

Editorial: After the Water has been Shed

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The present *Coolabah* volume, nr 15, flows from the January 2014 *Watershed* congress at the University of Barcelona, organized by the Philology Faculty's Centre for Australian Studies (ASC) in collaboration with the Centre for Peace and Social Justice (CPSJ) at the University of Southern Cross, Australia. A call was put out to delegates to elaborate conference presentations into full-fledged essays of academic length (5,000 to 8,000 words), and a select number of scholars has contributed to the making of this collection of blind-peer-reviewed essays. The resulting volume, as is usual with our post-congress issues, covers a wide range of topics relating to the congress theme—Watershed—and so offers an eclectic, yet therefore challenging mix of papers within the field of postcolonial and cultural studies. Part of what is left after the water has been shed and the streams of conversation have settled down becomes visible in this compilation. The following will lay out some of the strands occurring and concurring in these pieces, which each in one way or another address the trope of watershed.

In “Pedagogical Change at Times of Change in the Higher Education System: An Exploration of Early Career Mentoring, Co-publication and Teaching and Learning Insights”, Bill Boyd locates his discursive strand of analysis within the rapidly changing university environment and the deluge of social, political, economic and technological pressures on teachers/researchers this generates. Boyd has been engaged in developing tailor-made programmes to help early- and mid-career academics cope with these new demands, and reflects on this research and practice in his paper. His “essay provides examples of activities that, on the one hand, assist academics to develop the tools they need to navigate the new and evolving environment of higher education, while on the other hand directly addresses key pedagogical issues and provides new insight into teaching and learning in higher education”. Boyd’s opting for “human-scale ... small team-based research and writing projects” is also patent in Jeanti St Clair’s “Doing it for Real: Designing Experiential Journalism Curricula that Prepare Students for the New and Uncertain World of Journalism Work”. Her essay centres on the creative adjustments in journalism studies to the array of pressures that Boyd detects. Through “a learning-centred curriculum anchored in

authentic and experiential activities and settings”, she finds ways for students to ready themselves for, and stay afloat in, the sometimes rough waters of the new university as well as future work environments.

In “On Matteo Ricci’s Interpretations of Chinese Culture”, Chen Hong takes a different tack on education by delving into the rich cultural exchange between European missionaries and Chinese society in centuries past and by investigating its reciprocal character, claiming a more integrated and balanced approximation to the establishment of academic knowledge. Hong’s essay endeavours to fill a gap in the knowledge about Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), the 16th-century Italian Jesuit missionary to the Ming Dynasty who introduced Western learning into China, by looking at how Ricci also intensely participated in the reverse stream of knowledge. She points out that Ricci, in fact, is at the origins of the study of sinology as we now know it in the West, the fountain from which Oriental knowledge first started flowing in Europe. In “Transnationalism and the Decentralization of the Global Film Industry”, Jordi Codó Martínez looks at recent shifts in the film industry in which the point of gravity in production and consumption is swinging transatlantically and transpacifically to Asia and, especially China. Codó Martínez points out that, while Eastern cinema themes, genres and techniques have flooded Western cinema to cater for the Asian market, the Western consumer resists watching Asian cinema. This is on a par with the unidirectional flow detected by Hong in the way Matteo Ricci has been studied up to now. In “Louisa Lawson and the Woman Question”, Anne Holden Rønning looks at yet another pioneering figure and a different facet of mass media culture through Louisa Lawson’s involvement in *The Dawn*, the first Australian magazine in which women’s voice was to be heard on the continent. Published on the wave of the first emancipatory British women’s press in 1855, *The Dawn* “gave women a voice, marked women’s political engagement in the public sphere, and employed women composers, making available to a broader public issues which were politically relevant” in the period of its existence, 1888-1905. By studying its content over these seventeen years, Holden highlights the magazine and Lawson’s pioneering role and importance in the struggle for women’s vote and rights.

In “Developing a Connective Feminine Discourse: Drusilla Modjeska on Women’s Lives, Love and Art”, Ulla Rahbek also explores the current of women’s emancipation in writing by offering an analysis of the Australian author and historian Drusilla Modjeska’s fiction on the intersection of women’s lives, love and art, which she posits as the bedrock of Modjeska’s oeuvre. By addressing a series of connective images which refer to such womanly activities as weaving, folding and talking, Rahbek reveals Modjeska’s idiosyncratic feminism in the strong current of what she terms “connective feminine discourse” in her fiction. In “Identity and friendship in Hsu-Ming Teo’s *Behind the Moon* (2000)”, Catalina Ribas Segura takes us back to the Asian strand with her discussion of identity issues in the novel *Behind the Moon* (2000) by the Chinese Australian author Hsu-Ming Teo. In her analysis, Ribas Segura questions the notion of “Australianness” and addresses the concepts of belonging and identity in the development of some youths of different ethnic backgrounds in the western suburbs of Sydney in the 1990s. In her article on the Western-Australian story-teller and poet Alf Taylor, “Literature as Protest and Solace: The Verse of Alf Taylor”, Danica Čerče aims for a more expansive definition of Indigenous-Australian poetry than is traditionally managed. Rather than inscribing Taylor’s poetry, collected in *Singer Songwriter* (1992) and *Winds* (1994), within a narrow politicized framework that drowns out the literary qualities of his writing, Čerče takes Taylor’s oeuvre as

the example that Indigenous poets fuse community responsibility and identity with a rich exploration of the inner self, “urg[ing] us to see their careers in a perspective much wider than that of social chroniclers and rebels”. In “Negotiating ‘Negative Capability’: The Role of Place in Writing”, the non-Indigenous poets Lynda Hawryluk and Leni Shilton look at the issue of Australian belonging and place by applying John Keats’s notion of ‘negative capability’ (1891, p. 48) to their writing. There is a call for writing the Australian self into belonging by shunning rational approaches to explain the mystery of (belonging to) place; rather the impact of negative capability, which stands for the poet’s sensory and intuitive openness to the mystery, doubt and uncertainty the Australian landscape may inspire, enables the poet to ‘glimpse’ a mystic connection to the local that goes “*beyond* the notion of specific place”.

As is habitual in our editions and despite the previous presentation, these articles are listed according to their author’s last name in alphabetical order on the contents page so as not to predetermine the scope of interconnections these papers may generate. We hope these generous contributions will prevent the streams of conversation opened up in our watershed congress from drying up.

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