a car, an Aboriginal flag and two naked people, a white man and an Aboriginal woman.[105] The Aboriginal motifs, the high proportion of Aboriginal people in prison in the 1980s and 1990s and the encouraging of Aboriginal prisoners to create art in prison by prison officers tends to indicate that this work was completed by Aboriginal prisoners.[106] It therefore probably served a similar role to Bull's painting in reclaiming identity in the oppressive prison environment for the painters and other prisoners who would view the painting on a daily basis. It is most likely that this mural was painted after 1988 when Jika Jika reopened for HIV-positive and drug or alcohol dependent prisoners when security was relaxed and art therapy had become common practice within prisons.[107]

In early 2000, developer Peter Chiavaroli reportedly put Jika Jika demolition on hold until the two large murals could be preserved in some way. At the time he claimed that he intended to have them put in the promised museum.[108] The murals can today be found attached to the side of an apartment building within the Pentridge Prison area, on what is now Whatmore Drive.[109] The apartment building was built to include the retention of the 1870s built part of the original Stores Building.[110] However, the side the mural is on is entirely new, which indicates that it was moved in its entirety from the Jika Jika division to this new building. I have not been able to find any further explanation for the motivation behind moving the mural, and how it was done during the demolition of Jika Jika. There is no explanation of what the murals are, who painted them or where they came from. You would be forgiven for assuming they are simply a piece of street art painted after the apartment building was built. Wilson justifies the developer retention of the murals as a display of 'the 'respectable' face of inmate creative self-expression, and are as such are of rather less interest than the illicit.'[111] Wilson's argument that there are respectable and undesirable forms of prisoner art has some credence in that

victoria-1970-2010, Accessed 11 October 2017.

[105] Own visit to Pentridge Prison Site, 22 August 2017.

[106] Wilson, *Prison,* 125., Broome, *Coburg,* 300.

[107] Peter Lynn and George Armstrong, *From Pentonville to Pentridge: A History of Prisons in Victoria* (Melbourne: State Library of Victoria, 1996), 179.

[108] 'A Calm End to Jika Jika's Violent Past', *Moreland Courier,* 24 January 2000, 5.

[109] Own visit to Pentridge Prison Site, 22 August 2017, Whatmore Drive is named after Alexander Whatmore, Inspector General of the Office of Corrections from 1947-1970.

[110] Allom Lovell & Associates, *Pentridge Conservation Management Plan*, 92-94.

[111] Ibid, 66.

illicit graffiti is not given heritage value or preservation in any official sense at former prison museums in Australia.[112]

Despite the recognition of its artistic and cultural importance, Bull's mural has been untouched since the closure of the prison and has never been made available for public viewing. Even though the artists who created the Jika Jika murals were not known, nor was there any academic or artist recognition for the artistic talent or significance of the murals, these murals are on full public display (but unexplained), as the division they existed in was not prioritised for architectural value or oldness. While it is unclear why developers put the demolition of Jika Jika on hold to preserve the Jika Jika murals, I tend to assume that they were motivated by a need to appease heritage advocates with the loss of the Jika Jika building or perhaps they simply believed it was aesthetically pleasing and thought it would add profit value to their apartment building.

CONCLUSION

Due to the contestable and secretive nature of memories about Pentridge, it's heritage and preservation was always going to be a debate that would be controversial, emotional and widely felt. Despite a strong interest in prison museums, dark tourism and criminality, a museum at the former Pentridge Prison site has not eventuated and I doubt it ever will. Residential development and commercial ventures were far more profitable for developers, and because of this and a lack of artefacts, it will become near impossible to recalibrate the site into a museum.

In the context of redevelopment heritage values are forced into a hierarchy, due to the property value of the site, it seemed unfeasible to save the whole heritage site. Aesthetic value is the most compelling and achievable argument for preservation as the most aesthetically valued buildings are the oldest. The old aesthetic is highly valued within modern society due to the need for a physical anchor to the past and a connection to the wider national foundation story. Bluestone is central in this as it connects to the wider story of Melbourne, however, in my research I found that scholarship on the significance of bluestone for Melbourne's cultural memory was limited.

The current form of the Pentridge site does tell us what Australian society believes is important from our past and what we consider to be the aesthetics of

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[112] Jacqueline Z. Wilson, 'Prison Inmate Graffiti', in *Routledge Handbook of Graffiti and Street Art* ed. Jeffrey Ian Ross (Oxon: Taylor and Francis, 2015), 62.

the Australian identity. The key issue for preservation is that about the length of the average lifetime must pass before a place or building is considered worth preserving. So, what happens a lifetime after Jika Jika was built and we do consider it worthy of preservation, but it has already been demolished? It is worth considering that the preference for the aesthetically old may change in the future and other heritage values may be considered more important. This is why heritage tell us more about the present than it does about the past. There should be a wider and critical portrayal of the Pentridge prison story. But as the visual landscape is transformed in private hands and the promised museum still shows no sign of being created, one wonders how future histories of Pentridge will be constructed and in whose interests.

Mosaic, Gold, and Frilly Skirts: Mirka Mora's Legacy in Melbourne

Sabine Cotte

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French born Mirka Mora (1928-2018) had a particular status in Melbourne: a beloved artist, forever celebrated for her Parisian accent and the epitome of bohemia, she has left many public artworks in the city, populated with her characteristic imagery of children, fantastic creatures and flowery plants. Her public image, her original sense of dress and her eccentric behaviour are as famous, if not more, than her art. Mora's unique place in the city's social and artistic circles has much to do with her European migrant status, her central role in Melbourne's artistic world since the 1950s, together with her important production of public works that have become city landmarks,[1] and her extensive public engagement through workshops, classes and artist talks. However, if material culture was her bedrock to create a powerful image that made her stand out as a woman artist in a male dominated industry, she also cleverly used her materials and techniques to create artworks that impress by a complex approach of tradition and symbols. Although she embraced a large number of techniques during her career – spanning more than six decades – this essay will focus on her public artworks, and examine the broader implications of her material choices and practices.

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From Paris to Melbourne: seamstress, artist, restaurateur, woman

Born in Paris to a Lithuanian father and a Romanian mother, Mora enjoyed a childhood immersed in art, mainly thanks to her art dealer father who collected all sorts of antiques and displayed them at home. Because of her Jewish background, Mora's life and her education were disrupted in 1942, when she was deported with her family to a camp on the outskirts of Paris, from which they were saved by her father. After the war, she trained in drama for two years in Paris,[2] and married at the age of nineteen. At twenty-two, she immigrated to Australia with her husband Georges Mora and their baby son Philippe. Mora, then aged 23, started to make a living as a seamstress, in parallel

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[1] Murals in Flinders Street Station, Melbourne; Tolarno murals, St Kilda; Acland Street Readings bookshop, St Kilda; mosaic in St Kilda Pier, St Kilda; Dog's Bar mural, St Kilda.
[2] Education par le Jeu et l'Art Dramatique, Paris, 1946. Created by Jean Vilar, Jean Louis Barrault, Roger Blin among others, its aim was to lead students to self control for their personal creation (from *Pratiques théâtrales dans l'éducation en France au XXe siècle: Aliénation ou émancipation?* - Études littéraires; Artois Presse Université, 2010).

to developing an artistic practice. She had always made her own clothes and was 'a marvellous dressmaker, very exclusive, very tasteful dressmaking and embroidery' according to John Yule (Irving 1989, 118). This talent in textile work was later sublimated in Mora's embroideries and soft sculptures, which combined very detailed textile work with various techniques of painting.

This sewing business and related encounters with clients became Mora's entree to the artistic society of Melbourne (Delany 1999). The Mora couple had briefly settled in a house in the suburb of McKinnon upon their arrival, only to realise that they hated it and had no interest in maintaining a garden. They actively looked for an artist's studio in the city centre; the landlord of the studio in Grosvenor Chambers, 9 Collins Street, was persuaded into leasing it to the couple after Mora told him that she was going to open a French 'haute couture studio' (Mora 1984). The studio became 'a legendary place' for the following 15 years, with Mirka as a 'queen bee figure, a catalyst figure of the 1950s' (Barbara Blackman in Mora 1984) and a centre for Melbourne's contemporary art and artists (Thomas 1993; Harding & Morgan 2015). Mora met Charles and Barbara Blackman through a customer who was interested in the decorated fur and lace collars she exhibited in the window, and who happened to be a friend of the couple (Mora 1965). She then offered her studio as a venue for an exhibition of Charles's schoolgirls, which opened on 1st September 1953. According to Harding & Morgan, 'the repurposing of the Moras' apartment as a gallery was to revolutionise the Melbourne art scene of the 1950s' (2015, 228). It also signalled the Mora couple's non-conformism to the Australian dwelling norms of the time that favoured low density suburbia; the couple's choice to live as a family in an artist's studio in the city centre was 'an assertion of its 'European-ness' and an attempt to bring a touch of its social and cultural values to Melbourne', a trait shared by many European immigrants of the time (O'Hanlon 2014).

It was readily embraced by the circle of artists; Barbara Blackman has spoken eloquently of their role in her essay 'The Good Ship Mora: Melbourne in the Fifties', published in *Meanjin* in 1996:

> There we were, in Melbourne in the fifties, the new wave of painters [...] needing [...] some ship in which to sail, a destination of intent. Europe gave it to us; movers of the new force [...] Georges and Mirka Mora came from the heart of that war-wounded Europe, which we, in our protected isolation, were only slowly coming to understand. [...] Georges and Mirka offered us new sites. They were happeners, not owners. They had lost families, homes, land of birth, friendships,

memorabilia of their youths, and now lived in the present and its possibilities [...] certainly [Georges] grew us up, as assuredly as Mirka never let us escape our child hearted spontaneity (Blackman 1996, 294–5).

Melbourne society was still very conservative at the time and Mora's unique style of dress, discussed further, was something new, as was the open attitude of the couple that intimately mixed art and personal life. Most of the artists who later became important figures in the art world used to drop in at 9 Collins Street to talk, view the gallery's shows or do some drawings while conversing.[3] Arthur Boyd (1920-1999) Fred Williams (1927-1982), John Perceval (1923-2000), Erica McGilchrist (1926-2014), Ian Sime (1926-1989) and Charles Blackman (1928-2018) were habitués. Both Barbara Blackman and Mora recalled how intense the relationships were between these people, how much they learned from each other, from constantly visiting and writing to each other (Mora 1984). For Mora, it was a period of intense learning from her many contacts with other artists. 'I had an art school around me' is how she remembers those times (Mora 1984), which highlights how much she learned by watching other artists paint or draw in her studio. According to her, at the time [in 1954] she 'could not draw properly and did not understand paint physically', and was struggling to develop a self-taught practice, while bringing up children and cooking for the flocks of visitors (Mora 1984).

But the most important encounter occurred through meeting the music critic John Sinclair, during a party at the house of one of Mora's customers. Sinclair was a friend of John and Sunday Reed, and directed Sunday to the young French seamstress, which triggered a friendship between both couples. That friendship was to have a great impact on Mora's career and on Melbourne's art scene for the following decades.

The Mora couple would become a feature in the Melbourne arts and culinary scene of the time. While actively contributing to the revival of the Contemporary Artists Society (CAS) and the creation of a dynamic artistic culture in Melbourne, alongside arts patrons John and Sunday Reed,[4] Georges and Mirka Mora had two other sons and ran successively three cafes and

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[3] Barrett Reid describes the group as 'a fairly close knit group of people, based on personality rather than necessarily talent as such or shared ideas' (Irving 1989, p 93).

[4] Georges Mora and John Reed established the first Museum of Modern Art and Design of Australia in 1958. It operated until 1966 when it closed due to lack of funding. The Reeds later donated their house and their collection to the state to establish Heide Museum of Modern Art which opened in 1981, just before their death in December the same year.

restaurants that became meeting points for the local art world (Heathcote 1995). The first one was Mirka café, which opened at 183 Exhibition Street on 8 December 1954, with crockery by John Perceval and art on the wall lent by the Reeds. Among the several pubs that served as gathering places for the avant-garde, Mirka café was 'a place for Melbourne's biggest creative egos' (Heathcote 1995, 66), 'the hangout for Melbourne's most avant-garde artists', where the weightier conversations happened, and the only place where women were not marginalised (Thomas 1993). The café's exhibitions, including group and solo presentations such as Joy Hester's show in 1955, helped enhance the Moras' status as innovative patrons of the arts (Clark 1997).

Becoming too small, Mirka café gave way in 1956 to the Balzac French restaurant in 62 Wellington Parade, East Melbourne. In addition to its reputation for good food and stimulating company, it soon became a great meeting place for the art and political world, particularly after gaining its license for serving alcohol in April 1958 (Clark 1997, 176). Charles Blackman was a cook for a while; being close to the Melbourne Cricket Ground, the Balzac was one of the busiest restaurants during the Olympic Games in November 1956. Blackman often recorded the frenzy of the day with drawings of flying crockery that inspired his famous Alice in Wonderland series (Harding & Morgan 2018, 111). The Moras' restaurants were indeed much more than a means of living; Mirka and Georges held a privileged point of observation, overseeing the incredibly rich encounters that happened daily and fostered long lasting friendships with artists from various parts of the world.[5]To decorate the restaurant, the Moras commissioned six ceramic angels to John Perceval (some of which now in public collections), and a large triptych to three Sydney artists: the 'Annandale Imitation Realists' (Colin 'Countdown' Lanceley, Mike 'Pancho'Brown and Ross 'Pride of Day' Crothall) in exchange for meals and accommodation.[6] The painting is now in Queensland Art Gallery. Mirka contributed to the decoration with a black and white mural, recently rediscovered during renovation in the restaurant.

When the building at 9 Collins Street was listed for demolition in 1965 (only the façade is preserved today), Georges Mora bought the Tolarno hotel in St Kilda, where he could have in the same place a restaurant, a studio for Mirka and a home for his family. Three years later it also became an art gallery (Clark 1997). Over the years, Mora gradually painted all the walls of the restaurant and

[5] Foreign artists were often invited to open the CAS' annual exhibition, as did British actor Ralph Richardson in 1955 or American musician Larry Adler in 1957 (Clark 1997, 176).
[6] https://aiccm.org.au/cleaning-café-balzac-mural

the ground floor, to create a mural ensemble[7] that was registered by Heritage Victoria in 2009. For Georges, it was also the starting point of his career as an art dealer, which was to become his main job in the years to come. The Tolarno French Bistro replaced the Balzac as a meeting point for the art world (Thomas 1993) and its murals became an intrinsic part of the place:

> Tolarno gallery was a phenomenon of the 1960s. Georges and his first wife, the artist Mirka Mora, had taken over an old hotel… they turned it into one of Melbourne's liveliest bistros. Mirka decorated every surface with her angels and lovers, stray children and magical birds and beasts (McCaughey 2003, 79).

After a few years at Tolarno, the Mora couple eventually separated in 1970 and pursued their respective careers as an art dealer (Georges) and an artist (Mirka).

From the 1970s, murals became a big part of Mora's production, either public works of art (Ayr mural, Flinders Street mural, St Kilda mosaic) or adorning private residences. Most of these murals are still in place and have become landmarks of their respective areas. But the most striking characteristic is the variety of techniques they employ: mosaic, painting on wall, on canvas, on plastic, carved and painted relief. In addition to her mural production, Mora was also working tirelessly in her studio, producing charcoal drawings, oil and tempera paintings, theatre masks and costumes, painted soft sculptures and painted embroideries. This article shows how this vast array of techniques enlightens the importance of materials in Mora's art and her links to art history.

Mora continued to paint daily in her home-studio in Melbourne almost until her death in 2018 at the age of ninety. Cherished by the media for her bohemian personality, she regularly featured in Melbourne's media – on radio, television and newspapers. She appears in *The Age* over the years for exhibition reviews, in social pages and social rubrics such as 'What I learnt' (2003) or 'Life lessons' (2011), as well as for a celebration of significant events of her life; *The Argus, The Herald, The Sun* (and later *the Herald Sun*), *The Australian* all published portraits, usually at the time of her exhibitions. But she was also an inimitable 'Agony Aunt' for ABC television in 2012, a lively guest of 'Enough Rope with Andrew Denton' in 2009, as well as 'George Negus tonight' in 2004 – where she kindly advised him that to be a true bohemian, you should not have money in the

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[7] The murals that cover the four walls of the restaurant were 'refreshed' by Mora herself in 2007 when the restaurant was revamped by chef Guy Grossi and renamed 'Mirka at Tolarno'. Other artworks include plaster bas reliefs and signs in the bathrooms.

bank, the key being to spend it (Mora 2004). She also participated in projects of social activism, embracing public causes in her neighbourhood's local life, where her presence always attracted public notice,[8] or donating drawings to local causes such as promoting the neighbourhood of St Kilda or fundraising for the French School of Melbourne. On a broader historic perspective, she was interviewed for the National Library of Australia's *Oral History Program* (1965,1984,1987,2012), participated in the National Trust's 'Our City Stories' in 2013, and shared her traumatic past in an audio-visual series on Jewish survivors of Nazi camps produced by Yad Vashem, the World's Holocaust Remembrance Centre (Mora 2012). Her autobiography *Wicked but virtuous, my life*, was published by Penguin in 2000, followed three years later by *Love and Clutter*, a charming book of drawings, photographs and stories about her objects.

This rich and multi-faceted life made her a very important character in Melbourne's history, recognised by institutions and community alike: she was made an Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Government in 2002,[9] and selected as one of Victoria's twenty-five 'living treasures' by the *Herald Sun* (4 October 2014), alongside other artists, arts patrons, and sports and media personalities.

READING THROUGH MATERIALS

Because her education was interrupted, Mora spent her life immersed in books for her own education. Her first reflex when starting a new technical exploration was to buy illustrated books so she could study from text and images alike. She did so for needlework as well as for mosaic, both techniques that require very specific knowledge. To get a good understanding of mosaic for the Flinders Street mural, her bible was the monumental text *The mosaics of San Marco in Venice* by Otto Demus, published in 1984 by University of Chicago Press, and other books on the sixth century Byzantine mosaics of Ravenna (Mora 2013; Reid 1986). While she researched the literature, the scope of her study was broader than purely technical, including iconography, Greek mythology, philosophy, medieval imagery, decorative art, the history of arts and crafts, aboriginal art and various world folklores.

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[8] Melbourne icon Mirka Mora rejects the development plan proposed for the St Kilda Triangle site, video, 6 February 2008, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeLME2uicLk.

[9] L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (Order of the Arts and the Letters) was created in 1957 by the French Ministry of Culture. It rewards persons who significantly contributed to the enrichment of the French cultural inheritance. It has three grades, in increasing order; Chevalier (knight), Officier(Officer) and Commandeur (Commander).

She then integrated this knowledge in her work, technically and stylistically. Careful observation of the mural shows how she applied it, for example including glass tiles specifically imported from Italy, that let the light through before reflecting it, creating an illusion of depth. She also used them for sinuous golden outlines inspired by the San Marco artists' golden backgrounds and linear wavy seas. Her diary of the time reflected her constant reference to these books: 'Back to San Marco and Ravenna' (7 January 1986); 'Draw and watercolour. Also look at mosaic books O. Demus and Ravenna yet again' (18 January 1986).

While some artistic movements in the second half of the twentieth century (such as Arte Povera and Conceptualism) would reject or entirely deconstruct traditional academic knowledge to define themselves in new perspectives, Mora craved a place in the centuries-long tradition of art, and actively used technical knowledge to reach her goal. A confident relationship with materials was for her a clear indicator of artistic status; when asked what prompted her to choose plaster for one of her bas-reliefs [at Tolarno hotel in 1977], she summed it up by this self-explanatory statement: 'all great sculptors have worked with plaster!' (Mora 2015, pers. comm., 13 January).

For her, the concept of knowledge was embodied by materials and technique. But Mora's intimate relationship with the techniques of the Old Masters did not take over her art. Rather, she used it as a way of anchoring her practice in a solid base, a starting point from which to explore creation freely. She appropriated and creatively revisited each technique to elaborate her own hybrid processes, where symbolic meaning is often present. In her art therefore, the materials communicate significance to the work, sometimes through themselves and the ways they are assembled and transformed, sometimes through the artist's way of staging them on her body and her environment, or through the sharing of her processes.

The story of the making of the mosaic on the Flinders Street mural (1986) well illustrates Mora's process of customisation. For all its beauty, mosaic is a very difficult and constraining technique because of the sharpness, linear edges and non-flexibility of the ceramic or glass tesserae, and the fact that the mortar hardens quickly, blocking them in a fixed position once set. She loved the majesty and stunning visual effect offered by mosaic, and was obviously very eager to learn the technique, as her thorough research demonstrated. On the other hand, she was equally eager to 'bend' the method to suit her own desires. For her, the traditional technique of mosaic was a sort of 'passport' to

the domain of art history and a guarantee of the longevity of the work of art – and her name as an artist – through time. Her modifications to the tradition were subtle, but significant enough to convey her identifiable personality.

Traditional techniques of mosaic, described for instance in Ralph Mayer's *The artist's handbook of materials and techniques* (4th edition 1981) often involve preparing the work separately on a flexible support, and transferring it on the wall prior to applying the mortar that will seal the tiles together, this being called the indirect method. Mora was aware of this technique, and of the fact that she did not conform to it, for she told Barbara Blackman that the mural was 'not prepared as traditional mosaists do, flat in another room and then put on the wall' (Mora 1984). She chose to employ the traditional way of drawing in dark red on the wall prior to the application of the mosaic, as confirmed by her assistant (McGaan 2014, pers.comm., 25 September) and by photographs of the mural in progress. After this, she worked directly on the wall. But even then, she did not follow the other traditional method, where the tiles are glued on the wall and the mortar placed afterwards as a grout; instead, she worked by laying a surface of mortar and pushing the tiles inside it, positioning them at different angles instead of evenly, thus creating an undulating surface, with tesserae of all sizes and shapes catching the light and shimmering in it. She insisted that she did not want flat surfaces because they were 'dead'; observing the mural near sunset when the light comes from its side shows she succeeded in her quest; at this time of the day, the artwork is almost coming to life.

These subtle technical innovations contributed to her signature style as much as her personal iconography. However, mosaic was not the only classical technique employed by Mora. During the 1960s, she explored tempera, a technique dating back to the fourteenth century Italian painters, that had been revived in the twentieth century and described in treatises such as Jacques Maroger's *The secrets of the Old Masters* (1948), which provided several recipes for tempera emulsions, to be mixed with oil painting in order to emulate the texture of ancient paintings. Charles Blackman, a good friend of Mora, was also interested in this book and experimented with tempera in the 1950s and 1960s, notably in the *Alice* series (Mora 1984). Tempera is characterised by the use of egg as a binder for the pigments. However, Mora's idea of tempera was different: it involved egg, water and pigments, but also flour. Her 'dough drawings' as she called them, were inspired by the Old Masters recipes, with the difference that the egg was not mixed with the pigments and applied to the surface with a brush, but mixed with the flour to create a moist dough that was then dipped into dry pigments and used to draw on paper, giving an effect

similar to pastel drawing. Mora detailed the process during our conversations, underlining her link to the Old Masters ('the Old Masters worked with eggs, do you remember? well, I work with dough that is moist by the eggs'*)* in contrast to her own personal interpretation and showing her pride in both the technique and the results: 'it was very soft, very beautiful, like pastel, it was very beautiful' (Mora 2013a). The technique was unusual and became the topic of a 1967 article in *the Herald* "The girl who daubs in dough', where she proudly stated that because of the eggs, her paintings would last forever – another claim to be included in history.

In the seventies, after separating from her husband, Mora developed her soft sculpture technique (fabric sculptures stuffed, coated and painted), shown in many exhibitions, and started to teach at the Centre for Adult Education (CAE) for a living. In addition to the workshops, her artistic activity through these years was very intense, involving experimentation with various media (fabric, ink drawings, paintings, embroideries, charcoals, tempera, mosaic), which attests to her 'exceptional facility for technical exploration' (Morgan 2010, 29). Gradually emerging as a recognised artist, Mora started to get public commissions; she was the first of a series of fourteen artists commissioned to paint trams by the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of the Arts of Victoria in 1978[10] (Fagan 1987; Auld 2001), a project that sought to bring art to the streets for everyone's enjoyment, providing access to art for people who did not usually go to galleries. The columnist Phillip Adams famously described the Art trams project by declaring 'Melbourne has invented the mobile mural, the electric fresco!'.[11] Mora's tram, one of the people's favourites, ran for a number of years in the streets of Melbourne before being auctioned in 1986 (Fagan 1987) to a private collection.

Mora was deeply involved in the community arts projects of the 1970s; besides her workshops, she took part in 1978 in the 'Artists in schools' pilot project funded by the Australia Council's Community Arts Board (Auld 2001), spending one day a week in a designated school for an entire term. Mora worked in both Ste Anne Catholic School in Kew and in Kew Primary School (Mora 1984), creating artworks with the children. The same year, an exhibition of her painted embroideries toured regional Victoria, as well as two boxes of dolls commissioned by the Crafts Board Australia, representing *The enchanted*

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[10] Other artists included Erica Mc Gilchrist, Clifton Pugh, Les Kossatz, Peter Corrigan, Gareth Samson, Howard Arkley, Andrew Southall, Don Laycock, Mike Brown, Paul Mason, Trevor Nicholls, Rosemary Ryan.

[11] Quoted in the leaflet "Melbourne Painted Trams", published in 1986 by the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry for the Arts, Victoria.

garden and the aboriginal *Bunyip paradise* now held in the National Gallery of Australia (NGA), Canberra.[12]

Even in her textile explorations, Mora anchored her practice into the tradition: for her embroideries, she revisited the quilting technique of 'trapunto', originating from fourteenth century Italy and characterised by monochrome three-dimensional quilts, where some parts of the work are raised by stuffing them; as usual, she re-interpreted it, painting the raised parts, mixing paint and stitches of all sorts, some traditional, some invented. All the while, she drew inspiration from a very big book, *Needlework through the ages,* by Symonds and Preece, which contains many black and white photographs of historic needlework and chapters such as 'Origin of stitches and materials' that she studied closely and whose roots can be traced in her needlework (Mora 2013b and personal observations).

Mora's approach could be described as a 'classic technique with a twist'. She viewed traditional ways of making art as solid bases indispensable to creation, but believed that these time-honoured practices should never hamper the creative process. Her innovations, however, never strayed far enough from the conventional technique to make the works unstable. Furthermore, as she sought to gain recognition within the artistic pantheon through the use of these techniques, she made sure to keep them identifiable at a glance. Only with closer scrutiny can people realize the myriad tiny adjustments that she has added in order to completely appropriate the method and make it part of her own artistic identity.

The price and symbolism of materials

Good materials had particular significance for Mora; to her, they were a precondition to the production of quality art. Books, embroidery supplies, paints or mosaic tiles had a common point, their high quality; the more expensive they were, the more quality was warranted, as when she chose tiles imported from Italy for the Flinders Street mosaic, stating that she 'wanted the best'. 'Manganese blue was very expensive but I know the effect' (Mora 1984). Excellent materials generally allow for easier use, better quality of colours, better flow of paint or better capacity for modelling and ultimately more beautiful results. Boasting 'when I buy paints I don't want to know how much

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[12] The *Boxes of mysteries* are two Perspex cases with decorated bases, dimensions 141x60x70 cm. (Assemblage, cotton, filling, coloured paint); *The enchanted garden* comprises 55 dolls, *The Bunyip Paradise* 25 dolls (online catalogue of the National Gallery of Australia, http:// artsearch.nga.gov.au/mirkamora).

it costs. They are mine to work with' (Mora 1984), Mora arguably rewarded herself by indulging in expensive materials that openly represented the artistic and social status she considered to be hers.

This choice reflected her desire to ensure the longevity of her productions. She also exploited cleverly their symbolic charge, well informed by her scholarly readings. Her use of gold is particularly telling; amongst all symbols carried by colours, gold has the greatest power of evocation and meanings, in addition to its stunning visual quality. Gold is a symbol of eternity, perfection, and has connotations of transcendence derived from the alchemy and its legend of transmutation of vulgar metals into gold. Gold and silver are also symbols of affluence and richness. These two colours were aesthetic choices, but their symbolic connotations also infused Mora's works with significance. She used them in selected works: tapestries, masks, and mosaics, revealing her layered intent. Flinders Street mosaic, located in the heart of Melbourne city, is a very prominent work, for which Mora was the laureate of the competition in 1986, over five other (male) artists. She derived great pride from this, and it was a turning point in her career. Therefore, she opted for a technique that would ensure that her work made a lasting impression; mosaic is historically considered as an indicator of wealth and prestige, because it is a time-consuming and expensive process, and survives mainly in imperial and high status religious buildings (James 2006), carrying meanings linked to permanence, grandeur, lavishness and commemoration (Lloyd and Inglis 2009). She reinforced the message by using magnificent Venetian glass tesserae with resplendent colours, including the gold and silver tiles. Mora was fully aware of the symbolic meaning of her choice, telling Ulli Beier in 1980 'Gold is life…to me gold does not signify physical but spiritual wealth' (Beier 1980). Combining the symbolic aspect of the materials with the inherent visual shine and weightiness of the mosaic, Mora's highly publicised use of the pricy tesserae shows her intention to impress with the Flinders Street mural; it had to evoke monumentality, resplendence and eternity, and the reviews show that it fully succeeded in that endeavour (Ryan 1986; Reid 1987).

Similarly, she used gold selectively in her masks for Euripides Medea staged by Playbox in 1979. Of all the painted masks, only Medea's is decorated with gold, as she is the only non-human character in the play. On stage, the mask of Medea, a character tormented and always in movement, would have caught the light in many different places, creating an extraordinary shimmering effect, and thus visually embodying Medea's powers as a magician. The Messenger, a character carrying news between the mythological beings fighting each other,

wore an elaborate headpiece decorated with silver patterns. Silver is one of the three base metals of alchemy and traditionally symbolises the moon energy and its serenity; mercury, an element characterised by swift movement, shares the same colour, hence the name 'quicksilver' given to the material mercury in the Middle Ages. The God Mercury is also the messenger of the Gods in Greek mythology, and wears characteristic winged sandals. Mixing these references together, Mora embellished the top of her unnamed Messenger's mask with wings (an echo of the winged sandals?) and decorated it with silver, black and blue, symbolically referring to his swiftness through the use of colour, while choosing a different and colder harmony than for the mask of Medea. It is clear that Mora, who was fully versed in Greek mythology, used these colours not solely for their chromatic qualities but also for their symbolic significance, particularly relevant to the divine characters in the play.

In many realisations of lesser importance, Mora equally showed a will to make the work more precious by adding 'noble' and expensive materials: she used expensive oil colours on the Ayr mural (QLD); she included sequins and beads on embroideries; she painted her stuffed sculptures with shiny oil paint; she designed golden 'frames' with paint or with mosaic in her oil paintings. For Mora, spending money on materials -and showing it- was a public celebration of the act of making art, which was often accompanied by the artist spending money on herself. For example, she decided to stay in an expensive hotel (the Windsor Hotel in Melbourne) for three nights to prepare drawings for the Flinders Street competition (Mora 2000). Other examples exist of the artist's use of costly materials being paralleled by personal luxuries in her private life, such as buying expensive hand creams and perfumes to alleviate the roughness of the mosaic job (Mora 1984), or treating herself and her assistant to expensive food and wine in nice restaurants after spending long hours each day on a public commission (McGaan 2014, pers. comm., 25 September). This took on an element of personal myth-making: by publicizing her 'extravagant' spending, on her art and on herself, when on a large project, Mora arguably was building her self-worth.

Her efforts did not stop with the realisation of the work, as she communicated about her research in every media interview, underlining her techniques' classical roots and cultural references. In this way, she was compensating her lack of formal artistic education, adding a legitimacy to her work that contributed to her recognition within the broader artistic tradition.

But beyond her public promotion, which was mainly confined to the realm of Melbourne's artistic society, the message can be read in the works' materiality. They transmit it through the complex texture of their surface, an experience both visual and tactile which often implies lengthy and difficult processes representing real physical challenges. The manner in which Mora, as an artist and as a woman, negotiated her bodily engagement with artistic achievements at all stages of her life, is the subject of the next section.

Material culture and the artist's image

Women artists

The role of women in Melbourne's art scene in the 1950s and 1960s is not easy to grasp, due to their lack of visibility. Although they had gained social status during the war by accomplishing men's work in their absence, dominant ideologies of domesticity, family and material values were reinforced upon women with the return of peace, leaving little place for their emancipation (Burke 1975; Sheridan 2002). Peers describes a period of relative invisibility in the post-war years, centred on towering masculine figures such as Nolan, Tucker and Boyd' (Peers 2011, 16). In Melbourne, the prominent art teacher Max Meldrum had declared in 1938 that 'there would never be a great woman artist and there never had been' (Renschler 2006, 122). His opinion still had currency in the 1950s and the general culture was mainly hostile – or at best indifferent – to women artists.

Even in Mora's avant-garde artistic circle, the male-oriented order of things was not much contested. Reminiscing of the CAS activities, Mora and Barbara Blackman referred to its 'second circle of the wives' while Ailsa O'Connor, a member of the CAS in the late 1940s, recalled the 'slightly invisible women members' in the artists' groups (Mora 1984). Noting the large and mainly ignored existence of women in the post-war art world, Furby (2001) points to the CAS' internal contradictions between its manifestos and principles, and its consistent gender bias in favour of its male members, both in selecting works and in promoting artists. Deborah Hart concludes that 'despite a democratic and broadly inclusive approach to exhibitions in the CAS, the role of women in public debate was marginalised' (Hart 2001, 28).

As a result, there was a complete lack of contemporary role models for Mora, apart from Joy Hester, who however was largely unsuccessful compared to her husband Albert Tucker. Hester's choice of medium (ink drawing and watercolours, then viewed as less 'noble' than oil paint) probably also

contributed to her lack of recognition (Burke 1983). The two women were friends for a while, and Hester strongly encouraged Mora to practise her art, telling her that she should do 'hundreds of drawings and washes' (Hart 2001), advice that Mora followed by drawing intensively every day (Mora 1984).

Mora did not wish to be active in the feminist movement, stating that 'once a woman does this sort of thing [women's lib] she is losing her charm' (Dunstan 1971). Despite this personal non-political stance, she epitomized freedom for a woman, quietly making the choices that suited her best without needing political resonance. She was very much an actor of the times in her choice of textile materials. Art historian Whitney Chadwick has argued that materials play an important role in the perception of women's contribution to art as marginal (Chadwick 1994). For her, textile materials are emblematic of women's different perspective on art, challenging hitherto admitted supremacies which materially encode gendered identity within art history. Embroidery for example became over the centuries the uncontested embodiment of a specific ideology of femininity, which included social attitudes expected of women, and a symbol of the separation between arts and crafts (Parker & Pollock 1981, 59), thus linking gender, place of production and value. This indelible association of feminine identity with textile crafts, which has continued in the twentieth century, is often perceived as detrimental to an artist's image, as noted by Parker and Pollock (1981, 78). Very recently, the exhibition *Pathmakers* at Museum of Art and Design, New York explicitly linked the material choices made by women to the fact that they were often overlooked by the critics (Museum of Art and Design 2015).

While not delivering explicitly political messages with her textile creations, unlike her contemporaries Miriam Shapiro or Judy Chicago, whose famous 'Dinner party' was made in the same years, Mora nevertheless participated through her media and her attitude with art to the general movement that aimed to 'de-sacralise' art. Tellingly, Shapiro defined 'femmage', a conflation of textile art and painting, with criteria such as including drawing and/or handwriting sewn in the work, including scraps as essential to the process, having a woman-life context or having elements of covert imagery (Brooklyn Art Museum 2014), which fits quite well Mora's artistic production.

Mora however never had any interest in theorizing her art. She combined these 'feminine' techniques with painting and sculpture and transformed them into the sophisticated and very personal form of art that has become one of her trademarks. The thread and needle, far from confining her socially to the

domestic sphere that she had rejected in favour of creative freedom, provided Mora with exactly the opposite. Her textiles gave her the means of succeeding as a single woman, through her sales of embroideries and soft sculptures and her workshops, and strongly contributed to the construction of her artistic identity. This was also made possible by Mora's family and social network, comprising of her ex-husband Georges, founder of Tolarno galleries, and of Marianne Baillieu, director of Realities gallery. Both gallery owners were risk-takers, who gave her space to show her work. Nevertheless, by introducing sewing, stuffing and embroidering into Melbourne art galleries, Mora gave the materials meanings of her own, and slowly gained recognition as an artist using 'the very mediums intended to inculcate self-effacement' (Parker 1981, 215).

A curated image

She also had a very acute perception of her public image as a woman artist. These complex identities depend in large measure on history circumstances and social construction. In order to define their style and artistic personality, women artists often devise strategies to carve 'spaces of freedom' within their own lives, where they can create and reinvent themselves, sometimes outside socially established norms (Rohlfsen-Udall 2000). One strategy is the use of material culture, often a prominent element of self-definition for public figures, and one that the anthropologist Daniel Miller calls an 'unspoken form of communication' (Miller 2010, 10). Like her contemporaries, Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) and Niki de St Phalle (1930-2002), Mora was a good example of this approach. Embracing the cult of celebrity, she made remarkable use of material culture in relation to her personal narratives to create an iconic image of herself. Characteristics related to dress, space and attitude were key determinants in the building of her image.

She cultivated a flamboyant public personality, dressing in all circumstances in a girly Victorian style with antique lace collars, frilly petticoats and Mary Jane shoes, repeatedly reframing her personal narrative (interrupted childhood, migration from her native land, bohemian lineage) to help becoming the artist she aspired to be. Similarities with Kahlo, who publicised her tragic personal life, her tumultuous love life and her ethnic-inspired way of dress, and St Phalle, reinventing herself in France after migrating from the USA, far from her abusing father, and championing a hyper feminine way of dressing, only underline the efficiency of this strategy in lifting the invisibility veil that shrouded women artists at the time. For these three artists, the construction of

their personal selves in the public eye included a conscious appropriation of material culture to build their identities (Pankl & Blake 2012). It worked very well; the press articles about Mora are full of these allusions to her dressing style, either purely descriptive such as 'she has a gleeful smile and she still wears little girl dresses and little girl shoes' (*Age,* 5 October 1985) to a bit uncanny ('At 48 she still has the soft face of a teenager, huge black eyes ringed with kohl, long crinkly hair like a doll left out in the rain and clothes like carnival costumes' (*Weekender*, 19 April 1973).

Mora's image and bohemian style evolved throughout the years; but however unconventional and informal her appearance may be compared to the mainstream style, her image was always carefully curated, as different as possible to the scruffy and stained appearance associated with artists like Pollock or Bacon. Mora's agency in the self-construction of this public persona was undeniable and was noted by critics:

> She is I'm sure totally conscious of the effect she gives. It is as if the seven or eight hours she spends on her art each day is started by recreating Mirka Mora. The Mirka we see is as much a product of her art as the paintings and embroideries and dolls. The result is always intensely cheering (Clarke 1983)

Indeed, conversation with Mora confirmed that her style was very conscious and reflected her tastes; to the end, she wore the same long flounce skirts that she favoured in the 1950s, and boasted 'I love looking at myself, I love looking at my work, and myself… I like myself a lot!' which was obviously comforting for her self-esteem (Mora 2014). A few diary entries confirmed the care she puts into her appearance. For instance, a full-page drawing on 29 August 1983 shows how she planned her look for a coming workshop in Tasmania, elaborating on the stories associated with each garment, such as the 'white jumper Mof doesn't like' or 'I am taking my black cumberband I bought in Sydney in 1968'. Another diary entry shows the obvious attention she put into her appearance, detailing her clothing and make up and noting that she could take more advantage of it, but decided not to: 'Wearing silk and lace and Christian *(Dior?)* shoes and bag. Should accentuate my make-up but enough is enough' (24 July 1986).

As this carefully elaborated personal style became a trademark image, Mora's sense of 'performative dress' extended to props; her prams and her scooter were famous in St Kilda and were given pride of place in the papers, with an image of her riding her scooter with her frilly dress, girly shoes and hat,

titled 'Arty grandma Mirka loves taking it to the streets' (*Weekend Herald*, 7-8 September 1985). She derived intense satisfaction from this celebrity and the fact that she was different from the mainstream, commenting with pride 'I loved my scooter, I told everyone to buy one, it is so nice, and then it became a fashion, I started it, but in St Kilda!' (Mora 2014).

She was extremely clever in this creation of her image. Clothing is one of the strongest materials for expressing the self and mediating relationships with other people. Miller argues that far from being superficial, clothes make human beings what they are – or rather what they think they are and want to project (Miller 2010, 10, 22). The sociologist Sophie Woodward described a woman's wardrobe as 'the palette from which women paint themselves daily', while dressing is claimed to be a 'daily creation of artworks' (Woodward 2005, 23). Woodward draws upon Gell's notion of 'distributed personhood', where selfhood is externalized and distributed in space through various material objects, in order to explain clothing as a two ways process. Interpreted from inside out, clothing communicates the intentions of the self, while from outside in, clothing interiorizes the anticipated judgment of others. From this perspective, the three artists' chosen styles of dress, make strong statements that need to be understood in the historical context prevalent before the feminist movement of the mid 1970s. In personal but different ways, the three women tested the limits of 'what it meant to be a woman and to be a painter', sometimes at considerable expense to their personal life (Rohlfsen Udall 2000, 1).

Mora reinforced her image with an eccentric behaviour, which attracted public attention but was always totally devoid of any nastiness. Either baring her bottom at the inauguration of her Tympanum (1977) in the presence of the French ambassador, or turning a pirouette at the unveiling of her Flinders Street mural (1986) in the presence of the Minister for the Arts – who told her he wished he could have done it too! (Mora 2013 b), she ensured constant media attention to her public persona. Acting in such a way procured her great satisfaction, and defined her own form of feminism, which did not mean renouncing feminine material culture's attributes, but instead adding a different discourse to the classical image of women.

To the public display of their elaborate personae, Mora and Kahlo alike added the exhibition of their home, which doubled as their working place. Ambivalent early memories resulted in both women creating personal spaces where toys have a prominent place, which reclaim their lost or interrupted

childhoods, and which according to Rohlfsen-Udall (2000, 232), function as metaphors of the self. Both private houses were crammed with objects, pots and pans, and lots of toys; both artists had an extensive collection of dolls and dollhouses; Mora painted her windows with decorative patterns and mixed her toy collection with art materials and her own works of art. This exuberance of material culture and artistic creation, coupled with the spaces' bright decoration, contributed for both artists to the invention of their lifestyle, intrinsic to their public image.[13]

Communicating through materials

Miller remarks that 'stuff matters', and that its absence or presence is a definition of either poverty or experience (Miller 2010, 125). Among other interpretations, he reads material culture as a 'technology of attachment', which can provide support during difficult times in one's life (Miller 2008, 89). Miller's powerful image of people's possessions as sediments, which are laid down as 'foundations for material walls mortared with memory' applies beautifully to Mora's home, where every object has a story attached, their accumulation being of great comfort to the artist (Miller 2008, 89). Mora spoke of her clutter as 'the thread of my memory wanting to have its own continuity through familiar objects' (Mora 2003, 1). This environment was equally reflected in her art, both in subject matter and in her style, that borrows from folk art and mythology, with an abundance of decorative and vegetal patterns.

But she was also very generous with her techniques and materials, transforming them into a means of communicating with people. Having turned from an artist/mother/wife/restaurateur into an artist/teacher, she worked for CAE for 23 years, teaching her own working processes such as doll-making, embroidery, watercolour and painting. This was perfectly in line with the public art policies of the 1980s in Victoria, seeking to make art more accessible to the 'non-elite'. Nevertheless, sharing one's own techniques is an uncommon and very generous attitude for an artist, and Mora's workshops quickly became very popular events. Former participants fondly recall the feeling of joy and of creative stimulation in these workshops, and how proud they were of their creations, 'sensing that their tutor had confidence in them' (Anonymous 1990). From her own analysis, Mora's enduring success as a teacher, marked by an award from CAE, was due to her ability to bring out the artist in every person (Anonymous 1993). She privileged communication over status, explaining that she simplified her art to make it accessible for the

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[13] For example, see 'This artist's home is a living work of art', *Home*, August 18, 2001, 31).

workshops and readily showed her own materials for inspiration (Mora 1984). Similarly, in her own practice, materials were just another way of nurturing relationships. Nicola McGaan (her assistant on the Flinders Street mosaic) recalls that friends such as Barry Humphries or Noah Taylor would frequently come up the scaffold, and make a small section of the mosaic, which Mirka would ask McGaan to remove once they had left (McGaan 2014). This sheds light on Mora's kind way of drawing the line between her friendships and the ownership of her art, but also her manner of 'making together' to impart extra value to friendships. This original way of communicating through sharing and doing, continually investing the materials and processes of her art with the task of mediating relationships between herself and those around her, was a characteristic of Mora's personality, and contributed in no small part to foster her artistic reputation.

Even when she was no longer teaching and sharing her techniques, Mora still used her materials' power of communication, frequently posing in her studio for the press. Artists' studios have always exerted a fascination for the public, as 'conjuring places of new concepts, styles and forms' (Lebourdais 2016). Although this romantic vision is disputed in books such as *Inside the artist's studio* (Fig 2015), a collection of interviews that aims to shed light on the real day-to-day process of the artist, requiring time, hard work, and persistence to succeed, artist's studios speak powerfully to the public's imagination. In Mora's case, there was no doubt that her image, surrounded by the tools of her trade, very effectively communicated to the readers her status as the archetypal female artist.

CONCLUSION

This review of the importance of material culture in Mora's life, as an artist and as a woman, reveals the deep significance of her choice of materials and techniques, and the extent of her own agency in the making and control of her public image. Approaching Mora's person and production from a different perspective grounded in material culture studies, gender theory, and phenomenology opens to a better understanding of the layered meanings behind her processes. In her works, relationships abound between her techniques and the broader contexts of feminism, craft movement and public art policies in the twentieth century, as well as the culture of celebrity in the beginning of the twenty first century. Her life story, the lives of the works and their complex creative processes are intimately linked to each other. Mora created things in a manner that impacted on her social behaviour, and social

movements impacted on Mora's creation. Her agency in making myths about her own persona recalls another great figure of bohemianism, the journalist Marcus Clarke in the 1860s, whose flamboyant figure of a non-conformist symbolised a counter culture based on creativity and romanticism (Moore 2012). Indeed, Mora credits the writings of one of Clarke's contemporaries, French novelist Henry Murger and his book *Scènes de la vie de bohème*, (1851) for her decision to migrate to Melbourne, claiming a place that the city readily gave her in the bohemian tradition, enhanced by her French migrant status and the Mora couple's social status in the art world. Using archetypes of bohemia as a self-marketing strategy certainly helped Mora to 'accumulate cultural capital and achieve distinction' (Moore 2015), proving the enduring appeal of both bohemia and European migrants in the story of modern Australia. However, she was much more than this; a woman artist carving her way into recognition, a very hard working artist with a strong cultural background, whose subtle creative processes established a material legacy that only now starts to be examined in its own right.

Mora's materials and idiosyncratic modes of making art are much more than just inert substances animated by the artist. They contribute to assert her position in Australia's pantheon of artists, as much as her public image that ensured her visibility in the social scene. Her sense of 'performative dress' locates Mora within a broader frame of female artists in the twentieth century, a time where, for women, getting a voice on the art scene was not an easy feat. Mora invested in her materials, and always considered them as another type of language, which she liberally used throughout her career. The concepts embedded into her creative processes range from tradition and knowledge to gender and eternity, and an enduring meditation on the act of transforming various matter into art through constant technical innovation. Mora's works resonate strongly in viewers' minds because they combine the symbolic power of materials with the agency inherent to their sophisticated modes of making and their mythological imagery. Therefore, in all of Mora's artistic endeavours, materials can be seen as an embodiment of the artist, transformed through processes invested with her personality, and becoming ultimately a representation of the self.

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GREG DENING LECTURES

Greg Dening was a key figure in the development of the History department at the University of Melbourne and the Melbourne Historical Journal. The 2019 Memorial Lecture held in his honour took place on the 15th of October at the Forum Lecture Hall. It was delivered by three young scholars – Henry Reese, Nat Cutter and Fallon Mody – who represented Dening's approach of 'sensitive curiosity' towards sources and subjects. The MHJ is thrilled to publish edited versions of their speeches.

Listening to a Train Wreck: A Warrnambool Drama in Sound[1]

Henry Reese

In the early autumn of 1897, a passenger train derailed between Warrnambool and Allansford in the Western District of Victoria. Thankfully no one was badly harmed. This local scandal reverberated through the community and encouraged a range of responses. The dramatic clamour of colonial modernity literally coming off the rails provoked a local impresario to recreate this event in sound. The Warrnambool sound recordist Thomas Rome's construction of the train accident is one of the earliest surviving Australian-made recordings. In the spirit of Greg Dening, This paper offers a close re-reading of this micro-historical fragment, emphasising the motley of associations that accrued to early performances of recorded sound in colonial Australia. Thomas Rome's recording provoked listeners to attend deeply to their own local soundscapes. This hints at a longer trajectory for the concept of 'field recording' than is conventionally ascribed, and complicates neat distinctions between scholarly and creative approaches to history-writing.

On the evening of 11 March 1897, a small incident occurred near Warrnambool, in the Western District of Victoria. Sometime after eleven p.m., shortly after leaving Allansford, an express train to Port Fairy came off the rails and plunged some thirty feet down the embankment. The engine driver and fireman both suffered minor injuries and many people received a bad shaking and a shock, but thankfully no one was seriously injured. Life went on. The world was not changed. This was a profoundly local incident, a rude interruption of the everyday. We can imagine the story unfolding locally, spreading from the lips of shaken friends or family, along the well-trodden lines of gossip in a small town, perhaps over a shop counter or in church, across a farm fence or in the schoolroom.

Now it just so happened that the Warrnambool Industrial and Arts Exhibition, a local agricultural show in the proud little coastal town, was in its final week at the time of this train accident. Performing at this show was an ambitious

young man named Thomas Rome. Rome was conducting demonstrations of the Edison phonograph, a sound recording machine less than a decade old, and still charged with the heady possibilities of a new medium. With the help of a group of friends and the touring percussionist George Twentyman, Thomas Rome recreated the sounds of this train accident on a wax cylinder record, in time to display his record to the Warrnambool public on the second last day of the Exhibition. This was a performative act of history-making, an idiosyncratic attempt to make public sense of the shared recent past, an act of what we might today call 'contemporary history'.[2]

In the spirit of meditation on the theatrics of listening and sounding that form the theme for this year's Greg Dening Memorial Lecture, I would like us to listen together to this ancient, bewildering, strange piece of audio, and to try to make sense of it on its own terms, in its own dynamic present: a world unfolding, a train permanently crashing. Despite this being the second-oldest surviving Australian recorded sound, to date this record has received almost no critical attention. The only serious account of this recording comes from the sound archivist Chris Long in 1985, and this is a survey of the recently discovered archival material, not an analysis of its historical meaning.[3] As such, I think it is high time to revisit this recording in light of recent developments in thinking about sound and society in Australia. I want to push this record as far as it can go.

The exercise we are about to embark on together is also a test of a foundational precept of sound studies — the historicity and cultural situatedness of listening.[4] Early sound recordings are too often dismissed by historians of sound recording as having very little interpretive value, as impossibly degraded, low-fidelity predecessors to the real business that unfolded in later decades.[5] But those are the biases of late twentieth century ears. As we shall see, no account I have found of Thomas Rome's train cylinder questions the clarity and realism of its representation; contemporaries took it seriously on its own terms, as what it purported to be: a representation of a recent train crash.

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[2] Greg Dening, *Performances* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1996), 36.
[3] Chris Long, 'Australia's Earliest Known Recordings: Thomas Rome's Collection', *International Association of Sound Archives (IASA) Australia Branch Newsletter* 19 (1985): 5–21. Long also produced an audio documentary about Thomas Rome's life and work. See Long, 'The Fabulous Phonograph of Thomas Rome,' cassette tape, National Film and Sound Archive (hereafter NFSA), 455235.
[4] Michael Bull, 'Introduction: Sound Studies and the Art of Listening', in *Routledge Companion to Sound Studies*, ed. Michael Bull (London: Routledge, 2018), xx–xxii.
[5] Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2003), 1–29.

This sound comes to us as cargo from the past, and we do it justice by listening to it on its own terms.[6] This is as clear a reminder as we can have that the Australians of Warrnambool in the 1890s did not listen in the same way that you or I do; we cannot impose our own judgements on this recording.

I hope this is not asking too much of you, dear reader, but I invite you now to break out of the confines of this page for just a few minutes. It is time to let some sound into this journal's pages. Please pause to listen to the digitised recording of Thomas Rome's train wreck cylinder record before continuing. It is freely available online.[7] Doing so will not only help to make sense of the discussion that follows, but it also helps to enforce a sense of the reality and dignity, as well as the radical otherness, of long past listening states. I hope Greg Dening would approve of this gesture. The frisson of the past — of a history — is available to stream through SoundCloud. Thank you.

Let's break down what we just heard. We first hear a rudimentary announcement, of the kind that appeared at the start of commercial cylinder recordings in these early years. We hear someone speaking but they're too far away from the phonograph's horn — garbled rustles are all that is left of a once strong voice, confirmation of the amateur quality of this recording.

We're now on the train platform. A railway staffer calls out the train's destination — Warrnambool — and collects tickets. Then some more indistinct chatter on the platform. We hear the blast of whistles and the rhythmic thuds of the drums, simulating the train beginning to roll over the sleepers and picking up speed.

As the train picks up steam, we hear a voice say 'Goodnight, Heaver'. This is a reference to the acting curator of the Warrnambool museum at the time, standing in for J.F. Archibald of *Bulletin* fame, whose time was often spent elsewhere on decidedly more bohemian pursuits. Mr. Heaver, who was on board during that fateful night, reportedly received the 'worst shaking' of all the passengers.[8] This is the first of several pointed, and pretty cheeky, digs at local personalities in Thomas Rome's record.

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[6] Dening, *Performances*, 46.
[7] 'Warrnambool Railway Accident (c.1897) by Thomas Rome', National Film and Sound Archive of Australia, https://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/warrnambool-railway-accident-c1897-thomas-rome [accessed 1 December 2019].
[8] Long, 'Australia's Earliest Known Recordings', 13.

Soon things start to go wrong; we hear a whistle blast and a series of dramatic thuds as the train careens down the embankment. We then hear a woman's scream, a vocal utterance startling in its directness. Then a cantankerous man's voice: 'What the deuce is up?' Then a clamour of voices. Another woman screams, and we hear an observation that the train has left the line. We hear people asking their compatriots if they are alright. 'Let me out!' one man demands. 'Oh, where is my baby?' moans another.

We then hear a short conversation between two men. 'What's the matter, Tommy?' one voice asks. Perhaps Tommy is Thomas Brown, the train's driver. 'Oh, a little scratch', the staunch 'Tommy' replies.

The following exchange is impenetrable to me without the help of an insider, in the form of a description of the record in the Warrnambool *Echo*, one of the two local papers.[9] 'Hello Greeny, are you hurt?' asks a voice. 'Greeny' is Mr. W. Greenwood, the well-known coach of the Warrnambool cricket club. The voice of Greeny responds 'Not much Dicky', but then adds, 'I've lost me hair!' Another voice then counsels Greenwood to send for the doctor about the missing hair.[10]

This is a kind of 'great cat massacre' moment for me: *why is this situation funny?* These people sound familiar to us, but we are dealing with a different cultural world, eavesdropping on a conversation we're only half familiar with.[11] Regrettably my search for more information about Mr. Greenwood's hair has thus far come up blank. Did he wear a badly disguised toupee or comb-over? Is this a mirthful send-up of the man's vanity? Or is it the opposite; is he known for a Byronesque piratical charm, is he, like Samson, nothing without his hair? We are not privy to this local meaning, an in-joke that describes the contours of its audience.

We then hear a final couple of screams, and lastly a shout of 'Murder!' before the cranking of the phonograph cylinder begins to wind to a wheezing, exhausted close. Hang on: murder? Let's think about this. What was going on here? Was this scripted? But … we *know* that no one was murdered! No one was even badly injured! Is someone getting carried away in the hilarity of the moment? In its own present, in the world of the recording, this single, wildly out-of-place word opens up an interpretive moment of some depth.

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[9] *Echo* (Warrnambool), 18 March 1897.
[10] As a side note, 'Dicky' could perhaps be Richard Scully, the train's fireman.
[11] Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 77–8.

Let's try to imagine the recording context, a tight scrum of men and women, recordist and drummer, packed closely around the horn of the phonograph to record this scene. At this time, early in the acoustic recording era, records were made by shouting and playing instruments directly down the very same funnel that would later be used to reproduce them.[12] We do not know whether the actual Mr. Greenwood, Tommy Brown or Richard Scully were present, or whether instead, as I suspect, these are impressions, pantomimes of the town's sober local personages given by a more irreverent youthful crowd. I imagine this was a situation of intense hilarity and fun, joy at the collaborative sonic creation in a new medium. Maybe everyone collapsed in laugher as soon as Thomas Rome's cranking of the record finished. We also do not know how many 'takes' this took, how many times the recording was ruined by someone flubbing their lines or bursting out laughing, necessitating Thomas Rome shaving another layer of wax off the blank cylinder and starting again. Rome's personal papers are silent on all of this. All we have is the audio, a grainy echo. This situation forces us to imagine the circumstances of the record's creation and intended reception.

More broadly, what else do we hear? We hear accents that are refreshingly direct — these are vernacular utterances, the voices of ordinary country people rather than more formal performances. We also hear in-jokes, clearly intended to be understood and provoke a shared chuckle among the community. The most time of all is devoted to the sounds of people taking care of each other. What's the matter? Are you hurt?

One of the most significant messages I take from this acoustic reconstruction, silly as it may be, is one of community. It makes me think of the observations made by Ross Gibson in his 2014 Greg Dening Memorial Lecture, regarding another kind of media practice in rural Victoria. Discussing the multigenerational cinematography of the Teasdale family of the Wimmera, Gibson argues that the Teasdales' creation and circulation of media within and across their community belies the existence of a 'suffusing, integrative urge' that pulses beneath the skin of the countryside, a sense of connectivity and relationality between people and place, and people and people, deepened, shaped and mediated by intimate sensory practices, by a love and respect for each other and for the environment.[13] I get something similar from Thomas

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[12] For an account of early sound recording that restores a sense of the Victorian antiquity of the medium, see John M. Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), Ch.4.

[13] Ross Gibson, '"Who Knows the Weather?": The Memory of Greg Dening', *Melbourne Historical Journal* 43.1 (2015): 12.

Rome's record. While at times the voices are almost irretrievably jumbled and incoherent, the message is nevertheless unmistakeably vivid.

I also think that Thomas Rome's selection of subject matter tells us something larger about his soundscape. A soundscape is simultaneously an acoustic environment and a way of listening: it is a shared cultural response to the sounds of a place.[14] To get at this, we need to put this recording in its wider contexts. For Thomas Rome was neither the first, nor the most influential, demonstrator of the phonograph in Australia. He came along near the end of a heady phase of phonographic display and performance. Since the invention of the so-called 'improved' phonograph in 1888, a motley cast of self-styled impresarios, somewhere between scientific lecturers and magicians, toured the Australian colonies relentlessly. They followed well-established theatrical networks and introduced widely dispersed audiences to the science and spectacle of sound recording. This wave of displays immediately preceded the full-blown commercialisation of recorded sound, which was substantially in place by about 1905.[15]

Like Thomas Rome, each of the early demonstrators played meaningfully with the evocation of place and space through sound. Remember, this was a moment long before the primary meaning of recorded sound lay in the reproduction of music; this future was amorphous, one of openness to the world's soundscape, to connection and communication.[16] There were many possible futures.[17] The early demonstrators would routinely record such iconic local sounds as church bells, town criers, street music and famous voices, some of the most culturally charged sounds in the environment, and present them back to audiences that responded with wonder and delight. Further, the ongoing accumulation and curation of a library of recordings — here, listen to Auckland's cathedral bell! Now the Adelaide Salvation Army Band! Now the Mayor of Ballarat! — presented evidence of an ordered, systematic, familiar world to colonial listeners; the socially significant sounds of this wider colonial world were readily apprehensible, modern, and affectively charged.[18]

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[14] Emily Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900–1933* (Cambridge, MA & London: MIT Press, 2004), 1–2.

[15] Henry Reese, '"The World Wanderings of a Voice": Exhibiting the Cylinder Phonograph in Australasia', in *A Cultural History of Sound, Memory and the Senses*, ed. Joy Damousi and Paula Hamilton (New York & London: Routledge, 2017), 25–39.

[16] Henry Reese, 'Colonial Soundscapes: A Cultural History of Sound Recording in Australia, 1880–1930' (PhD Thesis, University of Melbourne, 2019), Ch.3.

[17] Dening, *Performances*, 125.

[18] Reese, '"The World Wanderings of a Voice"', 33–4.

As media historian Lisa Gitelman has argued, these performances were

> local experiences … yet they had extralocal significance. Like the exchange columns and wire stories of the local press, phonograph exhibitions pointed outward, toward an impersonal public sphere comprised of similarly private subjects … In their very recordability, people were connected. Audience members might imagine themselves as part of an up-to-date, recordable community.[19]

What does it mean to understand yourself as 'recordable'? Did 1890s listeners wonder at the onrush of a new sounding world? My research suggests as much.

Thomas Rome's record takes on additional resonance if we also understand it as belonging to a well-established, but now largely forgotten genre of early phonograph record known as the 'descriptive specialty'. Descriptive specialties were sonic reconstructions of famed and historic, but often profoundly ordinary, everyday events, from the battles of the Spanish-American War to a busy London street. They remained popular well into the interwar period. Countless examples survive and they are fascinating. Today these records often have a somewhat madcap, almost cartoonish quality to them, but these representations of acoustic reality were taken seriously in their time.[20]

The descriptive specialty demonstrated the capacities of the new medium to its audiences — listen, we can do this with sound! — but it also worked to inscribe a set of affective associations. The realism of the descriptive specialty emphasises media historian Jonathan Sterne's understanding of the early phonograph as a 'partial machine', one whose meanings were not inherent but which were completed as a dyad, by the active engagement of their audiences.[21] 1890s accounts of descriptive specialties demonstrate an intense desire or urge, on the part of audiences, to hear the events as real, or to invest them with meaning as though they were.[22] I have found no report of Thomas Rome's train wreck cylinder that questions the success of his representation, the felicity of his sonic performance, its convincingness or fidelity to the

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[19] Lisa Gitelman, *Always Already New: Media, History, and the Data of Culture* (Cambridge, MA & London: MIT Press, 2006), 34.

[20] Elodie A. Roy, 'Worn Grooves: Affective Connectivity, Mobility and Recorded Sound in the First World War', *Media History* 24, no.1 (2018): 31–2.

[21] Sterne, *Audible Past*, 247.

[22] Gustavus Stadler, 'Never Heard Such a Thing: Lynching and Phonographic Modernity', *Social Text* 28, no.1 (2010): 87, 92, 95; Reese, '"The World Wanderings of a Voice"', 32–3.

supposed *real* sound of a train wreck; rather we see a willingness to take this record seriously on its own local terms.

So we have taken a deep dive into one attempt to recreate a socially significant local sound, in a busy field full of attempts to recreate socially significant local sounds. By exploring the wider circles of resonance around Thomas Rome's phonographic practice, I have striven to 'compose him in place' and in his 'present-participled experience'.[23] While Thomas Rome's performance was intensely local, I have suggested that it also gestured toward the wider colonial soundscape, and to Warrnambool's place therein. As Katie Holmes and Kylie Mirmohamadi have argued of settler constructions of the Victorian Mallee, it is important to explore 'how configurations of local place, colonial and national space intersect and interact'.[24] So, yes, on one level this construction of a minor train accident only makes sense if we know those affected thereby, poor shaken Mr. Heaver and hairless Mr. Greenwood. But on another level, what is being constructed here is a knowing contribution to an integrative national tale in sound, one of the emplacement of technological and industrial modernity in the bush.

Thomas Rome's recording practice thus represents the construction or ordering of an ideal colonial soundscape, as opposed to other, alternative soundscapes, with clear settler colonial implications. This, his work seems to say, is how a thriving, prosperous country town *should* and *did* sound, this is how our community sounds when brought together in a moment of crisis. It is an auditory snapshot of a bustling settler community, confident in its modernity and progress. Perhaps even when things go wrong, when the train goes off the rails, we can still hear something of the cultural power at work behind the sense of listening. If we listen through the patina of noise and grit and time, and take early sound recording seriously in its own present, then I think that we can learn a lot.

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[23] Dening, *Performances*, 17.
[24] Katie Holmes and Kylie Mirmohamadi, 'Howling Wilderness and Promised Land: Imagining the Victorian Mallee, 1840–1914', *Australian Historical Studies* 46, no.2 (2015): 193.

Between Captives and Consuls: Searching for the 'Little English' of Barbary

Nat Cutter

In the early modern period, many Britons freely took up residence in the Islamic world, in search of wealth, freedom or self-actualisation. However, little is known about these people and their lives, beyond incidental mentions in other sources. Drawing on little-known correspondence from the English consulate in late seventeenth century Tunis, this lecture traces the lives of servant apprentice William Newark, renegade translator Hassan Agha, and housekeeper-turned-merchant Edith Stedham to shed light on the everyday lives of these non-elite expatriates. In the spirit of Greg Dening, I hope to allow the 'little people' of the past to speak for themselves.

Greg Dening devoted his career to the study of the people 'on the other side of the beach', and the 'little people' on his own. In his own words, he wanted 'to celebrate their humanity, their freedom, their creativity and their dignity', listening to their voices in all the forms that are available to give 'the past and the other the dignity of being able to be their own selves' in his representations of them.[1] In this paper, I hope to follow in his footsteps, and tell the stories of some forgotten people.

In January 2019, I went on my first archival research trip, searching for documentation of the origins, experiences and influence of British expatriates who lived in the Maghreb in the seventeenth century. I was looking for a wide range of different documents, but the most exciting possibility was a collection housed in the UK National Archives, which originated from the English consulate in Tunis, and which had (as far as I could tell) remained almost entirely untouched by historians. The collection was sparsely described, so I had little idea of how valuable it might be.

In the event, what I found was box upon box, containing thousands of letters, financial records and legal documents, a treasure trove of material. Some of it was easy to read – some, not so much. But I didn't hesitate to get my hands dirty opening this treasure trove.

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[1] Greg Dening, 'Performing Cross-Culturally', *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 25, 2 (December 2006): 1-2.

Figures 1-3, left to right: The National Archives (hereafter TNA) FO 335/3/6; TNA FO 335/1; Author's hand. Photographs: author, reproduced by kind permission of The National Archives.

Figure 4: Richard William Seale, *A correct Chart of the Mediterranean Sea, from the Straits of Gibraltar to the Levant: From the latest and best Observations: for Mr. Tindal's Continuation of Mr. Rapin's History*, 1745, ink on paper. Available in public domain from Wikimedia Commons.

The Maghreb (roughly the territories of modern Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya) was famed in the early modern period as the home of the dreaded Barbary corsairs. Portrayed in theatre, ballads, captivity narratives and fiery sermons alike as barbarous, brutal and alien pirates, the corsairs were reputed to capture and enslave Christians by the boatload, forcing them with threats and brutal treatment to renounce their religion and their nationality, 'turn Turk', and join the corsairs' eternal war against Christendom. Yet over the last few decades, historians have begun to tell a rather different story about Europe's relations with the Maghreb. The tropes of Maghrebi aggression in the period conceal a long history of friendly trade and intellectual exchange between the regions – not to mention European privateering attacks on, and enslavement of, Maghrebi peoples. Perhaps even more surprisingly, the early modern period witnessed hundreds, even thousands of Europeans who left their home countries to freely settle in the Maghreb, searching for personal advancement or freedom from restrictive European social norms.

These migrants lived in the Maghreb as expatriate merchants, joined Maghrebi armies and navies, and even freely chose to convert to Islam. Unfortunately, at least in the case of British migrants, the available source material surrounding these fascinating people has been quite limited, mostly mediated through government dispatches and printed narratives written by former captives.

However, the material that I have been looking at, and upon which my research is (now) heavily based, offers a wealth of new information. The archive in question was gathered by Thomas Goodwyn, an English merchant of no significant ancestry who through the 1670s built a formidable reputation in the booming Tuscan port of Livorno. In 1679, after the establishment of what was to be the first long-lasting treaty between England and Tripoli, Thomas Baker, the newly-appointed consul at Tripoli, persuaded Goodwyn to leave Livorno, and set up shop in Tripoli, thereby to gain a foothold in an untapped market. To Baker's dismay, Goodwyn soon found Tripoli not to his taste, and within a year relocated to Tunis, which featured a much stronger export economy as well as a better-established English trading house. Through the period of his residence in Tripoli and Tunis up to 1700, Goodwyn retained a huge number of letters that he received from all over the Mediterranean and Europe – Aleppo, Alexandria, Algiers, Alicante, Bizerte, Cadiz…and many other places.[2]

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[2] For more on Goodwyn and Baker, see Nat Cutter, '"Grieved in my soul that I suffered you to depart from me": Isolation and Community in the English Houses at Tunis and Tripoli, 1679-1686', in Heather Dalton, ed., *Keeping Family in an Age of Long Distance Trade, Imperial Expansion and Exile 1550-1850* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, forthcoming 2020).

Figures 5-7, left to right: Pier Francesco Mola, *Oriental Warrior or Barbary Pirate*, 1650, oil on canvas; Engraving from Pierre Dan, *Histoire de Barbarie et de ses Corsaires*, 1637; Lorenzo A. Castro, *A Sea Fight with Barbary Corsairs*, c. 1681, oil on canvas. All available in public domain through Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 8: Richard William Seale, *A correct Chart of the Mediterranean Sea, from the Straits of Gibraltar to the Levant: From the latest and best Observations: for Mr. Tindal's Continuation of Mr. Rapin's History*, 1745, ink on paper. With author's annotations: red dots represent Goodwyn's places of residence (Livorno, Tripoli, Tunis) and blue represent the additional locations from which he received correspondence.

Through Goodwyn's archive, we gain a picture of not just the captives and consuls known from other sources but the hitherto almost-invisible 'middle people': the English soldiers, servants, converts, and apprentices who risked their livelihoods and identities to seek a new or better life in the Maghreb. As well as containing far more information about these people, for the first time we have a substantial collection of their own words. In the rest of my presentation, I want to share the stories of three of these middle people – a translator, a merchant apprentice, and a housekeeper turned merchant. Each of them was connected with the English merchants and consul in Tunis or Tripoli in the early 1680s. Each is regularly mentioned circumstantially in Goodwyn's letters during their period of residence, but all attract specific attention when there is cause for concern, providing a window into everyday life and struggle through their conflicts. These are the missing stories in early modern British-Maghrebi relations.

The first of our middle people is already known a little from the journal of his employer, Tripoli consul Thomas Baker. In 1680, Baker wrote in his journal that he had given to Hassan Agha, his dragoman, or translator, 'a Pistoll in Gold to forfeit Ten, if hee shall drink a drop of Wine or Brandy until the 23rd of September next'.[3] Just over a year later, Baker raged in his journal, 'I cashiered my conceited, foolish, impertinent false, Trayterous, base, Drunken Druggerman, who is called Hassan Agha; Who before his voluntary Turning Turk was named Edward Fountaine of a good family in Norffolk as hee pretends; A hopefull Branch, and a great comfort to his Relations!'[4] We thus understand that Edward Fountain converted to Islam by choice, taking up the Turkish name Hassan Agha (which means 'handsome lord') and that he had a problem with alcohol (at least from the perspective of his employer) – a dangerous problem for a new Muslim, but one that was common among young Turkish soldiers in the Maghreb. Goodwyn's archive adds an additional layer to Hassan's story. In 1680, Baker requested Goodwyn send him spurs and tack in order for Hassan to ride as a cavalryman in the Tripolitan army, a common occupation for converts in the Maghreb.[5] In August 1681, Baker responded to Goodwyn's enquiry about Hassan with a new report of Hassan's dismissal. Baker wrote that he had '(Praysed bee the Lords holy Name!) casheired him once more my service neere 3 months since – a more accursed Dog, knave,

[3] Thomas Baker, *Piracy and Diplomacy in Seventeenth-Century North Africa: The Journal of Thomas Baker, English Consul in Tripoli, 1677-1685,* edited by C.R. Pennell (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1989), 23 March 1680, 118. For more on Hassan Agha, see Nat Cutter, 'Grieved in my soul', forthcoming 2020.
[4] Baker, *Piracy and Diplomacy,* 13 May 1681, 129.
[5] Thomas Baker to Thomas Goodwyn, 28 August 1680, TNA, FO 335/2/3.

Rogue, Spiove, and Traytour (except Judas) was never yet undamn'd'. When Hassan fled to an Islamic religious leader to seek refuge from Baker's retribution, 'I left him to bee tortured only by ye remembrance of his owne foule actions, and thus am I rid of a notorious Villaine'.[6] Yet five years later, in 1686, Baker reported with regret, ' Hassan Agha lost his life in the quarrell against the Begh I am sorry for him, having on all occasions shewne himselfe a good souldier on horseback'.[7]

We have in this corpus a letter written from Hassan Agha to Goodwyn, just two months before his ignominious departure from Baker's service. Though ostensibly mundane, it offers some additional clues to understand Hassan's position. Converts were often distrusted and excluded by Christians and Muslims alike, so Hassan was glad to hear 'that you have not quite forgotten mee'. His drinking is also present, but presented as an honour to Goodwyn as Hassan promises to 'drink your health to save our soulss'. Hassan indicates friendly relations with Muslims, singing off with a greeting to 'bobo safare', evidently a Maghrebi or convert friend, and also indicates his own Islamic identity, signing off with his own name: Al Effendi Hassan Agha.[8]

The second middle person, William Newark, arrived in Tunis in 1683, sent by his family to apprentice for his uncle, Thomas Goodwyn, and another relative in Tunis, merchant Francis Barrington.[9] Newark was expected to act initially as a servant, but over time to learn the trade of a merchant and eventually make his fortune in Mediterranean trade. Unfortunately, Newark too had a problem. In August 1683 Barrington sent Newark and another servant named Joseph Punter to join Goodwyn as he established a new trading post at Cape Negro, a short journey from Tunis. Barrington sent with Newark and Punter a letter to Goodwyn with some serious concerns about them. According to Barrington, Newark had 'comitted those disorders as he is most Inclyned to since you left us'. Barrington counselled Goodwyn to 'keep a stricter hand over him', otherwise 'the Heat of his youthful blood; with ye ill Examples this Country affords; will prejudice his rising' to mercantile success. Barrington's reticence to specifically name Newark's 'disorders' is telling – and so is Barrington's additional concern that Punter 'might be too much a Boone companion for Couzin Will'.[10] It was a very common trope in English accounts of the Ottoman Empire that young Turkish men, particularly soldiers, routinely engaged in

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[6] Thomas Baker to Thomas Goodwyn, 1 August 1681, TNA FO 335/2/11.
[7] Thomas Baker to Thomas Goodwyn, 22 March 1686, TNA FO 335/5/14.
[8] Hassan Agha to Thomas Goodwyn, 18 March 1681, TNA FO 335/2/8.
[9] For more on William Newark, see Cutter, 'Grieved in my soul', forthcoming 2020.
[10] Francis Barrington to Thomas Goodwyn, 1 August 1683, TNA FO 335/3/8.

Figure 9: Hassan Agha to Thomas Goodwyn, 18 March 1681, TNA FO 335/2/8.
Photograph: author, reproduced by kind permission of The National Archives.

homosexual activity. Judging by Barrington's veiled references, it seems likely that Newark was engaging in some form of sexual impropriety, and one in which Joseph Punter might also be involved. William Newark left England in the hopes of making his fortune under successful relatives, but struggled to conform with their morality in a society with different norms than his own.

Sadly, we have no letters written from Newark himself – he disappears from the records after mid-1684, either returned home or deceased – but we have several from Dorothy and Lucy Newark, who seem to be Newark's mother and sister, who visited Goodwyn in Tunis in 1688.[11] Note the careful, rounded italic hand, the lack of capitalisation and punctuation, and how Newark flatters her uncle, evidently wealthier and more successful than his family.

The third and final story, and perhaps the most exceptional of the three, belongs to Edith Stedham.[12] Stedham came to the English consulate in Tunis at some point before Goodwyn's arrival, and apparently acted as a housekeeper of sorts, providing food, clothing, and supplies to her male housemates on their trading expeditions: 'Mrs Stedham Salutes & sends you by this Hamall the Shirte you desired.'[13] From the outset, however, Stedham was a respected member of the household, specifically greeted in letters alongside the other merchants, and soon beginning to invest and trade in cloth and other commodities on her own account: 'Mrs Stedham presents her humble servise to you; and thinks her selfe much obliged to you for your care to procure her some small Profitts from your Station.'[14] In 1686, she was wealthy enough to support her long-estranged husband to join her in Tunis, albeit as a servant and her social inferior. Francis Barrington wrote to Goodwyn that Mr Stedham, 'having heard that ye plase is beseiged, cryes loth to depart hence', being 'very chary of his boddy Politick'. He continued,

> I thinke itt had been happy for her if shee had taken his forfeiture; for I have been told shee might have done itt; having forfeited ye Bonds of Matrimony by leaving her so many yeares without the least notice or knowlidge of his being alive or dead – but slipping ye opportunity shee I feare is like to receive trouble enough from him if once shee should be void of your Protection.[15]

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[11] Lucy Newark to Thomas Goodwyn, 15 April 1688, TNA FO 335/7/6.
[12] For more on Edith Stedham, see Cutter, 'Grieved in my soul', forthcoming 2020.
[13] Francis Baker to Thomas Goodwyn, 27 May 1682, TNA FO 335/3/1.
[14] Francis Barrington to Thomas Goodwyn, 22 September 1683, TNA FO 335/3/9.
[15] Francis Barrington and Benjamin Steele to Thomas Goodwyn, 1 February 1686, TNA FO 335/5/16.
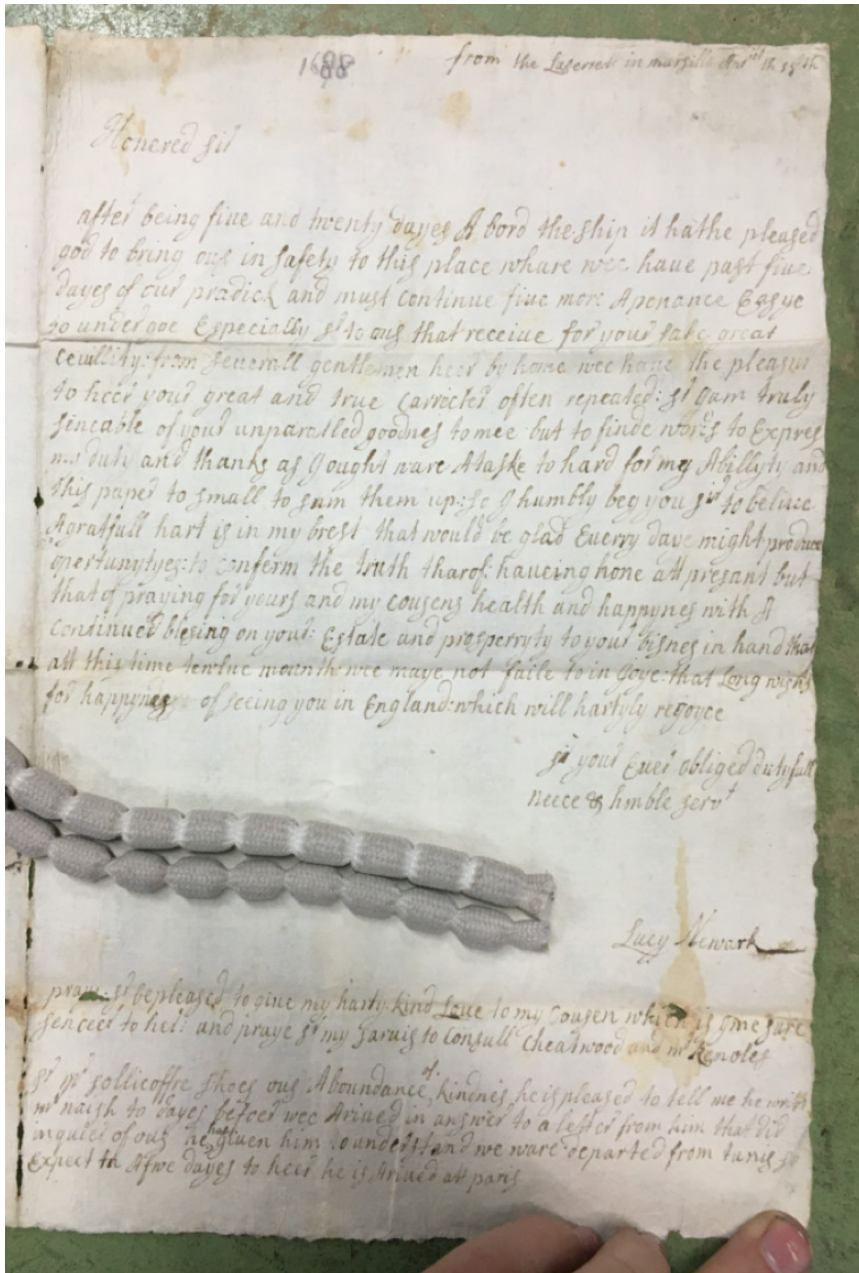
Figure 10: Lucy Newark to Thomas Goodwyn, 15 April 1688, TNA FO 335/7/6.
Photograph: author, reproduced by kind permission of The National Archives.

Edith Stedham, like so many others who went to the Maghreb in the seventeenth century, or who have migrated throughout the world in centuries since, escaped poor treatment at the hands of a loved one to establish success on their own two feet. It is ironic to note that, as a husbandless foreign woman in a country which apparently corrupted *men* to drunkenness and sexual impropriety, the greatest threat to Edith's safety is the pathetic, penniless husband who abandoned her.

Stedham, too, wrote letters in her time at Tunis – despite that fact that her literacy was evidently quite limited. In this particular letter, Stedham's spelling was so indecipherable that Goodwyn, upon receiving it, carefully translated some particularly poorly-spelled words and wrote the result in pencil between the lines. However, Stedham's writing, however difficult to read, is enormously significant, because it may the earliest extant writing from an English woman in the Maghreb.

What I find so compelling about these middle people, the 'little English of Barbary' is that, on the one hand, they are so exceptional, so strange and alien – both to us in the twenty-first century, and to their own contemporary countrymen. The Maghreb was a place that posed dangers and temptations to them, as well as benefits. Yet in another way, they are so normal. They deal with the same, human problems – sexuality, addiction, abandonment – and the same kinds of hopes and desires – success, freedom, meaning, community – that capture us all. Listening to their voices provides a new window into the stories of risk, migration, assimilation and minority so common in our own multi-polar, globalised world. And like Greg Dening, I hope to bring these stories into the light.

Figure 11: Edith Stedham to Thomas Goodwyn, 16 July 1685, FO 335/5/12.
Photograph: author, reproduced by kind permission of The National Archives.

'1000 Babies Can't Be Wrong':

Listening out for Arthur Deery, an Alien Doctor in Victoria[1]

Fallon Mody

In January 1961, fifty mothers marched through the Victorian town of Healesville demanding their doctor, who had been abruptly dismissed, be reinstated to the local hospital. The Sun reported they marched in "blistering, near-century heat" carrying placards that declared, "1000 Babies Can't Be Wrong" and "Doc Deery forever". The mainstream newsworthiness of this moment was who these white, middle-class mothers mobilised in support of: Doc Deery was a Hungarian Jewish "alien doctor" with "communistic ideas". Arthur Deery was among hundreds of refugee doctors who arrived in Australia in the 1930s. Historians have paid little attention to this group beyond representations of their marginalisation, as social and professional outsiders. In this paper, Fallon Mody will re-present Arthur Deery's migrant medical life, which spanned 40 years, and three country towns. In doing so, this research highlights how such biographical explorations enables what Greg Dening called "history's empowering force" to give us a deeper, more human understanding of being an "alien doctor" in Australia.

The following is the written version of the paper presented by Dr Fallon Mody at the annual Greg Dening Memorial Lecture held at the Forum Lecture Theatre, University of Melbourne, 15 October 2019.

Dr Arthur Deery arrived in Australia in February 1940 onboard the *HMS Niagara* with his wife Perla and daughter Nora.[2] Almost twenty-one years later, on a blistering hot day in January 1961, a group of white, middle-class mothers and mothers-to-be marched one mile through Healesville's high

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[1] The type of research I do would not be possible without the support, collaboration and trust of the families and friends of the doctors whose lives I research. I would like to acknowledge and thank the three generations of Dr Arthur Deery's family who have collaborated with me on this research, and who were in the audience, and who will also listen to this recorded lecture. I would like to thank Dr Julie Fedor, Prof Joy Damousi and the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies for inviting me to present at the 2019 Greg Dening Memorial Lecture, together with my co-presenters Nathaniel Cutter and Henry Reese. I would also like to acknowledge my supervisors Dr James Bradley, A/Prof Sara Wills and Prof Fiona Fidler, as well as my partner Raian Isaac, who continue to support my research efforts.

[2] National Archives of Australia (NAA): A6119, 5461 DEERY, Arthur Dr Volume 1.

street protesting his sudden dismissal as an honorary medical practitioner at the local Healesville and District Hospital.[3] One placard invoked the living proof of Dr Deery's professional standing in the community, insisting that, '1000 babies can't be wrong'.[4] A few days later a group of about one hundred pensioners also marched in protest of his dismissal. In a matter of weeks, one thousand three hundred Healesville residents signed a petition which eventually resulted into a formal public inquiry into the governance of the hospital.[5] Dismissal as an honorary from a country hospital without a formal charge of professional misconduct was unusual, and could be devastating for the reputation and livelihood of the doctor in question.[6] Dr Deery was quoted as saying, 'I'm glad they marched. It warms my heart to know I've got so many friends'.[7]

The campaign triggered by Dr Deery's dismissal was extraordinary. By August 1961, the number of financial contributors with a right to vote on hospital matters rose from 200 to 2500 people as Dr Deery's supporters and opponents ran furious campaigns to garner support.[8] Of course, as a suspected Communist and a former 'alien' now 'New Australian'[9] – Dr Deery's dismissal surfaced many tensions: his supporters and their actions were deemed to stem from Communist sympathies at the peak of anti-Communist hysteria in Australia, and were therefore labelled, 'un-Australian'.[10]

Declassified government surveillance files reveal that in the year Dr Deery was dismissed, a fellow doctor told an informant that Deery's practice was in trouble because he had been, 'very foolish in allowing his Party membership to become known in such a small town'.[11] For his own part, Dr Deery was

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[3] 'Fifty Mothers March on Hospital', *The Sun*, 28 January 1961, 5.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Board of Inquiry on the Administration and Management of Healesville and District Hospital and its Affairs & Addison, Donald McGaw 1962, *Report and Recommendations*, Caulfield, Victoria.

[6] In country towns in particular, every medical practitioner in the district was entitled to serve as an honorary at the local hospital.

[7] 'Fifty Mothers March on Hospital', *The Sun*, 28 January 1961, 5.

[8] Public Records Office of Victoria (PROV): VPRS 240, P0000 unit 8 Board of Inquiry – Healesville and District Hospital, 1962-. NB: It was common for local district hospitals to offset the costs of running a local hospital through a subscription model, with paid subscribers having a vote to elect the hospital committee.

[9] The term was coined by Australia's first Minister for Immigration Arthur Calwell in December 1947 to describe recent non-British immigrants to Australia.

[10] PROV: Board of Inquiry – Healesville Hospital. For a broader discussion of post-war anti-Communism in Australia, see: Stuart Macintyre, *The Reds: the Communist Party of Australia from Origins to Illegality* (Allen & Unwin, 1999).

[11] NAA: Deery.

clearly aware of his divisive position in the community. In a written statement that he read at a packed and highly-charged townhall meeting a few months after his dismissal, Dr Deery began by apologising for his English, declaring, 'I am just a bloody foreigner'.[12] Balancing this, however, Dr Deery reminded his dissenters that it was *his work* that underpinned the groundswell of support to have him reinstated. In the twelve years he had practised in Healesville, his supporters believed that he'd lifted the state of medical service there.[13]

Dr Arthur Deery was one of hundreds of so-called 'alien doctors' who arrived in Australia between 1930-45,[14] and one of the almost nine thousand Jewish refugees who resettled in Australia during this time.[15] This group of doctors have been the subjects of very specific scholarly interest: historians of migration have documented their challenging resettlement experiences in Australian communities.[16] Historians of medicine have documented what is now recognised as a typical gatekeeper response by the local medical profession who sought to prevent the registration of an 'influx of continental practitioners' who they argued were ill-suited to practising medicine in Australia.[17] The latter also served as justification for not liberalising state medical acts to recognise their European medical degrees. Instead, many of these men and women were forced to retrain at a local Australian university, often at great emotional and financial cost.[18] What this existing historiography creates is a dominant narrative of their marginalisation.

One result of these tightly-drawn historical perspectives is that the *work* of these practitioners has been obscured or more accurately neglected, unless they went on to achieve exceptional renown or notoriety.[19] Instead many of

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[12] PROV: Board of Inquiry – Healesville Hospital.

[13] Ibid.

[14] The term 'alien' was commonly used in Australia to describe or imply foreign nationality i.e. settlers who were not British subjects. Similarly, "alien doctor" was used to describe medical practitioners whose degrees were not recognised, precluding them from registering as a licensed practitioner.

[15] Andrew Markus, 'Jewish Migration to Australia 1938–49', *Journal of Australian Studies* 7, no.13 (1983): 18–31;

[16] For example, see: Suzanne Rutland, *The Jews in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[17] For further discussion, see: John Weaver, ''A Glut on the Market': Medical Practice Laws and Treatment of Refugee Doctors in Australia and New Zealand, 1933-1942', *ANZ Law & History E-Journal* (2009): 32-38.

[18] Suzanne Rutland 'An Example of 'Intellectual Barbarism': The Story of 'Alien' Jewish Medical Practitioners in Australia, 1933-1956', *Yad Vashem Studies* 18 (1987): 233–57.

[19] For eminent or high achievements, this memorialisation is typically in the form of biographical entries in large memory projects, including the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. It is worth noting that sociologists studying the experiences of post-war migrants in

these histories conclude with an arc familiar in explorations of marginalised groups: they are portrayed as prevailing against the odds, as many of these 'alien doctors' went on resurrect medical careers in Australia.[20] This success is implied, however, not described. There are very few studies that have systematically examined the professional lives or work of this group of doctors in Australia.[21] Therefore, the focus of this paper is to explore the professional life of one alien doctor, Arthur Deery. I'll conclude by arguing for the value in systematically recovering work histories such as Arthur Deery's, first because it complicates this narrative of marginalisation, but also because it signals the collective work patterns of these so-called alien doctors in Australian country towns.[22] Simply put, Dr Deery's forty-year Australian career from Toora to Healesville is illustrative of the hidden but vital work medical migrants undertook in interwar and post-war Australia. In doing so, this paper (as well as my broader research) helps redress what has been called the 'conspicuous silence' of medical migrants in national histories.[23]

This paper draws on the research I undertook for my PhD project which examined the collective biographies of almost three hundred European medical migrants who were registered in Victoria between 1930-60. For this project, I constructed a prosopography – or systematic collective biography – to document the professional pathways and carers of these medical migrants which drew on biographical data from state medical registers, national

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Australia found that some unlicensed doctors took advantage of their appeal in their migrant communities, and provided them with poor or exploitative medical care. See for example, Jean Martin, *The Migrant Presence: Australian Responses 1947-1977*. Research Report for the National Population Inquiry, Studies in Society: 2. (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1978).

[20] A. James Hammerton, and Catharine Coleborne, 'Ten-pound Poms Revisited: Battlers' Tales and British Migration to Australia, 1947-1971', *Journal of Australian Studies* 25, no. 68 (2001): 86–96; Louella McCarthy, 'Filtered Images: Visions of Pioneering Women Doctors in Twentieth-Century Australia', *Health & History* 1 (2006): 91-110.

[21] Some examples include, Peter Winterton, 'Alien Doctors: The Western Australian Medical Fraternity's Reaction to European Events 1930-50', *Health and History* 7, no. 1 (2005): 67–85. And for post-war Displaced Persons, see: Egon Kunz, *The Intruders: Refugee Doctors in Australia* (Canberra: ANU Press, 1975). Finally, my PhD research was a prosopography of the work of medical migrants in Victoria, see: Fallon Mody, 'Doctors Down Under: European Medical Migrants in Victoria (Australia), 1930-1960' (PhD thesis, The University of Melbourne, 2019).

[22] The term medical migrant is used throughout this paper as a catch-all category to describe the heterogeneous groups of predominantly overseas-born medical graduates registered in Victoria as a medical practitioner on the basis of their foreign medical qualification(s). The term 'medical migrant' is used over 'migrant doctor' because the latter term suggests individuals who are actively practising medicine, and does not accurately capture the (changing) work status of some groups of overseas-born medical graduates in interwar and post-war Australia.

[23] Laurence Monnais and David Wright, eds. *Doctors Beyond Borders: The Transnational Migration of Physicians In The Twentieth Century* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2016).

medical directories, dozens of archival sources held in the National Archives of Australia and the Public Records Office of Victoria, as well as published biographies, obituaries, newspaper sources, and interviews with surviving family members.[24] For this paper, I would also like to particularly acknowledge the collaboration and contribution of the extended Deery family in Melbourne.

Forging a medical career – from Hungary to Healesville

Arthur Deery was born Arturo Deutsch in Eger, Hungary on 15 July 1906 to working class Hungarian Jewish parents. Deutsch originally wanted to become a journalist but chose medicine for its potential to raise his economic and social status.[25] As Jews in Hungary, there were quotas for university places afforded Jewish citizens, and so Deutsch – like many Hungarian students at the time – left for Italy in 1924, aged eighteen to purse a medical degree.[26] Deutsch graduated from Padua medical school in 1933. To fund his studies, he worked a string of casual jobs, from working in his sister's coffee shop in Italy, to being a travelling salesman.

After graduating, which included diplomas in dermatology and venereal disease, Deutsch set up a private practice in Milan, and in 1934 married Perla Oxman – a Russian Orthodox Jew who was a qualified pharmacist. Fascist Italy's somewhat ironic status as a haven for Jewish students and professionals came to an end in 1938 when sweeping anti-Semitic laws were introduced. As historian Ágnes Keleman observes, a curious artefact of the interwar Italian-Hungarian connection was that:

> Jewish students could escape Hungarian academic antisemitism in a fascist country. They left one right-wing authoritarian political establishment for another. Due to the horrors of the subsequent history of fascism, retrospectively it is hard to disassociate antisemitism and fascism. However, up until 1938 fascist Italy was a hospitable environment for foreign (including Hungarian) Jews and their expulsion in 1938 was a shocking, unexpected calamity.[27]

Arthur and Pola Deutsch, together with their young daughter Nora converted to Roman Catholicism (a common reaction to the growing anti-Semitism in

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[24] For a full list of primary sources and a more detailed discussion of my method, see: Mody, 'Doctors Down Under', Appendices 1-4.

[25] Interview, Roland Deery with author, October 2019.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ágnes Katalin Keleman, 'Leaving an Antisemitic Regime for a Fascist Country: The Hungarian Numerus Clausus Refugees in Italy' (PhD Thesis, Central European University, 2014).

continental Europe), and fled to Cuba in 1938. It is worth noting here that Cuba was not as exotic a destination as it might seem – Shanghai and Cuba were two common destinations for fleeing Jews because entry into both jurisdictions did not require visas or passports.[28]

Cuba was a difficult time for the Deutsches. They were running out of money, and unsuccessfully applied for migration to the United States of America, where like many other countries, a strict quota for Jewish refugee intakes was operational.[29] It was then that Australia became an option. Arthur Deutsch had been in correspondence with a Hungarian friend, and fellow Italian medical graduate, Joseph Adorjan who had resettled in Australia in May 1939. Adorjan would have known that Italian medical degrees were recognised in Australian states owing to an existing reciprocal arrangement with Britain, and offered to help Deutsch find a suitable practice in Victoria should they migrate there.[30] While much of the finer details surrounding their journey from Cuba to Australia has been lost, we know that the Deutsches secured landing permits for Australia and were issued affidavits in lieu of passports in Havana. According to surviving family members, an American-based Jewish society paid for their passage to America and helped smuggle them across the border into Canada, from where they boarded the *RMS Niagara* from Vancouver to Sydney.[31] On 11 February 1940 the Deutsches arrived in Sydney where they stayed for about three weeks. And where they changed their name by deed poll, to Deery.[32]

Dr Deery's colleague – who had also Anglicised his name to Joseph Adrian – helped him find a practice in Quambatook (Victoria), a rural township on the Avoca river, with a reported population of between four hundred and twenty five to five hundred people in the 1940s.[33] The Deerys hated it, and lasted four weeks there.[34] On 11 January 1941, they moved from Quambatook to Toora

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[28] John Weaver discusses the role of Shanghai as a midway refuge for other Jewish practitioners. See: John Weaver, 'Pathways of Perseverance: Medical Refugee Flights to Australia and New Zealand, 1933-1945', in *Doctors Beyond Borders*, ed. Monnais and Wright (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2016), 42-72.

[29] This was typical of many Jewish settlers to Australia, the latter was often not their first choice. For a discussion, see: Markus, 'Jewish Migration to Australia 1938–49'; and Rutland, *The Jews in Australia*.

[30] Moira Salter, 'Prejudice in the Professions', in *Racism: The Australian Experience*, ed. Frank S. Stevens (Melbourne: Hobgin Poole, 1971), 67-75.

[31] Interview with Roland Deery.

[32] NAA: Deery.

[33] Victorian Places, "Quambatook" – last accessed 03 December 2019, https://www.victorianplaces.com.au/quambatook.

[34] NAA: Deery.

where Arthur Deery was to take over the practice of an Australian-born Dr Nathan who was called up for military service in the Australian Imperial Force. Toora was to be a longer stay. The Deerys lived there for the duration of the war, and it was there that their youngest two children, Roland and Yvonne, were born. However, the Deerys' marriage was a strained, unhappy one and perhaps contributed to Arthur Deery's dedication to his practice.

Like many country-based doctors and nurses in Australia, Arthur Deery worked long hours in Toora. He was reported to typically 'keep late hours but very seldom is he away from his surgery other than for medical reasons'.[35] The scope of his practice included the neighbouring hamlets of Corner Inlet, Foster, Port Franklin and Welshpool. Apart from maintaining set surgery hours for most of these locations, he did house calls for which he was allowed an amount of petrol, attended the Port Welshpool military base, and was an honorary at the local Toora Bush Nursing Hospital. Yet, the challenge of establishing himself as a trusted community member while officially an 'enemy alien' is evident in the surviving records.[36] During his five years in Toora, Dr Deery was repeatedly reported as a spy.[37] In the process of establishing that should Deery even wish to be a spy, there was, 'no scope for such action in Toora', his surveillance files also help build a picture of his reception and work as Toora's medical practitioner.[38]

For example, a report filed in 1941 concluded that 'DEUTSCH … as a medical man is definitely against drinking, smoking and hard living, which action has gained for him many bad friends'.[39] Almost three years later, a police report filed following an incident involving his wife Perla Deery and the local Bush Nursing hospital reveals that Dr Deery was still a divisive town figure. The report noted that:

> Deery [is] the centre of a hotbed of small town gossip … [involving] the religious question, professional etiquette and medical ability, coupled with a certain amount of suspicion, which at these times is directed towards all foreigners.[40]

The investigating officer noted that some town members admitted that they, 'knew nothing to the detriment of Dr Deery, [but] one should treat all foreigners

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[35] Ibid.
[36] All axis-allied nationals were considered enemy aliens during the war.
[37] NAA: Deery.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.

with suspicion'.[41] While others found that it was perfectly reasonable for Dr Deery to treat the Italian prisoners of war at the nearby internment camp since it, 'would be very difficult for them to explain their troubles to a non-Italian speaking Doctor'.

Perhaps a more telling summary of Dr Deery's work in Toora was the retrospective one provided during the Healesville Hospital inquiry in 1962. Toora's then headmaster James Cheetham – who was one of the few longstanding friends the Deerys made in Toora – was to reflect that:

> …invariably having the welfare of the hospital, his staff and its patients at heart, he [Dr Deery] was the means of gradually building up the largest bed average [at the Toora Bush Hospital] known up to that time, patients came to him from over 17 to 20 miles. All recognised his skill and regretted his departure.[42]

It was also noted that following his departure from Toora, the daily average of patients at the hospital gradually dropped – particularly in regard to the number of minor surgeries and hospital treatment. This change would be of concern to the local hospital committee since the Bush Nursing Hopsitals were sustained through local subscriptions so communities could access a self-managed and 'efficient Hospital Nursing Service near their own homes'.[43] Therefore a relevant Bush Nursing Hospital would be one that could prevent locals from travelling long distances to the nearest district hospital for all but major incidents.

This pattern of work displayed by Dr Deery in Toora, including the commitment to growing his practice, and the development of adequate services for the community, is also a feature of his time in Healesville. As the Healesville inquiry unfolded, testimonies repeatedly showed that between 1948-62, Dr Deery had built up a successful practice which included the majority share of public and private patients at the local hospital. The sentiment if not the detail is summed up by the reaction to a a local resident's statement during the recorded Healesville townhall meeting of 1961. Mr Beveridge declaration was transcribed as follows:

> We all know Arthur Deery is a doctor competent and skilful and dedicated to his profession. HEAR HEAR. (applause) … As a

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[41] Ibid.

[42] PROV: Healesville Hospital Inquiry.

[43] James Barrett, *Outline History of the Victorian Bush Nursing Association* (The Association, 1932), 22.

> community we are indeed a fortunate people … For 14 years he has
> carried on a 24 hours a day service for those in need of his skill.[44]

Incidentally, the outcome of the Healesville inquiry was neutral for Dr Deery – while the Board of Inquiry did not explicitly reinstate him, he was no longer banned from practising at the hospital. However, he was not forced out. Dr Deery left Healesville in 1968 for Mooroolbark where he practised in partnership with his son Roland Deery for another fifteen years. Roland recalls that during this time, residents from Healesville and even Toora drove to Mooroolbark to continue to be patients of Arthur Deery.[45]

ARTHUR DEERY'S MEDICAL CAREER IN BROADER CONTEXT

It is tempting to view Arthur Deery's Australian career as extraordinary (and certainly some aspects were). However, his almost 40-year career in country practice also helps illustrate a particular historical episode within the collective biography of alien doctors who arrived in Australia in the 1930s and '40s that has to date been poorly understood. Arthur Deery was one of forty-eight 'alien doctors' who gained registration in Victoria between 1930-45 who were the subjects of my PhD research (a further thirty-nine gained registration after 1945).[46] In total, it is estimated that a few hundred of the Jewish refugees who arrived in Australia held medical qualifications, and some never regained a medical license.[47] In the pre-war period, and particularly during World War II when enlistments by locally-trained doctors exacerbated existing country shortages, resident alien doctors worked or in some cases were compelled to practice in the bush.[48] Table 1 documents the eighteen practitioners in Victoria who are known to have worked in one or more country towns in this period. When considered as a collective, what Table 1 highlights is that in the process of re-establishing themselves as medical practitioners, many of these doctors occupied a particular gap in the Victorian medical system – that of doctoring in country areas.[49]

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[44] PROV: Healesville Hospital Inquiry.

[45] Interview with Roland Deery.

[46] NB. Each state had individual medical registration laws, and all practitioners were required to register themselves in each state they wished to practise in. For the period 1930-60, the Victorian medical registers show 456 British and Irish-trained men, 113 British and Irish-trained women, 87 continental European men and women, and 87 other foreign medical degrees were registered. Mody, 'Doctors Down Under', see Table 1, 9.

[47] Rutland 'An Example of 'Intellectual Barbarism''; Weaver, ''A Glut on the Market''.

[48] Weaver, 'A Glut on the Market'; Mody, 'Doctors Down Under'.

[49] NB. Of these forty-eight doctors, four never appear to have practised in Victoria despite being registered there. In the post-war period, British and Irish-trained doctors who arrived in far larger numbers also appear to have disproportionately occupied country practices. For a

At the time, the British Medical Association (BMA) in most Australian states including in Victoria argued that there was no real shortage of medical service in country towns, and that alien doctors were ill-suited to country practice because such practitioners were often required to be competent, autonomous all-rounders.[50] These attitudes are reflected in the official statements of senior BMA representatives in Victoria. In July 1939, the incumbent Victorian branch president of the BMA, Dr Davies, declared that:

> No benefit to the country would be secured by admitting refugee doctors unless there was a shortage. But there is no shortage, in spite of what has been said about the need for more doctors in the country. If there is a living to be made any where, an Australian doctor would go there. There are many Australian doctors wanting practices. It would not relieve the position of country districts to admit refugee doctors, because the people there have no money to pay for medical services, and doctors cannot be expected to work for nothing.[51]

A few months later the Victorian BMA secretary, Dr Dickson, stated:

> Of the 25 alien doctors [registered in Victoria], only four were known to be in practice in the country, the remainder having settled in Melbourne or the suburbs. Many of them admitted that their training in Europe, unlike that of students here, had not fitted them to cope with the responsibilities of medical practice in country districts remote from the assistance of specialists.[52]

Indeed Australian country practitioners and even their urban counterparts continued to perform at a scope – particularly in surgery, gynaecology and anaesthesia – that in many other nations were considered wholly out of the domain of the general practitioner.[53] However, as many historians have argued, in the case of alien doctors in pre-war and wartime Australia, these arguments constituted posturing by the BMA in order to justify a blanket restrictive measure on liberalising state medical degrees to recognise foreign medical degrees.[54]

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discussion, see: Fallon Mody, '"Revisiting Post-war British Medical Migration: A Case Study of Bristol Medical Graduates in Australia', *Social History of Medicine* 31, no. 3, (2018): 485-509.

[50] Bryan Gandevia, 'A History of General Practice in Australia', *Canadian Family Physician* 17, no. 10 (October 1971): 51–61. http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2370185/.

[51] *Riverine Herald,* 18 July 1939, 3.

[52] *The Age*, 25 August, 1939, 8.

[53] For a full discussion, see: Mody, 'Doctors Down Under'.

[54] Rutland, 'An Example of Intellectual Barbarism'; Winterton, 'Alien Doctors'; Kunz, *The Intruders*.

	Name	Country town (GP unless otherwise states)	Year*	Population^		
				1933	1947	1954
		Italian medical graduates				
1.	Adrian, Joseph (anglicised from Adorjan)	Murrayville	1939, 1940	603	NA	452
2.	Curzon, Maurice (Izrael Czerchowski)	Bendigo Base Hospital (RMO)	1939	NA	26,739	39,928 (greater Bendigo)
3.	Fox, Eric (Erich Fuchs)	Yallourn Hospital (RMO)	1940	2520	4119	5580
		Murrayville	1939	603	NA	452
		Broadford	Ca. 1944-54	1153	1101	1598
		Quambatook	1940	503	424	534
4.	Deery, Arthur (Deutsch)	Toora	1941-48	463	698	764
		Healesville	1948-ca. 1970	2035	NA	3566
		Mooroolbark	1970-retirement	403	NA	NA
5.	Kiel, Robert (Mojzen Zelman Kokiel)	Manangatang	1939	509	406	498
6.	Marshall, Samuel (Marszalkowizc)	Mildura Base Hospital (RMO)	1938-9	6617	9527	NA
		Sale Hospital (RMO)	1939-40	4262	5119	6537
7.	Martin, Martin (Margulius)	Beulah	1939-44	474	389	471
		Garfield	1944-52	397	530	652
		Natimuk	1939-41	793	NA	665
8.	Snow, Moses & Gisella (Schneebaum)	Horsham	1941-ca. 43	5273	6388	7767
		Stawell	ca. 1943-45	4747	4840	5463
9.	Van der Hope, Iszo Hartmayer	Beech Forest	Ca. 1930-32	419	NA	NA
10.	Walker, Charles (Chaim Wachs)	Mitiamo	1939	333	NA	NA
11.	Winthrope, Leopold (Weintraub)	Tongala	1941-2	NA	848	NA
12.	Wise, Daniel (Wacjperg)	Murrayville	1939	603	NA	452
		Warrnambool Base Hospital (RMO)	1939	8906	9993	10,850
		Nyah West	1939	NA	829	NA
		Stawell	1945-	4747	4840	5463
13.	Szaja Baumatz^^	Ararat (State mental health hospital)	1947	419	NA	NA
		Wartime licensees				
14.	Landaeur, Friedrich	Murrayville	1942-45	603	NA	452
15.	Rechelmann, Georg	Moe	1942-45	898	2811	NA
		Lakes Entrance	1946-69	882	NA	1252
16.	Schatzki, Paul	Ballarat Base Hospital	1942-45	35,638	38,140	39,945
		Warragul & West Gippsland Hospital		5809	6727	8605
17.	Süss, Manfred	Tongala	1942-45	NA	848	NA
		Omeo	1944-ca. 1946	439	NA	45
18.	Zieher, Roman	Walwa	ca. 1946	NA	208	NA
		Werrimull	1942-44	590	294	227

Table 1 Summary of "Alien Doctors" in pre-war and wartime Victoria. Source: Mody, PhD thesis, Figure 11. Reproduced with permission.

Eventually, it was the realities of wartime medical shortages that prompted the Federal government to enact a temporary alien doctors registration scheme to override state medical acts in 1942. The *National Security (Alien Doctors Registration) Act* created the first mechanism by which foreign medical graduates could be assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine equivalence with Australian medical training and commensurate experience. As historian John Weaver found, almost half of all the alien doctors who applied for this license were recognised by a panel of eminent Australian practitioners, suggesting a much higher level of equivalence to Australian standards than the profession's gatekeepers had allowed to be the case.[55]

The competence of these 'alien doctors' to adapt to the demands of Victorian country practice – which had been the subject of considerable pre-war debate – as well as in providing quality medical care is reflected in a number of ways. As highlighted by the brief exploration of Arthur Deery's Australian career, these doctors were subject to intense scrutiny, particularly by committee members of the BMA,[56] as well as the more xenophobic sections of the local communities they lived in. Any form of personal or professional (mis)conduct, or suggestion of it, was noticed, reported, and sometimes even newsworthy.[57] Therefore, the silence on this score – coupled with evidence from multiple sources, including the formal annual assessment of the temporary licensees during the war – indicates that 'alien doctors' were no more or less competent than their Australian counterparts. Increasingly, many saw their work as constituting a form of national service.[58]

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[55] Weaver, 'A Glut on the Market'.

[56] For example, PROV: Board Minutes: 1934 - 1945 Medical Board of Victoria, VPRS 16389/ P1 unit 5; PROV: Board Minutes: 1945 - 1949 Medical Board of Victoria, VPRS 16389/ P1 unit 6.

[57] See, for example: W. McRae Russell, 'Refugee Doctors', *The Age*, 17 August, 1939, 2; 'Doctors' Basic Wage – Aliens No Help', *The Argus*, 25 August, 1939, 2; W. Maxwell, 'The Refugee Doctors' *Medical Journal of Australia*, 1939, 919; 'REFUGEE DOCTORS PRAISED', *The Argus*, 30 December, 1942, 6.

[58] See for example: NAA: Deery. NAA: A1928, 652/17/4 SECTION 2 Medical Practitioners. Registration in Australia of Persons who have qualified elsewhere. National Security (Alien Doctors) Regns. 1942, Licences under. Applications and Correspondences Victoria. Section 2. NAA: A1928, 652/17/4 SECTION 3 Medical Practitioners. Registration in Australia of Persons who have qualified elsewhere. National Security (Alien Doctors) Regns. 1942, Licences under. Applications and Correspondence, Victoria. Section 3. NAA: A1928, 652/17/4 SECTION 4 Medical Practitioners. (Registration in Australia of Persons who have qualified Elsewhere). National Security (Alien Doctors) Regs., 1942,
Licences under. Applications and Correspondence. Victoria Section 4.

Conclusion (or perhaps a post-lude[59])

In *Performances,* Greg Dening argued that 'histories … are empowering – their most empowering force is the discovery they help us make of our humanity in both the past and the present'.[60] Dening's words resonate strongly for me when considering the ways in which histories of 'alien doctors' and indeed medical migrants generally have been constructed in Australia. To return to the beginning of this paper, the mothers marching through Healesville did not know the outcome their march would have, or if it would be successful in helping Arthur Deery. They marched because 'Doc Deery' was their doctor and his injustice was theirs too – he could not treat them as they wanted. Arthur Deery's medical career does not neatly fit any of the popular narratives historians have constructed for understanding the social and professional reception of 'aliens' and 'alien doctors' in Australia – he did not remain marginalised, he did not achieve anything exceptional as a medical practitioner. And yet his story helps us understand much – both of Australia's migrant and medical systems in historical perspective, as well as the present.

First, it highlights an intuitive and increasingly accepted position that migrant identities and identity formation is a dynamic, unceasing process. Many, more talented historians of migration have explored how we might understand migrant identity, and it is out of scope for the purpose of this paper.[61] The second phenomenon that Arthur Deery's story highlights is the question of who and how medical practitioners are remembered in historical perspective. It is this point that I wish to discuss a bit further.

The average practitioner in the middle of the twentieth century is today what we would recognise as a general practitioner, and country practitioners were particularly low-prestige in medical career terms. They worked in sparsely populated, often isolated towns. These rural settings were a world away from the large Melbourne-based teaching hospitals that served as the focal point of medical power and prestige in Victoria (and Australia generally).[62] Typically medical practice outside of hospitals was a private, solo endeavour well into the 1960s.[63] Thus, the work of private practitioners is very hard to

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[59] In acknowledging Greg Dening and his enormous contribution to history in Australia.

[60] Greg Dening, *Performances* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1996), 205.

[61] See for example, Alistair Thomson, 'Moving Stories: Oral History and Migration Studies', *Oral History*, vol. 27, no. 1 (1999), 24–37.

[62] Tony Pensabene, *The Rise of the Medical Practitioner in Victoria* (Canberra: ANU Press, 1980).

[63] Australian Medical Association, *General Practice and Its Future in Australia. The Scope and Method of Practice of the Future General Practitioner. Report No. 1 of the A.M.A. Study Group on Medical Planning* (Sydney: Australasian Medical Publishing Company for the Australian

trace using traditional archival methods, unlike hospital-based specialists and medical researchers whose employment and work is preserved in the archives of hospitals, universities and other public institutions. As a result, the most accessible records of medical achievement – of hospital innovation, of work in medical associations, and of breakthrough research – are the ones we see reflected in the historiography.[64] Unsurprisingly, women and migrants are underrepresented in the ranks of the medical elite remembered in this way.

I would never have found Arthur Deery unless I had been intent on systematically recovering the professional pathways and careers of 'alien doctors' in Victoria. Hopefully this paper has convinced you that such histories deserve a place in our local medical and migration history not because of exceptional individual achievement, but because the patterns of service they provided within national systems of healthcare delivery and access highlights the role migrant doctors played, and continue to play, in our societies.[65] What Arthur Deery's pathway reflects back to us is the structure and practise of medicine in the middle of twentieth century. For example, how in Victoria, rural residents valued their access to a local practitioner, and in many communities residents paid subscriptions to the local hospital and regularly fundraised to provide an income guarantee to support a practitioner.[66] Therefore, to understand, in part, the Healesville mothers' one mile march in support of Arthur Deery is to understand this value.

Medical Association, 1972).

[64] For a discussion, see: Mody, 'Doctors Down Under'.

[65] Historians in Canada and the UK have recently undertaken similar studies. See for example, David Wright, Sasha Mullally, and Mary Colleen Cordukes, ''Worse than Being Married': The Exodus of British Doctors from the National Health Service to Canada, c. 1955-75', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 65, no. 4 (2010): 546–75; Julian Simpson, *Migrant Architects of the NHS: South Asian Doctors and the Reinvention of British General Practice (1940s-1980s)* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018).

[66] Mody, 'Doctors Down Under'.

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INTERVIEWS

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.

Thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed, could you please start by telling us a little bit about yourself and how you came to work at the State Library of Victoria?

I'm Carolyn Fraser and I'm one of the curators here at the Library, and my background is a very roundabout one in many ways. My undergraduate degree is in English and Cultural studies from the University of Melbourne, my honours year I spent on an exchange program at UC Berkley, and while I was there I applied to PhD programs in the US and ended up going to do a degree at Columbia University in the Anthropology Department. At that time the Anthropology program was, this is in the mid-nineties, a kind of theory-driven program. So, I guess coming from a cultural studies background, it was kind of a continuance of that. I really enjoyed studying in the US because at that time in the graduate level, there was a long period of coursework at the beginning of the program and so there was three years of coursework and then a whole series of exams before beginning the dissertation part of the degree, and I did all of that and then did not write a dissertation!

The other thing I was doing at the time was getting more and more interested in books and book production, hand binding, and printing. There was a centre called the New York Centre for Book Arts and I started doing courses there. I was a volunteer there and became very involved in that area. I moved from New York back to San Francisco where I had been previously and, just by coincidence, there were a group of people beginning a Centre for the Book in San Francisco, modelled on the New York Centre: I became involved again as a volunteer there, and was involved in helping establish it. I was also working for fine press printers in San Francisco, the first being Asa Peavy, and later I worked at a press called Yolla Bolly Press. So, my interest in books and book production kind of took over from my academic work really. I'm going to skip a whole lot of years here, but when I moved back to Australia, I brought back a whole lot of printing equipment with me. I had at that point been making my own books using those techniques, using a letterpress and hand binding works of my own and so intended to do that here, and did do that here, and that led to me, in part, but not entirely, to starting work here in Preservation.

My first role at the State Library of Victoria was in Preservation, and then I had another role later in Conservation. Concurrently, and this is where my academic background and, I guess, my craft interests overlapped, I was doing a lot of freelance writing

about the history of craft practices, particularly books, and book culture more broadly. It then expanded more into writing more generally about interesting topics that were both social history but with a focus on craft practice. I had published in several places before I started a regular gig writing for a Canadian magazine called *Uppercase*. While I was writing for them, I had written almost from the second issue of that magazine so over time I covered a lot of ground. Really, they were very open to having things of interest pitched to them, so we covered a lot of topics. And also, because I worked at the State Library, often I was writing about things I had been exposed to here, things that had perhaps come across my workbench or that I had seen or heard about or talked to somebody about.

My first curatorial role was actually a backfill for someone going on maternity leave. I think that one of the things that drew me when that opportunity was advertised, was that I had always been interested in exhibitions just as a visitor. I had also done a lot of the work on the preparation of objects for exhibitions and had been involved in the installation of exhibitions here at the State Library, so I knew some things about those aspects of the position. But for me, I felt that curatorial work actually brings together some of the seemingly disparate skills that I have developed in different parts of my

life. For example, I have research skills from my academic training. The skills to do with thinking about the display of material objects came from being involved with Preservation and Conservation, and with the installation of works for exhibitions, I knew a lot about it from that direction. Also in my writing, it's very much about the production of material culture and contextualising them through a social history lens that is not just one of chronology, but something like, well, 'why would people be doing something like this at this time?'- whatever it was. So, I actually think that working as a curator brings those three areas of training together. My roles here at the Library continued from that time into various positions and most recently, the latest incarnation of my role involved developing the new Victoria Gallery as part of the redevelopment of the State Library.

That is so interesting - it's great that you found a role in which you could combine your interests and capabilities. As you just mentioned, recently the 'Velvet, Iron, Ashes' exhibition was opened in the newly redeveloped Victoria Gallery at the State Library. Could you maybe just talk a little bit about the thought that went into the exhibition and the rationale behind its design: both in terms of the structure of the space and the objects chosen?

The Victoria Gallery was restored as part of the broader redevelopment of the Library: 'Vision 2020'. The space itself, although this is the first exhibition that has been in this incarnation of that space as a gallery, it has, in fact, for most of its life, been a gallery space. So that particular building opened in 1892 and over time has been used both as gallery space for the National Gallery of Victoria, and for the Museum's Natural History collection. So, that room has a storied history as a classic nineteenth century gallery, meaning that when tasked with coming up with a new exhibition concept we needed to take into consideration the room and its history.

So that was one thing on my mind, how to make a new type of exhibition within a space that already has a very grand footprint as an exhibition space. There were probably three main things that were on my mind in the beginning. The first was that this new exhibition would be a permanent exhibition. Permanence, of course, in exhibitions means something different- I mean the word is used differently than in any other context. So, the permanence is really about the curatorial concept, not about the exhibition it is in or the stories or the objects. So those stories and objects will get swapped out, but that curatorial concept will remain the same. So 'Changing Face of Victoria' and 'World of the Book'

(which was previously 'Mirror of the World'), those concepts developed by Clare Williamson and Des Cowley and others, are going into their fifteenth year. The curatorial concepts underlying those exhibitions have been broad enough to have endured that many years, and changeovers, and still be productive sites for people to make sense of them as exhibitions. So, whatever the concept was for this space, I needed it to be as flexible and as durable as that. We don't know, in advance, how long that kind of gallery will be used in that way, but the fact is that we have used those other two for fifteen years, and in an exhibitions context, five to ten years is probably the average lifespan for a permanent gallery.

Another thing was the fact that it would need to work in concert with the State Library's other existing exhibitions, our two permanent exhibitions in the Dome, 'Changing Face of Victoria' and 'World of the Book', the Cowen Gallery space, and our temporary gallery space, the Keith Murdoch Gallery, which will come online again sometime next year. So, this new exhibition would need to work in concert, or at least be part of a suite of exhibitions conceptually tied together as a kind of whole. I was very keen that we not do something that either replicates something that we are already doing, or something we have done in the past, or that would somehow disrupt the way that

those exhibitions work. And getting the balance right was partly about the concept, and partly about the materials- there are some materials in our collection that because of the cycles of rest that objects go through, we might not have the kind of collection that can support 'X', whatever that idea might be. So that needed to be taken into consideration.

The other thing goes back to the room itself. That room has two entrances, now this is a terrible thing from an exhibitions perspective, because from my experience organising exhibitions as a curator and as an exhibition designer, it's very helpful to have a controlled way which people move through the space. That way you can control the narrative, the visitor experience can be orchestrated in such a way that we know when people will get information, and when different kinds of experiences and touch points will happen. With two entrances, that is impossible to plan. So how could we make a feature out of that, rather than that being problematic. What would have been problematic would have been to have a privileged entrance. We were keen not to have that, so the concept would need to allow for that, so what could that be?

The third thing that was very key in my thinking was knowing that there was a desire that the Kelly armour be included in the first iteration of the exhibition. The armour has been part of the display in 'Changing Face of Victoria' since its inception. Every year there have been new stories told around that item, meaning that a lot of work and stories have been told over the last fifteen years. Is there some aspect of that story or some way to contextualise that story that we haven't done before? That was a question in my mind. So those were probably the three higher level things that I knew were things that I needed to grapple with. Ideally, I would have liked some longer period of time to develop a curatorial framework. Then have that decided upon and have everyone happy with that and then move to the kind of population of that with the stories, objects, and all of that. That did not happen because of the timeframe. Both of those things needed to happen concurrently. So, at the same time as I was trying to develop a framework, I was also investigating the collection and thinking about objects and which stories were suggested by those objects. There was one object which when I was first appointed to the role was very keen that we include. I wasn't entirely certain that we would include it in the first iteration, but at some point, I knew I wanted to display the Jessie Clarke costume.

The Pageant of Nations costume?

Yes. I knew of this costume because Shelley Jamieson, who is the head of conservation at the State Library,

had a picture of it on her office wall. I knew that the costume needed quite a lot of work. Although it is in very good shape structurally, the cloak is encrusted with glitter and it's lead glass glitter, commonly used in the era of pre-plastic glitter.

So, safety standards!

Well that's not so much the problem, although I am sure the manufacture of lead glass glitter was not great! That was not our problem at that point, the problem was really that the adhesive had failed, not completely, but in parts, so there was – well, I've been describing it as a 'giant glitter problem', so that was really something that was going to need conservation treatment. Sometimes the desire to display an object will give the impetus for that to be scheduled for conservation treatment, and very early on I flagged that I was thinking about displaying the dress so there could be time to plan for, and raise money for its treatment. It was in thinking about that costume that was kind of key in what ended up being the development of the concept because that costume was worn by Jessie Brookes, who was later Jessie Clarke. She wore that in 1934 in a Pageant of Nations held at the Town Hall as part of the year-long celebration of European settlement in Victoria. She was the personification of Victoria, and the costume includes both man-made and natural resources

of the state, that, at the time, were symbols of Victoria's prosperity. So, there are the buildings on the skirt: Government House, the Town Hall, and Flinders Street Station. The cloak is symbolic of the Murray Darling River and Irrigation system. The headpiece represents the transmission tower at Yallourn. So, the costume is more or less an exhibition unto itself as something that could be used to tell a great number of stories.

I started looking into the costume, the stories that the costume was telling and Jessie's own history. One of the things was that I knew the headpiece was a symbol of a transmission tower, but I didn't know much about the story of Yallourn, and once I looked into that I discovered that it is a tremendous story. It is a tremendous story in its own right, but, for an exhibition it is a particularly good one. The stories that work really well in exhibitions, and that I think are 'exhibition gold' can be stories that essentially have that kind of onion-like quality, where there is a story and there are so many layers, and that that key story ends up being a stand-in for much bigger - either issues or other stories - connected to it. Those stories are – I mean perhaps they're just the best stories – but I think in exhibitions they work particularly well.

And I think the Pageant of Nations costumes embodies those ambiguities and complexities

so well. Especially the focus on women's history and on Janet Clarke, and the connections made between the Kelly armour and the Ashes urn, which is on temporary display at the moment. Could you maybe talk a little bit more about centring the history of people whose histories perhaps haven't been told before?

Well the connections are really important, because thinking about the history of Yallourn led to a connection with that costume. It was also, in reading about Jessie Clarke's personal history, that I realised that she was a relation by marriage, to Janet Clarke. Janet Clarke, again, I didn't know a great deal about her, but it was actually while reading a history about her, and this will not come as any surprise to any historians, about the fact that often it is through reading something randomly that sparks a much bigger, more productive avenue of thinking. So, I was reading a history that was written by Michael Clarke, who was an MP but also a family historian of the Clarke family. He had published a book about his family called- well it was really about William Clarke, called *Clarke of Rupertswood*, which tells a lot of vignettes that form a broader history.

Reading that book, I discovered that Janet Clarke's uncle was Francis Hare, and my instincts were heightened at that moment because I knew that

Francis Hare was shot by Kelly at Glenrowan. I had not known that there was this connection between him and the Clarkes. I also knew that Janet Clarke was the person who had presented the original miniature urn that became known over time as the Ashes Urn. That was an interesting connection to me, that here was this connection to the Kelly's, and that there was also this connection to the Ashes story. The connection to the Kelly's became more interesting when I read into that further because what I discovered was not only that they were related, but that when Francis Hare was shot by Kelly, he went to Rupertswood to recuperate and while he was there he wrote a great deal of letters which are on display in the exhibition- we have a number of these letters in our collection and I also borrowed letters from the University of Melbourne Archives, who also have a collection of Hare letters.

These letters tell a story of the way in which Hare was very keen to souvenir the Kelly armour and believed that as the first person to be shot, as well as having been the superintendent in Benalla at the time, that he deserved the armour. Eventually, it's not clear in the letters how it gets resolved on an official level, but what does happen is that Hare gives a suit of armour to Janet Clarke as a thank you gift for having looked after him while he was recuperating. That armour went on display at Rupertswood at

the end of 1880, so within six months of the siege at Glenrowan. So that was fascinating to me because the history of the armour as an exhibition object is a very interesting history and I think that one of the things in the exhibition that I hope is of interest to people is that these two objects; the urn and the armour, have given rise to national myths and iconic stories in which an object is central to both the development and the continuance of those stories. If there were no suits of armour, and very early on there were calls for the armour to be destroyed, to be smashed into pieces…

So that it wouldn't become an object of worship?

Yes. And this tiny little urn was a joke presented in response to another joke. There would have been absolutely no sense of that becoming a museum object at the time. Would these stories, that are key to Australian identity, be the stories they are now, were it not for those objects having taken on interesting histories as exhibition objects, histories that have allowed that symbol to remain in the public imagination. Again, telling this story can present the way the exhibition was conceived of as a linear process, but these ideas were all swirling around in my head. By the time I had made that connection between the armour and the urn I realised that in fact, what I had been thinking about with the exhibition was whether there

would be a theme, but that I realised in fact the theme was not - which is a usually way to develop an exhibition - that in fact that was not the way to proceed. In fact, really the theme or the sort of curatorial concept, or the conceit actually, is about connections, that the exhibition is really about how stories are linked. And this speaks to something that I was also thinking about that was really a product of this kind of thinking. I was trying to imagine whether we could develop an exhibition that was somehow reflective of the fact that we're a Library: we're not an art gallery, we're not a museum, but we have collections that are reminiscent of both of those institutions.

So for me, I started talking about this as being, investigating, what a library-style exhibition could be. Exhibitions that we have done at the State Library, I imagine many of those exhibitions could be picked up and either put at the National Gallery or picked up and put at Melbourne Museum without anyone being any wiser because they are made in a manner that is reflective of those kinds of institutions and collections. Could we do something that perhaps is reflective, and not just at a level of subtext, but in terms of the experience of it, of libraries and specifically of our Library? The notion of connections between stories, rather than the thematic concept or the story or narrative that we're going to tell: could the notion

of connections speak to that idea? Because I think that's what libraries do well, and they facilitate those kinds of journeys that people make on their own through the collection. For example, the experience people have of coming to libraries: even the most casual visitor is often here to find something out, even if it's just using the Wi-Fi, all the way through to the major research projects that people come here to undertake. That idea of a library-style exhibition has been an animating one to the development of the concept. One of the beautiful things about the development of a permanent exhibition is that this will develop over time. This is, in a way, a living prototype for future iterations of the exhibition. I'm hopeful that that notion about connection will be a productive one so that in future years, there will be a wildly different set of stories, but that the focus on stories will still be the DNA of the exhibition.

It almost reminds me of the seventeenth and eighteenth century house museums that you read about, where objects are almost idiosyncratically collected together because of the stories they tell: it's almost like we're coming back to that in an age where information has been democratised, and where knowledge is spreading and traditional distinctions are breaking down. Distinctions between rationality and irrationality and other concepts like that, it is no

longer enough to have an exhibition strictly on one theme or another. And that reflects how we live today much more accurately.

Yes, perhaps. I think for me, one of the differences would be that we no longer live in a world in which the only way people can see an object is by coming to an exhibition. So, the history of exhibitions, or the genesis of exhibitions was that idea that this was the only opportunity that you might have, and that private collector might have, to see an object. I think for me now, because that is not the only way that people access objects or imagery of objects, the question is what can exhibitions do that digital opportunities can't do? I think there is still, certainly, the aura of the object, and that is something that is probably one of the main reasons that exhibitions still exist. But also, I think that for me I see exhibitions as a way to use objects in service of narratives and stories. I'm less interested in objects in and of themselves: if there wasn't a strong enough story to tell I wouldn't be as interested in the display of objects no matter how interesting or valuable they are as an item.

I guess that's something that academic historians can learn from. The value of object-based histories and object-based learning and the value of going and seeing these connections being made. And then

maybe the boundaries of academic and public history coming together more to the extent that people can see these connections and how they are made.

I guess what I hope is that, because I think that my experience is that most people, when they go to exhibitions, their imaginations are sparked about things that it reminds them of. An object might remind them of something, and I wanted to celebrate the making of those sparks in this mode of exhibition building.

Is that what you want people to walk out the exhibition with a sense of?

I think that would be one element. I think that for me, I don't know that this is a metric that is easily measured. But for me, the exhibition is a success if someone leaves the exhibition and tells one of those stories to someone else. That's my main kind of personal - that's not to say that's the metric by which we are evaluating exhibitions as a Library - but personally, as the curator, I am interested in people being interested enough in that story that they would want to tell someone else. Perhaps, you know, to inspire that person to either come and see an object or learn more about that story.

I think that's a really great note to end on, thank you so much for that, for your reflections on your role and on the exhibition itself.

INTERVIEW WITH SOPHIE
COUCHMAN, 3 JULY 2019
INTERVIEWER: JESSIE MATHESON

Thank you for doing this interview Sophie, it's greatly appreciated. I guess the best place to start would be if you could please explain who you are and what your research background is?

So, my name is Dr Sophie Couchman. I've got a very chequered past, is probably the way of explaining it. I actually started with a Science degree, but I've always been interested in Arts. At the time that I studied you couldn't do an Arts/Science double degree. So, I opted for science, but I did a lot of geography in that degree, a lot of human geography. It was on that basis that I was able to later move into history, in particular into public history and the museum space. I ended up specialising in Chinese Australian history through volunteering at the Chinese Museum in Melbourne, and getting interested in the history of Melbourne's Chinatown. Since working at the Chinese Museum, I have been expanding my research interests and working on projects related to British migration, historical photographs of factory work, Makassan contact with northern Australia and most recently women in farming.

Was there something in particular that drew you to Chinese Australian history?

I think it's a few things. People find it unusual because I don't have Chinese ancestry. But I think my interest really came from being a Melburnian. I was born, and grew up in inner city Melbourne so Chinatown's always been a part of my life. I've always seen it as part of Melbourne, and therefore part of my history as a Melburnian. That's shaped a lot of my work, I suppose at a broader level since then. I lived in Singapore when I was three years old, which I don't remember, but Asia's always been kind of around me, so it's never felt strange or different, it's always just been a part of my life.

Can you explain a little about the work you do with the Chinese Hometown Heritage Tours?

This was an idea that Dr Kate Bagnall had. We've been friends and collaborators for a long time now and we've worked on a number of projects together. She came to me a few years ago and said, 'Look, I've got this idea to run tours back to Southern China for family historians. Do you want to be part of this with me'? And I said 'absolutely'! And so we worked together, thinking about the route, planning the kind of sites, activities and experiences people might want and then Kate partnered with a travel agent in Canberra, which is where Kate is based. We provide the intellectual component of the tour and then we have a Cantonese-

speaking guide, who travels with us, who deals with the logistics of hotels and that side of things.

Do you have any particular examples or memories from these tours that stand out to you?

I suppose the thing about the tours is that we originally conceived of them as tours for people who didn't actually know where their hometown village was and that it was an opportunity for them to get a sense of the place and where their ancestors might have come from. But what we found is that we've ended up having, pretty much on every tour, someone who is actually returning to their hometown village, or even people who are Cantonese and dialect speakers who come on the tour and are interested in getting an Australian perspective on these places in Southern China. Without doubt, the really amazing thing about the tours is when you are travelling with somebody who goes back to their ancestors' village. We help to facilitate that. It can happen as part of the tour if we can fit it in and if they want to, or they can do it independently themselves. Regardless, we all travel with them on that journey. It's incredibly emotional. I think it's more emotional than the people themselves realise it's going to be. Quite often you go back to those villages, and there are going to be people there who remember your ancestors or remember an Australian

connection. So, these are people, who, through historical methods, maybe a tiny bit of family memory, but mostly through archive work, are finding out what the village is. Then they go to the village, and there's someone who says, 'oh yeah, I remember your family,' or, 'this is someone who is related to your family.' So, there's memories of their family still in that space and that's very powerful. Then, we've had other people who've travelled with us, in fact two cousins who came independently on two different tours, and they were not able to determine the exact village their ancestors came from. But Kate was pretty certain it was part of a cluster of villages that had people of the same clan that they came from. So, there was no concrete connection, but they knew it was probably somewhere in that area. I'm quite emotional even talking about it now. Both these people were walking around imagining their ancestors, they were stopping and paying respect at shrines. We had translators there, so they could try and talk to people. They weren't able to get any more information, but the power of being in the place was very strong.

How does that visceral, temporal experience compare to some of the other more traditional curatorial work you've done?

I think there's always something a bit emotional about history work. Otherwise you don't do it. I think

there's always an element of emotion that makes it important. But these tours are much more powerful than that. And I think there's lots of things that are going on in them that are very interesting. Kate and I have just written a chapter together where we explore some of these issues and some of it is about loss of Chinese culture within families, loss of connection to country.[1] And that loss of connection to China, it was a two-way thing. Because the Cultural Revolution severed ties between families in China and in Australia and the White Australia Policy also made communication and exchange difficult. There's a loss of language, which means people don't have the characters or the names of the people and places associated with their families. But I also think Australians generally have a very poor Chinese cultural literacy. So, we don't have a sense of what these places are like. We can conjure up an Irish countryside, or an English countryside, or a you know, an industrial Manchester or something, but we don't actually have the skills to properly imagine China. We only have vague clichés that come to mind. So, the journey to Southern China is touching on all those issues. It's also about reconnecting with a culture that was part of your family but has been lost. It's amazing.

And the other thing that happens that's really significant, and that was part of the motivation for the tours, is that Kate and I were both aware, having spent time in Southern China, that it turns Australian-centric perspectives on Chinese Australian history upside down. When you're in Australia, you're looking at people who come and who go to somewhere 'other', lost in time. When you go to China and you go to the Overseas Chinese Museums there, all of a sudden, it's a different perspective. From a China perspective, they're looking at a whole lot of people who went overseas. Overseas is Cuba, it's San Francisco, it's Hawaii, it's Canada, it's New Zealand, it's Australia and it's South America and from a Chinese perspective there's not a lot of differentiation, like it doesn't matter. Australia and Cuba and San Francisco as far as they're concerned, are kind of the same. It's just 'Not China'. And the stories they tell are about what those people then bring back and have done to build China. So, it is really refreshing to have that perspective and it really enriches your understanding of what's going on in Australia. It enriches how you think about a, say, a Chinese market gardener, who's being very frugal who's working hard, who's sending money back, you can see some of what that money is building. You

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[1] Couchman, Sophie and Bagnall, Kate, 'Memory and meaning in the search for Chinese Australian families' in Kate Darian-Smith and Paula Hamilton (eds.), *Remembering Migration*, Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies (forthcoming).

see some of the things which were important to returning overseas Chinese that are unrelated to how 'white Australians' have framed their lives. The architecture in Southern China is also fascinating, it's so interesting, it's a Portuguese-Chinese mix, so architecturally there's really interesting things going on. There was a lot of building and development in the 1930s and a lot of that still survives. You can see it.

Seeing these things is so important, but is this experience something you think you can be made more understandable within Australia?

Look, of course you can do that. I suppose Kate and I and other scholars do try to do this in various ways. But I've been in the position where I saw the photos and I heard people talk about it, but it didn't mean anything until I actually went there myself. I still think there is something about being there. You have to trace people's footsteps and be there to really understand.

This is a slight deviation, but I think something that characterises a lot of history work is multiple jobs, being juggled at the same time, could you talk about how your work with these tours fits in with the other work you do, which I know is very diverse?

I've always had a sort of hands on, get it done, sort of approach. I've built databases, developed web resources, an online journal, designed and self-published books, developed exhibitions and walking tours. I like the variety and while I've specialised in Chinese Australian history I'm easily interested in new ideas. It means I end up doing all sorts of different things and inevitably some jobs run over time and so the juggling begins! I suppose I also just close my eyes and leap in, too. The first conference paper I published (with encouragement!), I just did it. I didn't have a history degree; I had no background. If I need a database, I learn how to do it and just build it. Some of the work I've got to do within my job or studies, but I seem to always have a few other projects going on as well. While I was working at the Chinese Museum, there were lots of terrific projects that I was able to do within that job, which was great, but I also did things like organise a conference and publish a book of papers from that conference. That happened outside my work at the Museum because it couldn't be encompassed in the time that I had there. So, I'm always doing stuff outside my work and I like working part time as it gives me that freedom and leads to all kinds of projects. I've been really interested to explore other kinds of history since leaving the Chinese Museum. Some of that comes from the jobs that come your way. But this diverse work also all links together. So, the first job I worked on was the British migrants exhibition for the Immigration Museum. I

used to joke that I was going to the 'Dark Side', because I had done all this work on Chinese immigration that's all about White Australia and discrimination. Chinese were the original unwanted immigrant group. And then suddenly, I was in this space with the most desired immigrant group. Money was being thrown at British migrants and while Chinese were being disenfranchised and denied naturalisation, British migrants were the complete opposite. They were given all the rights of citizenship and naturalisation without having to become citizens of Australia. So, it was an incredible contrast. But I felt like it really added a depth to my understanding of the migrant experience and of characteristics shared by migrants. I found it really, really interesting, and really enjoyable.

My thesis was about visual representation, about how Chinese people were photographed, so as part of that I developed an interest in photography and using photographs as historical sources. My PhD was part of a linkage grant and we developed the Chinese Australian Images in Australia (CHIA) website, as part of that project, with a team at Melbourne University.[2] So that provided me with

the skills to then take on another job at Museums Victoria which was a research project looking at historical photographs of work in factories, which I found absolutely fascinating. Again, it's nothing to do with all the Chinese stuff that I had before, but it was tapping into all the stuff I knew about historical photographs. As part of it I was thinking about how material that was held in multiple different public archives might be brought together to get a better sense of the history of Victoria and manufacturing and industry so very similar to the aims of the CHIA project.

As a contractor, I have to kind of follow my nose a bit and I'm doing some very interesting work. Much of the work of a curator is project management so this has led to some project management work with Associate Professor Richard Frankland on a couple of projects at the Victorian College of the Arts at Melbourne University. One was an artist exchange between Yolngu artists in East Arnhem Land and Indonesian artists in Makassar, Sulawesi [Indonesia]. There's a Chinese connection there because the Makassans came over to Australia prior to British colonisation to fish for trepang, a sea slug that they then sold onto Southern China!

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[2] The linkage grant was between La Trobe University, the Chinese Museum and we worked with the Australian Science and Technology Heritage Centre (now the e-Research Scholarship Centre) at the University of Melbourne. One of the project

outcomes was the Chinese Australian Historical Images in Australia website, http://www.chia.chinesemuseum.com.au.

All your jobs end up speaking to one another in unexpected ways

That's right. And I must say I'm really enjoying that at the moment. It's fun. And probably the one that I'm working on at the moment, the Invisible Farmer Project, which is how we got to know one another, is the most kind of, out of the box. But really, the way I see the Invisible Farmer Project, and certainly the component I'm working on in this role is about storytelling.[3] It's about telling individuals' stories and that's something I've always been interested in. In Chinese Australian history, I've always been drawn to the underdog. I'm always interested in the person whose story is ordinary but extraordinary. I'm less interested in the really famous people who do all the kind of amazing things that are easy to write about. I'm interested in the woman who is a Chinese herbalist in Little Bourke Street, who looks after the children in the street, who is unrecognised. So the Invisible Farmer Project is an opportunity to use the skills I've developed in working with communities, working with British Australians, working with the Chinese community and taking it into the present. In this project I'm talking

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[3] Invisible Farmer is the largest ever study of Australian women on the land. This three-year project (2017 –2020) is funded by the Australian Research Council (LP160100555) and involves a nation-wide partnership between rural communities, academics, government and cultural organisations.

with women in agriculture about their lives now and thinking about the best way to tell those stories, and share them.

The theme of our issue for MHJ this year is 'Narratives and Power' I was wondering if you could maybe comment on any thoughts you have on the connection between family history and heritage, and accessibility, and where public history fits within that?

What do you mean by accessibility?

We are coming from the perspective of largely postgraduate students and Early Career Researchers from inside academia and there seems to be this slightly artificial divide between training as a historian, and then people we see doing their own family histories, or seeking out family histories from history professionals. So, I guess I'm asking whether there is any kind of gatekeeping or challenges that you think people who are engaging in more public history space face?

I think at the moment history is in a really interesting space. There are so many digitised historical records that are now openly available, and this has hugely empowered family historians. I'm part of a Chinese Australian family history group as well, and in the past, it would take a whole retirement to build a family tree that had the births, the marriages

and the deaths of people in the family. Now you can almost do that in an afternoon, so family historians are now starting to think about the 'whys' and the context around their family's history. I see this particularly with Chinese Australian family historians; the White Australia policy has put such a big stamp on families' lives and trajectories. So, it's natural in that space for family historians to already be thinking about that racial context, and I think they're a bit ahead of the curve because of that. But what this means is that there is now this very interesting kind of overlapping between very skilled amateur historians and professionals working in a community public history space, which I suppose I do, who are academically trained, and then a university space. Universities are also increasingly engaging with community and stepping outside of academia to do this work. In fact, with family history we've got recent examples of people like Graeme Davison going into their family history and reimagining that as a historian. And I think that's fine. I'm quite happy for there to be overlap around those things, I think it is happening naturally. It's good.

I think everybody is doing something slightly different in this space and there's benefits in conversations between all of these approaches to the past. One of the things about family historians is that they are very focused on individuals within their family and drilling down and getting enormous detail about those individuals, and generally academic or public historians take a much broader view. So, there's huge potential in the overlap there, in terms of providing understanding about the background to the historical sources that family historians are using, but also the historical context, helping them to understand why things are the way they are. And then at the same time, they have this rich archive, that most historians often don't have the time, or the resources to build. It costs a fortune to purchase every single death certificate and birth certificate and marriage certificate of a whole community, or even of a family. And I suppose I straddle those different spaces.

That seems like a really fitting note to end on, thank you very much Sophie.

I just want to start by thanking you all for participating in this interview. Could we maybe begin by you each introducing yourselves, and maybe a bit about your background?

Jason: I'm Jason. My academic background is in Media and Comms, and Politics. I then did a Masters in Advertising. So, I, unlike the others, do not have a history background.

Alice: I'm Alice. My academic background is in Ancient World Studies and Classics, and now I'm doing a Masters in Cultural Heritage, which I'm trying to make as queer as possible by interviewing queer people about public history and queer content in museums.

Eli: My name is Eli, I also did Classics and Ancient World Studies. I did my Honours thesis on the poetry of Sappho, which was chosen because it was a gay thing, and I definitely plan to keep doing more gay-related history in the future.

Irene: I'm Irene, I did modern history – I'm the only one here who did anything after BC! I did my honours in twentieth century Chinese history, on women's experiences during the Cultural Revolution- that wasn't explicitly chosen because it was gay, it was chosen because it was interesting and then incidentally turned out to be a bit queer. Which is life, I guess.

Could one of you explain what *Queer as Fact* is, and maybe a bit about how it came about?

Eli: Yeah. So, *Queer as Fact* is a queer history podcast. We can't really get more specific than that—it aims to talk about as diverse a range of topics as possible in terms of queer experience, geographic location, era and so forth. Which means we talk about a lot of stuff we're absolutely completely not qualified to talk about! It came about because I started listening to a lot of history podcasts and had a lot of opinions about how they could be better, and also queerer. So, I pitched that to these guys and I just said; 'Hey, you wanna do a queer history podcast?' and then I forced them to stick with that forever, and now here we are!

And Jason, could you talk a bit about when you joined?

Jason: Yeah, so I live with Eli, and we spent a lot of time talking about podcasts when Irene and Alice would come over to record. We would talk about potential episodes we could do, and we would talk a lot about queer media. So we started a sort of sub-series called *Queer as Fiction* within *Queer as Fact*, where we talk about historical pieces of media –

either pieces of media that are set in a historical time period, or pieces of media that are old enough to be themselves historical.

This may be a slightly loaded question, but probably one which is worth starting on. Your chosen title uses the word 'queer'. Was that a conscious decision – do you have a particular reasoning behind identifying yourself as a 'queer' podcast?

Irene: I definitely have thought about why we chose the word 'queer', because it is something that people question, sometimes.

Alice: I don't recall us actually sitting down and thinking 'What word are we going to use for this? We want to use the word "queer".' I think it's just the word that we are all comfortable using to describe that community.

Eli: I think I at least going into it knew that there was… a controversy about that. I decided to use it despite that.

Irene: Yeah, and I was going to say that; One: it is the word that we all tend to use, so we are all comfortable with it, and two: for me it is just the most all-encompassing word that I can think of. We always have that option of using the acronym but there are two problems with that. One is that 'LGBTQIA+ as Fact', is a terrible name. The second reason is that I just feel like as soon as you start listing

things in your community it becomes this very limited, exclusive, closed space, and I think that, as we develop different words to talk about identity, using that acronym is going to end up leaving people off the end, or just relegating them to the 'plus', which is a very 'et. al.' situation!

Eli: And also, we're not just trying to talk about all possible identities that could fit into the acronym *today*, we are trying to talk about whatever manifestation those identities could have had throughout the entirety of human history. And, I would love to sit down and try and make *that* acronym some time! It's impossible.

Could you talk a little bit about what kind of people you feature in the podcast, and your process for choosing those people?

Alice: When we first started we had a policy that was something like, out of every four episodes we want to have at least one that's about a woman, at least one that's about a person of colour, something like that, I can't remember the specific details. So, we were actively trying to avoid the focus you often get on white men from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Irene: As far as how we choose people, we do keep a spreadsheet, that lists time period and geographical area so we can look through everyone we've done and say to ourselves, 'oh, we've

had five like this recently, I better think of something different.'

So, you aim for diversity?

Alice: Yeah. And we do get a lot of suggestions sent in, so when I'm choosing, I also go to that list of suggestions and see what one leaps out. So, for me it's a balance of providing what people are asking for, while also maintaining that diversity and exploring those areas of queer history which aren't as well known or well publicised.

Could you talk a little more about maybe the process of putting together an episode, from research to technological considerations?

Eli: It's kind of weird to think of this from an outside perspective, because we've just been doing it for two years now. We go to the library catalogue! I mean I'm sure there is more useful stuff to be said , but we borrow some books, we read them, we scramble around to find out whether the one scholar who is talked about if this person actually was queer. We write about all the ways in which we hate everything they have to say, and then we put it all in order, and say it out loud!

The reason I'm sort of interested about the, pragmatics of it is that, you all kind of have history backgrounds, and queer historiography is really important. I think you seem to make

a point of talking about it explicitly in your podcast. So, I was wondering if you have any particular approaches to this, or there are any particular challenges you always come up against?

Alice: As well as going to libraries and relying on books, I'll often just Google the person and see what's there. Because there is often a lot of stuff being written on the internet that's well-intentioned but ill-informed about queer history. So, I'll look at how they are represented in the public eye, and how that is influenced by, or how that compares to the scholarship. And then when I'm presenting the episode, I also want to hear these guys' thoughts on that and how they interpret the historiography, so I'll often get up to points when I'll think 'I'm going to give this information, and then I know we'll have a ten minute discussion' and I can rely on the others to bring that analysis.

Irene: I definitely note down things that *I* want to talk about as I am going. When something comes up and I'm like, 'I have an opinion about this', I'll note it down and put it to these guys.

It sounds like *a lot* of work! I feel that in history spaces, people always end up with so many jobs! Is it as much work as it sounds?

Eli: It is, yeah. I think we didn't really anticipate all of the sort of different jobs that would come up within it

when we started. There's the research, which can take really as long as you're willing to spend on it. There is no point at which, you can go 'I now know everything about Horace Walpole.'.

Alice: One thing that I think we definitely didn't know going in is how long it takes to edit an episode. We record about twice as much as we actually put out, and then cut that down to create our episodes.

Irene: I guess there is a version of us that sat down and went, 'we can just make this a conversation and people can deal with whatever happens to come out of our mouths, and we could have just put that up', you know only cutting out the most obviously off-topic sections. But we very much don't do that! We go through and cut out all the filler words and make ourselves sound smart!

Eli: Also, there was a period where we tried to transcribe everything for accessibility, which was something we all felt pretty strongly about but ultimately had to give up.

Irene: Because you just physically can't do it. Once it's an hour-long episode, , they were ending up being around 10,000 words and you have to sit down and type it all out and honestly, we physically can't type that much without starting to have wrist problems!

I did want to ask you guys about the accessibility question. Kind of on two fronts; I'm interested to think about what the role of a queer history podcast is in terms of being accessible to the widest range of people, and also if you have thoughts on the role of public history in making history accessible?

Eli: I think, going back to what Alice was saying about how we look at academic scholarship but also just look at what people, queer people, say on the internet about Sappho, or Marsha P. Johnson, or whoever, there's definitely a tension between wanting to make it as enjoyable to consume by the public, but also not to start losing nuance.

Irene: That's definitely something I think about. When we make an episode sometimes it's in the back of my mind where I say to myself, 'are we getting too academic here?' Because that's our background, and that's the way we approach history, and sometimes I'm like 'will this get in too deep for the public?' But I never stop it. Because I feel like we have this tendency to underestimate the public.

Jason: I mean, certainly in the articles that have been written that mentioned us, probably the only piece of criticism that we get is that it's a little bit dry, and I think that is because we are trying to have it be more rigorous. There is very much

a balancing act there, where you are trying to make something that is an informative and valuable piece of work and also to be entertaining and accessible. I think we do a pretty good job. It's tough, I mean certainly there are episodes of our podcast where some people might struggle to follow what's happening.

Eli: I don't know how true that is. Probably to some degree. But I think I side more with Irene's point that we tend to underestimate the public. Because a lot of our reviews specifically do mention, like 'they cite their sources', 'they're willing to interrogate the scholarship', and stuff like that. I think that in general the queer community is very thirsty for information about its history and I think it's very thirsty as well for information that it feels like it can trust. You know, sure the general public doesn't necessarily interact with history the same way people who are in university, who are in academia do.

Irene: But yeah, I think the general public is certainly capable of the kind of nuance that they are just not necessarily given most of the time.

And do you think that that's something that distinguishes you as a podcast that looks at history and in particular queer history?

Eli: Not from every other queer history podcast, but I think that it is an

unfortunate pitfall of the fact that a lot of the people who are doing this kind of public queer history, who are queer themselves and therefore have sort of the knowledge to talk about being queer, often don't know how to talk about history, and vice versa. A lot of the academics who are writing books about queer people certainly know what they are doing as historians but don't have the nuance to talk about queer issues. So, there are definitely other queer history podcasts out there who we support in principle, and who definitely have very good ideas about how, say, queer history is necessary for the community and so forth, and who want to contribute to that, but who…

Irene: Just don't have the research skills to do it

Eli: Yeah, who sort of just spread blatantly inaccurate information, and I don't want to say, 'and we're perfect! And we always have the facts exactly', despite our name!

Irene: 'Queer as Probably True, I Guess'.

Eli: But I think it's a matter of when is it true enough? There are definitely times where we have not gone as in-depth as we could have, and someone goes, 'hey, I think you are wrong because of this', and I'm like 'yeah, obviously okay in hindsight…' I struggle with deciding at what point other queer history podcasts become

good enough for us to publicly support them. There's not a clear line there. There is not a point where your history becomes 'good' as opposed to 'not good.'

Irene: Yeah, it's not like there is 'right' history and 'wrong' history.

Eli: I mean there's wrong history!

Irene: Yeah! But beyond a certain level…

But do you think maybe one of the skills people with history training have is an ability to talk openly about what we don't know, and uncertainty? Whereas others have a tendency to be a bit like 'this definitely happened'?

Irene: That's something that I think you get comfortable with as a historian: Coming out of something saying 'we don't know whether or not this happened'. People often come at queer history wanting to know the 'facts', like, 'did this person have sex with other men?' and sometimes you do just have to say 'we don't know, we can't know'. So yeah, I feel like we are more comfortable with uncertainty. I think that's something you learn.

Do you think that equally, it's important that you are historians, but it's also important that you're queer people doing queer history?

Irene: Yeah, I think that has value. It's like Eli said, there are a lot of academics out there writing about queer people, or queer experiences in history, and many of them are not queer themselves and they come at it with kind of weird ideas of what queer experience is.

Eli: I think also if we talk specifically about trans history, I feel like I'm a mediocre historian who has the trump card of being trans and therefore not being a complete idiot about trans issues. Because, the hurdle you're trying to get across with historians talking about potentially transgender dynamics in, say, the ancient world, or potentially trans people in history is not even that they have questionable ideas about it. It's that you have to have a very lengthy argument about whether trans history exists at all. And it does!

Irene: The other one that we often discuss is that it's incredible how prevalent it is in general scholarship that otherwise accomplished scholars with university educations can't distinguish between sexual attraction and gender. I find things like basic ideas like that a woman can be attracted to another woman without wanting to be a man, or that trans men exist and that doesn't automatically make them gay. That kind of understanding is often lacking!

Eli: I think it's more than just having the understanding. It's what comes from a default point of viewing queer historical figures as people and having empathy for them. In a lot of the scholarship we come across, that sort of base-level of respect isn't there. Instead, there is this tendency to view the experiences of queer people as completely perplexing.

Irene: Or even as just a sort of novel salacious titbit.

Alice: I think that's something you get also in public history. Whereas in scholarship people are like 'this is weird, we don't understand it', in a lot of public history it's like 'oooh, this is so weird!' Those are both problems you get from not having queer people involved.

I wonder if sometimes if in academia and in public history there is also almost of bit of identity politics point scoring? I was struck by this in your episode on Pauli Murray, I think sometimes, there is this reluctance to kind of consider the possibility of Pauli Murray being a trans man because he was such as good figure for lesbian history! And there is this sense of wanting to acquire inspirational figures you can identify with, and unwillingness to give them up to uncertainty.

Irene: This is something Eli talks about a lot, that I feel he feels particularly strongly about. It's something that we *do* notice, this kind of thing where people feel the need to claim this figure for their identity. It often comes up with trans women and gay men, there is this ongoing argument of 'he was a gay man', 'no, she was a trans woman' and sometimes you have to be in this place where we say, 'we don't know how this person would have identified, or the metrics they have for identity are different, or, you can identify with this person from either of these perspectives!' You don't have to *own* a historical figure to identify with them!

Jason: It's almost like you *can't* own a historical figure!

Irene: It's almost like property is theft!

Alice: But I also think that you do have to be having a pretty long conversation to get that point across, and to say 'this person can be identified by this group because of these reasons, and by this group because of these reasons, and we shouldn't fight over it because of these reasons'. If you weren't making a long in-depth kind-of-academic podcast like we are, you don't have the chance to do that, because people do just want to say, you know, 'Pauli Murray was a lesbian,' or, 'Pauli Murray was a man' or whatever you want to say about Pauli Murray. So that's something we have an opportunity to do in this format.

Nuance requires space…

Eli: I think with Pauli Murray especially there's this sort of unwillingness to view him as a trans man, because he never medically transitioned and lived his life publicly as a woman, experienced sexism, and had a career defined by fighting against sexism. And so, it's incomprehensible to people that Pauli Murray could have had a male identity. Again, we need nuance, particularly with trans identities, because there's this unwillingness to understand that you can still be trans without having that popular narrative of: transitioned at age 19 and from then on had the exact same experience as a cisgender man.

And wrote in their diary which is now in an archive, 'I identify as a man'

Eli: Which is interesting, because Pauli Murray basically did that.

I feel like we are talking a lot about nuance, and throughout we've been mentioning how you respond to reviews, articles, tweets. **Could you talk about your online presence in those various spaces, because nuance exists in your podcast, how does it go in, like your tweets?**

Irene: Well I have no idea how to use social media, let's be honest.

Eli: It's sort of like editing the podcast, as in it's something we knew we had to do if we were going to have a podcast, but that we are in no way actually all that skilled at. And to return to someone like Pauli Murray, trying to contextualise who Pauli Murray is in a tweet where we also have to then post a fun fact as well is really difficult.

Alice: I was posting about Pauli Murray the other day on our social media, and every time I post about Pauli Murray I use he/him pronouns and then I think, since Pauli Murray is a reasonably well-known figure, we're probably going to get some kind of response, or backlash, or people reading that and going 'huh, I thought Pauli Murray was a woman.' So every time I post about him I think, do I have to have a paragraph saying 'Pauli Murray is trans and here is the evidence, here are the quotes, here is the source for the quotes.' It's frustrating.

Eli: And I think we have this ongoing struggle as well where if we use, say, our Tumblr as an example. There are more people who follow us on Tumblr than who listen to the episodes, so we view the Tumblr posts as just something which supports the episodes, to refer people to the episodes. But there are a bunch of people who interact with that as their only exposure to what we have to say. And we often have people respond to the posts with corrections or additions of information we do address in the episode, but who are likely never

going to listen to it. It's hard to know how to respond to that. So, all of that is to say, no we are not as nuanced and it's an ongoing problem!

Irene: Yeah, and at the end of the day, you end up trying to stick to 'fun facts, nice pictures' on social media a lot of the time, or a lot of 'solidarity posts'. You can't get the same kind of conversation in there.

Jason: I totally agree with what we were talking about before, that there is an audience who is thirsty for more rigorous queer content, but I think the thing is, we are trying to grow our audience, and the way to do that is shorter, more engaging pieces of content, and particularly through social media. But then you get all those academic queers who are like 'well, that's not the full picture' and it's just like 'yeah, that's why we have these hour-long conversations.'

Irene: *Increasingly* long episodes.

Jason: But in terms of 'listicles' and other media outlets that mention us, we tend not to get a huge amount of trouble with those because they are so simplistic. The people who are writing these listicles are under actual financial pressures in terms of their writing- unlike us when we write our social media posts. So they're bringing across the most basic facts about us as possible

Eli: 'This podcast has an episode on this person', and we are like 'that is a true fact'.

How do you find and deal with feedback from listeners? It's a public history thing, so how would you characterise your interactions with the public?

Irene: They are… largely very positive. Most of what we get is people send us these reviews that are go something like 'everything you do is so interesting, you are witty and charming', and we are go 'are we? oh shit, okay!' But we did turn off anonymous messages on Tumblr, because people get weird when they are allowed to be anonymous. For example, Eli and Jason did an episode on *Call Me By Your Name* and we had a bunch of anonymous messages on Tumblr, which I assumed were from the same person, that were just different variations of 'you guys are paedophiles, this isn't queer media this is paedophilia, have you seen the age difference, why are you talking about this?'

Eli: Also, some people specifically accusing the podcast of being a Jewish conspiracy.

Irene: Oh, I had forgotten that one! Or that one where someone got on 'Anon' and asked Eli to share his personal social media to prove that he was trans.

Eli: Yeah, that happened.

Irene: But people, when they have to attach a name to what they say, are much more reasonable.

Jason: Yeah, I'd say we probably get two or three different kinds of messages. We get people being overwhelmingly positive, and then we get people who want to talk about their own experiences with their queer identity, and how our podcast has helped them with that. It's really lovely. And we also get people who have either lived through an event we have discussed, or know people who were involved, or have access to material about what we were talking about, or are close to the locations where things happened, which is really cool!

Irene: Yeah, sometimes we have people who live near an area we are talking about who have gone and taken pictures to send to us, which is super nice.

Something I was kind of curious about is whether it's positive or negative interactions, is there an emotional labour as well as a time consideration when you do something that is not only in the public eye, but also online?

Irene: Yeah, if people send us a complicated message that will require a thought-out response, we definitely will have to workshop it in the group chat.

Jason: We've had messages that are basically asking us to write essays.

Alice: Yeah, sometimes we get very complex, nuanced questions about history, and I think the issue there is that I don't think people recognise the amount of work that goes into what we do. Just because we can present this information in a podcast, doesn't mean there's not hours of work behind that. So, we do get messages that ask us these questions that we just can't give them the answers that they want.

Irene: Or you can't give an off-the-cuff answer that is going to help them. You can give those sort of answers where it you say, 'this is a complex issue, it's hard to say one way or another, this may have happened, or not,' and if they wanted anything more, that's a four thousand word research paper!

Jason: Or it's another podcast episode.

Irene: I do think that sometimes people just don't see the work. On one level, it's flattering, that people imagine that we just kind of go into this just knowing all this stuff. People think 'Oh *Queer as Fact*, they'll be able to tell me about this'. We could, but what that really means is, we have the tools to do this, not that it's just sitting in our heads.

Jason: And I do think this is a reflection of how people in the general public feel about historians, they think that you know everything that happened in all of history.

Irene: That's definitely a thing that happens! It's like they are trying to catch you out!

Eli: But to talk about emotional labour. When we first started the podcast we were so excited about any interaction, because basically no one was listening. But now I just try to ignore our social media as much as possible! I think a lot of that came out of those very occasional, but still fairly consistent interactions that went something like 'hey, you should stop speaking about trans issues until you get a trans person on', to which we would respond, 'okay, but Eli is trans. So, the person who did all the research for that episode is trans', to which they would then say, 'okay but what proof can you give me?' Stuff like that, I'm just sick of it! I think something that is worth mentioning regarding the responses we get, is there is criticism we get where they're very overtly trying to soften it and be nice...

Irene: They send you something like 'I love your podcast, I love everything you do, I just noticed that you didn't go into as much depth as maybe you could have'.

Eli: Or even just commenting on the terminology we use and how it might be upsetting for them even if we didn't mean it that way. It's very easy to respond to that kind of criticism, but then we get other criticism where they'll be very aggressive. I think it's just as easy for us to decide that we don't have to respond to that kind of thing, but their tone doesn't mean there isn't some reasonable criticism at the core of what they were saying. I find it really hard to find that line where we can say that this something we should be taking on board in the future and when it is valid to ignore.

So it just struck me that I forgot to ask. Obviously there is the emotional labour of responding to people who have reached out to you, but I imagine that kind of clashes with the emotional labour of actually doing the research and putting an episode together. I mean, deep research into a single person often becomes emotional, and then to put that out there…

Irene: Yeah, to me it does always feel quite vulnerable. I did this research, and I tell these guys, and they respond to it and we have some conversation, and there is always part of me thinking, what if I did bad research? What if I missed something important? What if?

Eli: Yeah, and on that note we've been doing this for a while now. There are

definitely discussions that we have now that just wouldn't have occurred to us at the start. Not to be 'that person', but particularly about trans things!

Irene: I mean left to my own devices each episode would be like 'this woman was very good, and she loved women and *I* love women and this is very good'.

Eli: But in terms of vulnerability. I'm sure there is stuff we are saying now that in two years, hopefully, we will be like, 'well, that was embarrassing'

Irene: Like, 'that was weird and simplistic'.

Eli: And now that's just out there forever! Hopefully in ten years when I'm further along in my career than I am now, people can just find that on the internet and hear my bad history opinions from when I was twenty-two!

Irene: I mean I'm hoping that we reach the point that, I've reached with the fan fiction I wrote when I was fourteen! I know that's still out there, and it gives me a good laugh and I don't mind if somebody finds it and laughs. Hopefully, in ten years' time when we realise that, 'wow, we were like academic infants, we've come a long way since then', it will be the same kind of feeling, 'I've grown since then', rather than 'oh god, wipe me off the face of the earth!'

Jason: If public queer history and media discourse gets to the point in the next ten years where the stuff that we are doing now is considered incredibly un-nuanced I will be so happy!

Eli: But, I'm not saying that the standards of the public have moved on since we started, I'm saying that my standards have.

Irene: Yeah, I think for us, we're always going to feel like we keep thinking more, we keep trying to get better. The other day Eli had prepared notes for the Nero episode and he was like, 'this is the shortest script I've done in ages, we're just going to bang this out it won't take that long, it'll be great.' We ended up recording for more than two hours and we were like, 'whoops, what have we done?' I guess we have more to say now! Every episode you do you want to get better, get a little bit more thoughtful about how you talk about things, you touch on things you haven't thought of before.

Eli: I think that is something all scholars should stop and ask themselves though, 'am I actually getting more nuanced or am I just getting more verbose?'

I guess putting it out into the public keeps you honest?

Irene: True!

Jason: I was just going to say that the advantage of doing what we do and publishing content twice a month is that we are getting so many more iterations of these discussions. There will be episodes that are asking similar questions, so you end up having to find new things to say about the same fundamental issues. I think the fact that we are constantly doing that, rather than, you know, publishing a paper once or twice a year, means there is a huge difference in terms of how quickly iterations of those ideas come about.

So, you guys have been so generous with your time, but I thought it would be good if we could end on any particular episodes that you're happy with, or that you might want to talk about?

Irene: The one that I actually really like, and I don't actually remember if I was in this one or if I just edited it, but it was the episode on the Warren Cup. I remember editing it because we'd ended up having these sort of two weirdly overlapping conversations that were half an hour each, and I remember going through it and just thinking 'I'm going to shuffle this around, so it flows' and when I did it, I was like 'that actually came out really well!' That was something I was quite proud of, not as much from a scholarship point of view but just as I kind of put it together. I made us make sense!

Eli: That can be a hard thing to do!

Irene: I was very proud of that one!

Jason: I think probably for me, simultaneously, the episode I don't want anyone to ever listen to, but also the one that I kind of was proud of in terms of what we did do with it was the episode on *The Colour Purple* because that was, of the episodes that I've done research for probably the most intense – like, 'I'm wading into some *discourse* right now, and I am in no way qualified for it, but I'm going to go in anyway!' I think the episode came out all right in the end, but I definitely thought to myself, 'Is this going to be okay, or am I going to hear about how racist I am in two weeks?' So, it was an intense experience.

Eli: I think for me, when we did the Pauli Murray episode, I felt like we, or at least I, took a step forward in terms of having stuff to say. I realise I've said nothing in this entire interview that hasn't been like 'but have we talked about the trans people?' But with a lot of the trans and trans-related topics we've done, it does feel like I'm actually contributing to something, in a way it doesn't always feel like. For example, we all know that Oscar Wilde slept with men, we can tell people that, they'll be very interested to hear it, but I don't feel like I'm really contributing anything. But when we talk about Pauli Murray and Billy Tipton and other trans people it

feels like we are actually contributing something, and also, I definitely have that emotional connection to them, more than I do to some other people we've covered.

Irene: I remember when we did the Harvey Milk episode, and that was a very emotional episode. We paused the recording in the middle, so we could all make a cup of tea and have a cry and we could keep going. And every once in a while we get a comment from someone on that episode that's like 'I cried in the Harvey Milk episode' and we're like 'us too, I love you, stranger!'

Jason: I think there is definitely a thing where when we do episodes about trans people that there are a lot more examples where even queer people often don't know that there even is trans history.

Irene: I learn so much from you, every time you prepare one of those episodes.

Jason: And I feel like there are queer people who don't know about gay and lesbian history as well. We don't really know many people like that in our personal lives, but, for example, I came out of high school not knowing that Oscar Wilde was gay. So, it is sometimes hard to recognise that even the most basic episode, that we think everyone will know about, might not necessarily be the case; there are tonnes of people who didn't know this stuff.

When we get messages from people who are just like 'oh my god, this is so amazing, I never considered this, I never considered that my identity would be represented in history like this' it is really heart-warming.

Irene: Yeah, and sometimes we get those messages where somebody writes in to say; 'it's just so nice to hear about two women, living together and being happy – I just didn't know that happened in history!'

Eli: I think it's one of those things where we all went into this, knowing that queer people have always existed, if we push aside questions about 'when did "homosexual" become an identity' and so forth and, we knew that there were always queer people who were happy but we didn't really understand that until we did this. We've come across *so* many happy stories, and we weren't looking for them. They just happened to be there and that was really nice. But yeah, to finish off, doing trans history for this podcast, to get a little too real, as someone who is not a genius and has typical struggles in academia, it was the thing which convinced me that I had something to contribute to history, which, somehow I did a whole history degree *not* thinking that!

Well that sounds like a nice note to end on, thank you all so much!

MHJ

REVIEWS

ANU Historical Journal II Edition 1 (2019)

Introduction

The 2019 Melbourne Historical Journal Committee were thrilled to hear that the Australian National University History Society was to relaunch its journal in 2019. The ANU Historical Journal II (ANUHJII) has strong historical ties with the MHJ, and in this very new climate we were excited at the prospect of renewed collaboration. Included below is our review of the exciting first edition of the ANUHJII. A review of Volume 46 of the MHJ will be published by ANUHJII.

The journal opens with an editorial that provides an overview of the history of the ANU Historical Journal, and of its place alongside other student bodies, particularly the ANU Historical Society It highlights the role of postgraduate-run journals as an important space not only for young historians to develop their voice and professional identities, but also as a place for postgraduates to make a meaningful intervention in, and to develop their understanding of, the pragmatic considerations which sit at the heart of the publication process. As editors of the MHJ Collective, the editorial resonated with us. It clearly articulated the inherent value of postgraduate-run journals and potential sites of

solidarity amongst such journals, all of which are currently facing similar challenges, and are motivated by the same ideals. The editorial emphasises also the original journal's very strong sense of commitment to publishing primarily the work of students, which is suggestive of the role the ANUHJII may play in expanding this space. The commitment to publishing the work of young historians from undergraduate to early career researcher (ECR) level speaks to the editorial team's awareness that participating in a student publication, both as a writer and as part of an editorial team, is 'formative for emerging scholars', and an important aspect in developing as an academic.

Linked to this is the editorial note that a small number of public lectures found a place in the first series of the journal. The inclusion here of public lectures from Professor Frank Bongiorno and Emeritus Professor Stuart Macintyre is an excellent way to incorporate the contributions of established academics, as well as to maintain the original series' commitment to publishing postgraduate scholarship. Balancing the celebration of young academics with a demonstration of support by established researchers is a crucial part of postgraduate journals as it fosters collaboration and community between academics at different stages of their careers.

REVIEW OF MEMOIRS

Following the 'Editorial' section is an exciting collection of 'Memoirs' which complement the editorial by reflecting on the history the ANUHJ and of the History Department as a whole: its foundation, its people, and its ambitions. The founding editor of the original ANUHJ, Alastair Davidson's, memory on the difference between the 'old and new' Australian historians summarise the core belief of one generation of young ANU scholars' dedication in transforming Australian's history writing enterprise from an imperial one to a national one, that is, to write an Australian history of its own. With respect to that ambition, Emeritus Professor Manning Clark was no doubt, as mentioned by most of the contributors, the mentor and motivator of this transformation. However, the ambitions of ANUHJ did not stop at a political re-centralisation of inquiry and narrative: the demonstration of a desire to tell one's own story, the liberation from the traditional gender role attached to female historians (as articulated in Rosemary Auchmuty's article of how ANU had instilled in her the ideals of women's liberation), and the hope of incorporating a focus on Asia and the Pacific in historical research, were all evident as parts of a collective number of ambitions longing to be achieved. As a social and intellectual hub as well as an academic journal, the ANUHJ was a comfortable shelter for young historians who had 'no long-term friends in Canberra' (Ian Britain), and were sometimes 'miserable and alone' (Rosemary Auchmuty), giving them a community that nourished a sense of belonging as young historical researchers. This is one of the common themes that link the ANUHJ to its Melbourne counterpart, the MHJ: that young historians need an intellectual space to exchange ideas, critique each other, and foster friendships. Another important role the ANUHJ has played, and that the ANUHJII will continue to play, is summarised by Caroline Turner, who writes that 'in this current era of 'post-truth', people's historical awareness and knowledge of context and history is diminishing … [which] makes history journals such as ANUHJ even more relevant today, especially if they deal with the importance of scholarly research'.

OVERVIEW OF ARTICLES

Not only is ANUHJII's substantial articles section impressive for the diversity of its contributors, it is also impressive in terms of content and approach.

As the opening article of the ANUHJII, Tobias Campbell's '"Ours will be a tent": The meaning and symbolism of the early Aboriginal Tent Embassy' is a fitting choice. Campbell's insightful survey of the history of the Tent

Embassy rightly locates this crucial site of contemporary Aboriginal activism at the centre of Australian political life in the 1970s. As a study of the symbolism of sovereignty, it is innovative, as the first article for the ANUHJII it is particularly apt. Situating the Tent Embassy not only within the Australian cultural political landscape, but also within Canberra's vast geography of state-sanctioned memorials is a particularly strong theoretical approach that both grounds his argument and positions the journal immediately within its local geographical and political context.

Fitting for the ANHUJII in a somewhat different respect is Ingrid Mahoney's article 'A new dawn: rights for women in Louisa Lawson's *The Dawn*'. The ANUHJII has highlighted the work of a number of young historians and centred their new approaches in the Australian historical landscape. In turn, Mahoney reframes one of Australia's best-known feminists as a literary figure, a political leader driven by a vision for the future (in addition to, and as a constituent characteristic of her feminism). By centring Lawson's language and exploring the particularity of her politics, Mahoney has subtly redefined Lawson's position in Australian political, gender and intellectual history, and suggests new approaches to histories of Australian feminism.

That the third essay of the journal is so notably different from the two that preceded it is a testament to the commendably wide net the editors cast when seeking papers for their inaugural issue. These qualities are crucial ethical and intellectual principles for postgraduate journals. Ashleigh Green's article, 'Cultural responses to the migration of the barn swallow in Europe' is a wonderful read and a more than welcome addition. Green's *longue durée* approach is an excellent contrast to the first two articles, and her study of the shifting symbolic significance of the swallow is genuinely delightful. Particularly interesting is the ways in which the swallow captivated spiritual and scientific interest, and her comparison of this with the way maritime cultures viewed swallows.

Postgraduate journals should be reactive spaces where young historians have the chance to contribute to debates in their fields. Bodie A. Ashton's 'Kingship, sexuality and courtly masculinity: Frederick the Great and Prussia on the cusp of modernity' is a fine example of this. Taking a new approach to persistent contemporary questions about Frederick the Great, Ashton's article demonstrates both the role journals such as the ANUHJII can have for young historians, and the vital contributions of young historians to the wider historiographical landscape. Ashton's article is commendable

in approach and execution, and its inclusion in the ANUHJII is an important acknowledgment of the role this new generation of historians must play in the centring of gender and sexuality studies in historical debate.

The final three articles fall under a loose thematic heading of faith and politics. Nayree Mardirian's 'Lebanon's 'age of apology' for Civil War atrocities: A look at Assad Shaftari and Samir Geagea' explores how the global trend towards political apology and atonement for former atrocities from the 1990s manifested in Lebanon in the early 2000s. Mardirian draws on recent interviews and press coverage to explore the contexts of and responses to two political apologies (Shaftari's in 2000 and Gagaea's in 2008) to elucidate how shifts in how the Civil War is memorialised, have affected the political climate in contemporary Lebanon. Focused on such recent events, the article speaks very clearly to current debates around memorialisation of all sorts. Like Ashton's, Mardirian's article demonstrates a refreshing engagement with contemporary historical discussions that speak to its relevance today.

Focusing on the conceptualisation by Christian evangelicals of prisoners and Indigenous Australians as sinners in need of salvation, Tandee Wang's article '"O Sin, sin, what hast thou done!": Aboriginal people and convicts in evangelical humanitarian discourse in the Australian colonies' provides a strong exploration of how concepts of respectability were constructed in colonial Australia. Wang highlights the importance of the evangelical worldview to British imperial policy, and nuances contributes to discussions of how ideas of race and gender played out in mid-nineteenth century Australia.

The final article, Sarah Macallan's 'Object Study – The Tombstone of Anne: A case study on multi-lingualism in twelfth century Sicily' is important in the context of the final three articles in that it is focused on material culture, and is directed at understanding the broader purposes and implications of a single object. Macallan's combination of text, material and spatial analyses enables Macallan to argue for a nuanced interpretation of the tombstone that both accounts for its suggestion of religious tolerance and highlights its message of Christian superiority. As a reflection of the turns towards materiality and spatiality within the discipline, Macallan's article is especially fitting as the final article included in a relaunched postgraduate journal.

While the variety of articles presented is at first glance somewhat disorientating, and the reviewers feel this collection of essays may

have benefited from a more explicit curatorial hand in relation to the ordering of the articles, postgraduate journals ought to reflect – and celebrate – the extraordinary diversity of research being undertaken in Australian universities. This edition does so admirably. It is an exciting reflection of new trends in historical research. That it highlights new approaches to gender, sexuality, race and object studies is a testament to the originality of Australian young historians, and to the important role postgraduate-run journals play in highlighting this work.

**Reviewed by Jessie Matheson,
Jennifer McFarland and Luke Yin**

The reopening of Old Quad has been a long time coming, almost two and a half years' worth. Considering the age of the building itself however, two and a half years is a mere second in its life. Though perhaps a relatively short amount of time, the recent renovations have the potential to alter approaches to — and understandings of — the building itself, and its historical ties to the University of Melbourne more generally.

Holding many guises over its 165 years, Old Quad's recent makeover gives it new life as an exhibition space focused on displaying cultural collections at University of Melbourne in its halls. Far from providing a so-called 'white cube' space for the display of works, the exhibition space at Old Quad will not let you forget you are walking through a significant building on campus, both for its age and its look. Inescapably colonial in its Tudor Gothic style, it was modelled on similar iterations in Ireland and Wales erected around the same time.[1]

This was the very first building that inaugurated the University of Melbourne back in 1856, as an institution and knowledge centre. Its halls once housed all the professors of the University, and all of its 57 students would have walked through — and studied in — its interior. In essence, the Quadrangle, as it was known then, stood for the University declaring its place and its own importance in what was considered new land and a new colony. James Waghorne's essay celebrates the recent opening of the space by looking in detail at the historical continuity of the building, its progression from professor residencies to the law library and everything in between.[2] He states that Old Quad is a 'symbol of renewal within an evolving institution'.[3] The onus on this new space, then, is to symbolize current attitudes and debates as well as to expand on and interrogate the building's history. Specifically its undeniable colonial foundations, with the purpose of bringing the conversation out to wider debate.

Walking into the space, viewers are met with a veneer of the building's colonial heritage, in the new oak floors and wood paneling encompassing the entire south face gallery space. This space is aptly named 'Treasury' for its

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[1] George Tibbits, *The Quadrangle: The First Building at the University of Melbourne* (Parkville: The History of the University Unit, The University of Melbourne, 2005), 15-16.

[2] James Waghorne, 'The Quadrangle', in *Old Quad Catalogue*, (Parkville: The University of Melbourne, 2019), 12 – 16.
[3] Ibid., 13.

new purpose of displaying cultural collections. Behind one of the walls, the old council tables and chairs are on full display, their carpentry matching the arches of the gothic windows in the bay room. The inaugural exhibition, *Ancestral Memory* meets the loaded messaging of Old Quad's space with the curatorial rigor of Boon Wurrung, Mutti Mutti, Yorta Yorta Wemba Wemba artist Maree Clarke. Clarke brings works into the space that can be seen as an attempt to challenge, or at least to puncture, preconceptions and colonial constructs on multiple levels.

Partnering with First Nation's architect Jefa Greenaway, Clarke hinges the show on the eel, or more specifically the eel trap. This is a recognition that the lands on which we stand while in this space, the land of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nations, play host to an epic migration conducted by the short-finned eel yearly. They use waterways throughout the region to make their way inland. This forms a large premise of the show, as we gain insight into the long hidden or unacknowledged presence of the eel, long thought to have been deterred and barred from its journey due to the destruction of its natural water passageways. As we are told, this resourceful creature still passes through this land, under our feet, using stormwater drains as its new creeks.

The way the works and objects interact in the space brings attention to the ties between heritage, space, memory and hegemony. Presented next to three eel traps made by elder Gunditjimara woman Connie Hart and elders Patrick Bellamy and Edith Terrick, is an early map of Melbourne, created around 1832. This displays what we now know as the Melbourne CBD and its surrounds, with an early iteration of the 'Hoddle grid'; a city planning tactic Melburnians now take for granted. This juxtaposition seems to be a jarring choice, with the map blatantly representing the dispossession of First Nations land, and the brutal realities of colonial structures as imposed on landscape. Yet, in setting up this relationship, Clarke essentially undermines and critiques the certainties that maps are meant to lend to lived experience. It is the colonial mentality of this map that the eel traps target, as they speak to a thousand-year-old practice conducted in areas all over Victoria, a practice that very much disrupts and invalidates the claims made by colonisers of terra nullius, of unoccupied land. Weak justifications for these claims were based on perceptions of uncultivated land, where colonisers would argue that First Nation's people were not using the land in their narrowed perception of what this entailed. In fact, eel traps were placed in strategic points in waterways, where sometimes the waterways themselves would be
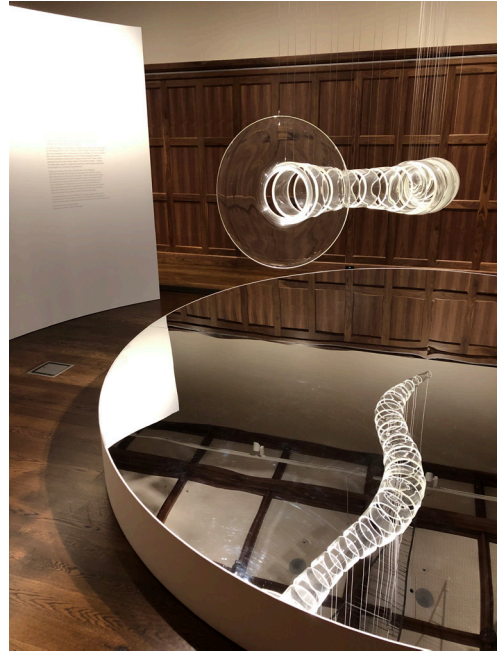
Figures 1-4: Ancestral Memory, the University of Melbourne, photographed by Ada Coxall.

shaped and directed, indicative of First people's intimate knowledge of land and country.

The eel and the eel trap thus become indicative — symbolic — of the resourcefulness and resilience of First Nation's people in their continuation of practice, despite the violence inflicted by colonial structures. Maree Clarke's focus on the eel trap widens out the story of the eel to bear on the violence and control inflicted on the practice of First Nation's People by the Australian government. She pays due attention to those who guaranteed the continuation of cultural practice despite the infliction of violence on Indigenous Australians, represented in the eel traps of elder Connie Hart. A Gunditjimara woman from around Lake Condah, West Victoria, Connie grew up in the hostile climate of 1950s Australia, where communities lived in constant fear that their children would be taken away from them by a government bent on eradication and assimilation, rather than celebration, of Aboriginal cultural practice. Her mother, her grandmother, and other elders in her community were master weavers, able to construct beautiful and practical eel traps from the native bung o'ort grass (spear grass) that grows in the area. Any eel trap created was added to the many thousands that have been woven in that area over thousands of years, a knowledge passed down, continued, from generation to generation.

Yet, Hart's family did not want to teach her, as the fear that the government would take her away from them was very real. Despite this, Hart took it upon herself to watch from afar, to weave a line or two while her mother and grandmother were not looking. Hart went on to become a master weaver in her community, retaining the knowledge that was denied her. This knowledge she would keep throughout her life, and ultimately pass on to her community. Teaching weaving to her descendants, keeping the tradition alive for following generations.[4]

Next to Hart's eel traps are Clarke's own river reed necklace works, setting up a connection between the two First Nation's women, as both keep their culture alive in unique ways. Maree Clarke refers to herself as a cultural 'revivifier'.[5] She looks into the practices of her ancestors, where the river reed necklaces speak to a mode of welcome to visitors, using native river reed from around Clarke's home on the Maribyrnong river. These necklaces, though, are not of the wearable type. Instead they are made large scale in order

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[4] Emily Bissland, 'Act of rebellion as 'naughty girl' Connie Hart wove against oppression' *ABC News*, 8th July 2018. Accessed at https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-07-07/act-of-rebellion-as-naughty-girl-wove-against-oppression/9943694.
[5] Fran Edmonds 'Maree Clarke: Glass eel trap and river reed necklaces' in *Ancestral Memory Catalogue* (Parkville: Old Quad, 2019), 9.

to embody and demand a cultural presence. Clarke uses artistic means to seize an agency in representation of traditional practice that was so often denied. This finds ultimate embodiment in her glass piece holding the same name as the exhibition: *Ancestral Memory*. The work asserts itself within contemporaneity, with a minimalistic and streamlined form. Divorced from its context, the work could take on many meanings. Yet, its presentation in this show provokes an understanding between this form and the forms of the woven eel traps on the other side of the room. This contemporary construction still owes its existence to traditional modes, providing an essential continuity.

Despite the potency of these works and the powerful curatorial visions of Clarke and Greenaway, a question still remains. Will the reimagined Old Quad continue to provide a space that effectively engages in contemporary debate and responds to the still overt signals of heritage and hegemony? As *Ancestral Memory* was only a temporary exhibition, it is incumbent on successive exhibitions to engage with a similar rigor of thought. The way the nineteenth century map was used in this exhibition offers the Old Quad a way to do this; by displaying long held cultural collections with an intent of opening up conversation, or by revealing the active structuring of history. The exhibition's focus on place, and its reminder to question,

or at least acknowledge constructed narratives and to offer alternate ones, is an important curatorial method for this space. The Old Quad should continue to stage similar exhibitions if it is to truly be considered the heart of an institution that prides itself on intellectual rigour and forward thinking. Through creative interrogation and reassessment of cultural heritage, the space has the potential to engage visitors in discussions regarding how our history is taught and received from the past all the way to today.

Reviewed by Ada Coxall

THE PAST THAT NEVER PASSED: A REVIEW OF THE NGV TERRACOTTA WARRIORS AND CAI GUO-QIANG EXHIBITION

It was at the moment when I was confronting each Terracotta Warrior at the NGV exhibition that I suddenly realised how remote I was, away from the history of China. Yet at the same time somewhere deep in my heart, I started to murmur: the past has never truly passed. Each of the eight Terracotta Warriors is placed in an individual glass cabinet with reflective mirrors, a design that brings without a doubt a sensational impression to the viewers. Given the fact that there are in total 6,000 or more Terracotta Warriors (many of those are still unearthed) in Xian, guarding the tomb where the first Emperor of China was buried, the reflective mirrors compensate for the shortage of warriors in number and provide the viewers an opportunity to closely examine the skills of ancient Chinese craftsmen. Although the Terracotta Warriors were supposed to be the theme and centre of the exhibition, I was astonished by the number of artefacts and artistic objects that the exhibition had to offer. Indeed, there are many connections between the exhibition and the histories behind it.

THE RULE

Many know of the Terracotta Army, but few know that the army is merely a part of the Emperor's collection.

Next to the pit where the army was excavated is the Emperor's Mausoleum, the size of which is no smaller than the Giza pyramids (see fig.1). Seven hundred thousand workers and craftsmen were laboured to the construction of the Mausoleum, which is still not excavated since according to the work of Sima Qian in 94 B.C., the Mausoleum has 'crossbows and arrows primed to shoot at anyone who enters the tomb,' and '[m]ercury was used to simulate the hundred rivers, the Yangtze and Yellow River, and the great sea, and set to flow mechanically'.[1] Cautiousness is required before any decision is made regarding the excavation. The craftsmen of the emperor once painted the warriors with the finest colour possible. However, due to Xian's dry climate, much of the colour flaked away within minutes before the eyes of the archaeologists when the mud protecting it was removed during the 1974 excavation.[2]

THE RITUALS

China was, as history remembers, a 'Nation of Rituals' (*liyi zhibang* 礼仪之邦). The nineteenth century American missionary W.A.P. Martin noted in his memoir, '[a] book containing

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[1] Qian Sima 司马迁, *Shi Ji* 史记 (Records of the Grand Historian), juan 6, (*Qin Shi Huang ben ji* 秦始皇本纪), 47.
[2] Brook Larmer, "Terra-Cotta Warriors in Color," National Geographic, 10 Sep, 2019, https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2012/06/terra-cotta-warriors/.

Figure 1: The Emperor's Mausoleum.[1]

Figure 2: One kneeling warrior on exhibit. The figure was once colourful. Photographed by Luke Yin, 2019.

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[1] Sunqianxiang 孙千翔, "Weishenme qinshihuang ling zhijin weikai? 为什么秦始皇陵至今未开？," [Why Don't They Excavate the Qin Shi Huang Mausoleum?], www.zhihu.com, 25 Aug, 2019, https://www.zhihu.com/question/19616066.

Figure 3: 'Bell of Duke Wu of Qin'.

Figure 4: 'Transience (Peony)' by Cai Guo-Qiang. The peony is the national flower of China.
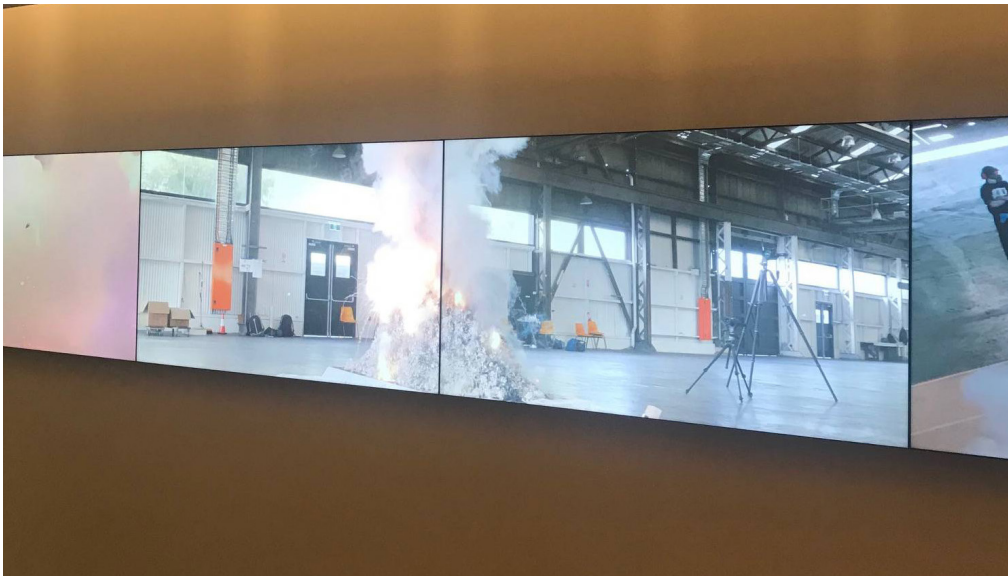

Figure 5: The creation of 'Transience (Peony)': The explosion.

three thousand rules of etiquette is studied at school, so that a well-bred lad always knows how to do the right thing at the right time'.[3] Martin's impression on Late Imperial Chinese ritual practices can be traced back to the Emperor's Era. The artefacts of the Emperor's palace represent not only an extravagant lifestyle, but also a deep connotation on how 'music' (*yue* 乐) was connected to 'rituals' (*li* 礼). The 'Bell of Duke Wu of Qin' on exhibition (see fig. 3), in which Duke Wu was the ancestor of the Emperor, provides such connotation in its exquisiteness. The sophisticated carving on the bell witnessed the ascension of Emperor's power, and in his dream: an empire in immortality. The bronze object was made to be immortal, with the practices of 'music' and 'ritual' two thousand years has passed but worship to the history of classicism reinforced.

THE RECONSTRUCTION

Cai Guo-Qiang's work 'Transience (Peony)' brings the audience to the emotional climax of the exhibition, especially the video at the end of the exhibition demonstrating how the artwork was produced using an explosion. The explosive performance immediately catches the attention of the viewers, yet the meaning behind the final work is even more profound. Cai was born in the 1950s, an era many would refer to as the most 'chaotic' period of modern Chinese history. The Great Leap Forward (1958-60) under the government's ambition of rapid nationwide industrialisation eventually caused hundreds of thousands of people to die from famine. But 'chaos' is the rhythm of twentieth century China, which echoes the revolutionary tone of a 'new China's' eagerness to be 'modernised' and to 're-embrace' the world; yet at what cost? A complete denial of the cultural tradition found in Chinese history as far back as the Emperor, if this is what the people of China desire? There might be no direct answer to it. Cai uses this artwork to indicate the short-lived Qin Empire, but its indication goes beyond: after Qin Dynasty, the Han Dynasty was to be built on the ash of Qin, and together with Qin, Han laid the foundation of Chinese civilisation for the next two thousand years. This history has never passed, and a true 'new China' is about to embrace the world with its long history and rich culture.

Reviewed by Luke Yin

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[3] William Alexander Parsons Martin, *A cycle of Cathay: or, China, south and north* (Edinburgh: Oliphant Anderson and Ferrier, 1896). 323.

'Our Bodies, Our Voices, Our Minds', the title for a group of exhibitions on display at Melbourne's Immigration Museum, features an array of tattoo works from a culturally diverse, international and local background. Which ran until the 5th of April, 2020, the exhibition features three styles of tattooing each running as individual series. 'Tatau: Marks of Polynesia' offers an educational experience, with photography of these works in tandem with prints of artists' views on the cultural tradition of *tatau*, from the Su'a Sulu'ape family, world renowned traditional hand tap *tatau* artists. A second series, 'Perseverance: Japanese Tattoo Tradition in a Modern World', features traditional Japanese *irezumi*, the Japanese word for tattoo (literally 'to insert ink'). The third series, 'Documenting the Body: Curated by Stanislava Pinchuk' features local artists in Melbourne, practitioners of various contemporary decorative tattoo styles.

The Polynesian *tatau* exhibition focuses on the cultural importance of this particular style of tattooing, where the process of tattooing is more than decorative. In the words of Su'a Sulu'ape Aisea Toetu'u, '*tatau* ties our people back to our responsibilities, history, heritage, and culture.' This feeling is echoed in the words of Su'a Sulu'ape Peter: 'It's not just about being a tattooist, it's not just a tattoo. Whenever I talk about tattoo, I talk about my family; I talk about my life. It's a lifestyle and it's cultural. I would give my life for it.' It is clear in the photography of this exhibit that there is tradition rooted in this artwork. While a number of the images on display are portraits of these tattoos, they do not attempt to isolate the art from the human. Tattooing makes use of the human body as its canvas and it is in these images that this relationship between art and body is laid out. Furthermore, the images on display are not restricted to these solo portraits either. As you move through the exhibit you will find a couple, arms loosely linked together, smiling at each other, a man standing in the surf, hands covered in grains of sand. Perhaps most important, an image of the Su'a Sulu'ape family together, and below that, the next generation, their children. A reminder that even as the tradition of *tatau* shifts and moves, and the style changes with new artists and new generations, they maintain their meaning and value over time. As expressed by Su'a Sulu'ape Aisea Toetu'u, these *tatau* can also be resistance, that despite the impacts of colonization, '*tatau* also reminds us that we are not fully colonized'.

The next series in this exhibition moves from Polynesia to Japan and California, where the 'Perseverance:

Japanese Tattoo Tradition in a Modern World' exhibit focuses on traditional Japanese tattooing, featuring work from Japanese artists in Japan and practitioners in California. While *irezumi* can refer to a specific traditional style of Japanese tattooing, it is also an umbrella term for all tattoos. Stepping into the exhibit, visitors are first presented with an explanation of the various themes used in this traditional style, involving historical, mythological and natural flora/fauna elements. Each of these elements generally carries cultural weight. Some examples of components in traditional Japanese style tattoos includes the *Tengu*, mountain spirits characterized by long noses or beaks, red skin and wings, featuring in many traditional mythologies. *Kitsune*, while also the word for normal foxes, refers to a spirit fox, commonly known in mythology to be able to shape shift and while sometimes regarded as benevolent were also known to be tricksters. *Sakura*, cherry blossoms, are iconic throughout Japanese contemporary media and culture, featured in traditional art and woven into *kimono* and *yukata*. A national event in Japan is *hanami*, or flower viewing, most heavily associated with the beginning of spring where thousands of cherry-blossom trees bloom across the country and people spend their weekends picnicking under the falling blossoms. These flowers' beauty is often related to the literary theory of *mono no aware*, which can be translated as an "awareness of things", which relates to the appreciation of transience. *Sakura* blossoms are emblematic of this idea, as their beauty is fleeting, blooming for up to two weeks before falling from the trees, their time made shorter by inclement weather. It is not that these flowers are especially more beautiful than others, but rather that their beauty is temporary and limited, with the season easily ended early by a strong storm which contributes to their iconic status.

The tattoos on display here show the full range of these different elements introduced and explained at the beginning of the exhibit, with works ranging from the most clearly traditional, using specific elements with heavy colour saturation and solid black linework, to more contemporary variations on the traditional Japanese tattoos, using similar iconic features and components of traditional Japanese tattooing with shifting styles of linework or illustration, and incorporating other iconic tattoo elements such as skulls. The work on display also makes an effort to highlight the contribution of female tattooists, as well as tattooed women, which is certainly needed in an art that is dominated by men. Throughout the exhibit, visitors are able to see the range of personal style that is worked into each tattoo, while every tattoo style, American Traditional, Japanese Traditional, Neo-Traditional,

Watercolour, Polynesian all have distinctive attributes, each artist carries their own approach to these styles in their work, and the wide ranges of what each artist is capable of is on display in these exhibits.

This same range is the focus of the final series in the exhibit, 'Documenting the Body: Curated by Stanislava Pinchuk', featuring Melbourne-based artists' works ranging from contemporary minimalist tattoos in concert with jewellery by Stanislava Pinchuk and Zaiba Khan, to Paul Stillen's flora and fauna tattoo work. Each of these displays expresses the individuality and breadth within the scope of tattoo artistry. Melbourne itself is a city full of talented artists, and this exhibit only scratches the surface of the incredible work being done here by these artists. The exhibit as a whole shows the range of emotion these art works can evoke in not only visitors as viewers of these works, but also captures their subjects. From the traditions of the Su'a Sulu'ape family, to the open mouth laughter of a man sporting his Japanese traditional body suit, to the stories of immigration built into the works of Stanislava Pinchuk and her clients, tattoos themselves can evoke a range of emotion, feeling and importance. From personal stories to larger cultural and social traditions, the meaning making of tattoos is as varied as their artists and clients.

Reviewed by Patrick Murphy

Russell McGregor
Idling in Green Places: A Life of Alec Chisholm
Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2019

Born in Maryborough in 1890 and dying in Sydney in 1977, ornithologist and journalist Alec Chisholm presided over periods of intense social change. In this biography Russell McGregor uses Chisholm's perspective as a man persistently on the sidelines of Australian public life to reflect upon the connections between environmentalism and the development of an Australian national identity. McGregor uses the relatively conventional structures of biography to construct a work of significant historical intervention. Rather than making a case for re-centring the influence of a man who has almost completely fallen from public remembrance, McGregor suggests that the study of such a fallible, naive, and yet passionate and active bystander may offer new perspectives on the dramatic changes Australia underwent in the early to mid-twentieth century.

Chisholm donated the bulk of his papers to the Mitchell Library. This is an enviable archive, which was masterfully used. McGregor's careful study of Chisholm's rhetorical style gives insights into his humanity, and into his profound belief in the social and psychological connections between humans and birds. Although, especially in the earlier section of the book, these personal recollections could be more critically interrogated Chisholm's papers bring lively animation to the various worlds he inhabited. McGregor paints an insightful picture of rural social life at the turn of the century, before he and Chisholm turn their attention to Australia's literary world with correspondence between Chisholm and the likes of Mary Gilmore and CJ Dennis.

Chisholm becomes a vantage point from which McGregor tracks twentieth century Australian history. The positionality of Chisholm is perhaps best characterised by McGregor's reflection on Chisholm's trip to Germany in 1938, that 'Alec just happened to take his overseas holiday at one of the most politically precarious times in recent world history' (141). Chisholm as a subject offers two looks – out into Australian public life, his position of relative fame providing insight into the great dramas of twentieth century Australia, including the Dismissal of both Jack Lang and Gough Whitlam (the former of which, Chisholm claimed to be intimately involved in). He also offers a look into Australian private life, and slower ideological shifts. Perhaps the most striking example of this vantage point is an extraordinary chapter where, within a

matter of only a few years, Chisholm reports on a Nazi rally in Berlin, dines with Australian Prime Ministers, and gives ornithological tours to Japanese diplomats. However, it should be noted that McGregor is somewhat unwilling to take a more critical approach to what he describes as Chisholm's 'earnest naivety' (123) throughout this period.

McGregor is obviously limited by the perspective of his protagonist (who, it is noted, destroyed much of the documentation relating to the women who populated his personal life), and perhaps this is why the women throughout the book appear somewhat marginal. The experience of Indigenous Australians also seems to have been almost invisible to Chisholm and therefore also to McGregor. Given Chisholm's preoccupation with the ravages of non-native birds on local populations, his belief in the productive relationships between humans and nature, and of connection to land, it is not anachronistic to suggest that this omission feels egregious. Chisholm does dabble in his later years with questions of women's and racial equality – and so does McGregor. McGregor is perhaps too keen to excuse the extent to which Chisholm consistently failed to use his privileged vantage point to engage with the social changes he witnessed, or to partake in any but his own personal causes. McGregor

undercuts his otherwise balanced portrait of Chisholm as a naive and vain optimist with perhaps an overly stringent defence, which can read as an attack on Chisholm's critics. McGregor keenly defends Chisholm from the criticism of other academics who have been less willing to excuse his shortcomings, and blind spots, such as in his histories of women. Chisholm's own autobiography was criticised for being too 'alluvial' (226) and lacking in social comment. It is possible that the same is true of this biography.

Idling in Green Places is at its best when McGregor dives into the worlds of birders and ornithologists. The search for the Paradise Parrot in the interwar years is a good example of this. Chisholm's first book, *Mateship with Birds* represents the unique, although not altogether unproblematic influence of Chisholm on Australian culture; it is here where we begin to understand Chisholm's particular mix of romanticism, nationalism, populism, conservationism, and humanism. McGregor provides the reader with a profound sense of Chisholm's belief in his particular understanding of the world of birds and their human-like psychological profiles. The section on – in Chisholm's mind – the villainous cuckoo is a charming example of this. McGregor tracks the changes in conservation ideologies and orthodoxies with compassion and consideration. The

chapter on Chisholm's belligerent resistance to the move away from amateur humanist birding traditions towards less democratic, more scientific approaches to ornithology, and the mid-century connections between conservation and anti-development movements provide insight into often overlooked environmental and cultural changes during the mid-century.

By considering a man who himself believed in the connections between humanity and nature, McGregor also constructs a history that animates and links Australia's natural and social lives. In its reflection on national identity and individual passion, it is exciting. In its study of skilled popular mobilisation for the cause of conservation, it is a timely intervention.

Reviewed by Jessie Matheson

Jessica Hinchy

Governing Gender and Sexuality in Colonial India: The Hijra, c.1850-1900

Cambridge University Press, 2019

In contemporary usage, the word 'hijra' refers to a group of eunuchs and transgender people in the Indian subcontinent, who are often street performers in ritual events such as weddings and birth ceremonies. These people are also known as the 'third gender'.[1] For a very long time, the *Hijra* community in India was socially marginalised, and their culture and history remain a mystery to outsiders. Jessica Hinchy's new book *Governing Gender and Sexuality in Colonial India: The Hijra, c.1850-1900* is the first book-length discussion of the history of the *Hijra* community in North India in the nineteenth century. Hinchy's highly original work explores the colonial archives, especially the substantial volume of legal documents regarding discussions and decisions on *Hijra* cases produced by British authorities at the time. Utilising debates on gender, intimacy, and space in colonial India, Hinchy argues that the *Hijra* community in India was initially criminalised by the colonial authorities, and latterly systematically eliminated, or subjected to genocide, because the British colonisers simply viewed *Hijra*

as a group of 'ungovernable' people. The intersectionality of *Hijra* identity; the anxiety of the colonial officials in dealing with Indian cultures and society, which eventually led to the failure of the elimination project;[2] and multilayered narratives and attitudes towards *Hijra* from both British authorities and Indian subjects are all meticulously documented in Hinchy's book.

The first part of the book (chapters 1-4) explains the reasons for the '*Hijra* panic' under the colonial administration during the nineteenth century. It details how the community was gradually stigmatised by colonial officials due to the constant fear and frustration that the sexual and gender 'disorder' of *Hijra* could form a direct challenge to the colonial rule and order. Despite the cultural complexity of 'eunuchs' and 'prostitutes' (such as *tawa'if* and *randis*) in Indian society, elite and middle-class Indians also condemned the existence of *Hijra* practices in the same period. These factors finally resulted in a 'gradual extirpation' of the *Hijra* community. The second part of the book (chapters 5-6) focuses on the so called '*Hijra*

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[1] Anuja Agrawal, 'Gendered bodies: the case of the third gender'in india', *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 31, no. 2 (1997): 273-97.

[2] With the word 'elimination', Hinchy refers to a series of colonial governments' legal moves targeting the *Hijra* community with the aim that *Hijra* would be extinct in Indian society: for example, the 1871 Criminal Tribes Act prohibited 'performing or wearing women's clothes' of *Hijra* in public space, which subsequently criminalised *Hijras* and their community in colonial India (p. 63).

Archives', an attempt by the British authorities to collect and register *Hijra* personal information. In these analyses, Hinchy intertwined detailed accounts of *Hijra,* their lives, rituals, and domestic practices with discussion of how stereotypical colonial understandings of 'kidnapping', 'impotence', 'sodomy', and the sexuality of Indian men, have together signified a complex and multi-faceted image of the *Hijra* in colonial India. The third part (chapters 7-9) discusses how the colonial authorities intended to eliminate the culture of *Hijra* community through the practice of removing the (male-bodied) children from *Hijra* households or barring *Hijra* from street performances, and how the community coped with these policies and eventually survived colonial attempts to eliminate these communities and cultures.

Through this study, Hinchy has successfully developed her analysis on 'cultural genocide' (p. 95) with the study of British legal polices and regulations towards *Hijra* in the late nineteenth century. The Contagious Diseases Act (1860) and the Criminal Tribes Act (1871) were among the most well-known regulations and are well contextualised in this book. One of the most impressive points of Hinchy's study is the sheer amount of colonial archives regarding *Hijra* in North India that were recorded by the nineteenth century British officials

Yet even as the colonial government archived more and more information about *Hijras*, there was a continuing sense of anxiety in the NWP (North-Western Provinces) government that this information was inadequate and that the *Hijra* 'system' was incompletely known (p. 135).

This is impressive because the neglect of the history of *Hijras* until now is not due to the fact that there are not sufficient archives, but rather to a lack of scholarly interest in the subject. A shortcoming in this study, if any, is an over-reliance on British colonial sources. Utilising more sources from the Indian perspective would establish a deeper understanding of the attitude of the colonised at the time. For instance, Hinchy mentions a few Urdu-language newspaper reports regarding *Hijras* (p.85) but does not extend her analysis of these newspapers. Nevertheless, Hinchey's book will surely encourage a further investigation of this fascinating topic of gender and sexuality in colonial India.

Reviewed by Luke Yin