Antipodes
A Global Journal of Australian/New Zealand Literature
The Publication of the American Association of Australasian Literary Studies
December 2017 Vol. 31 No. 2

♦ Poetry

♦ Fiction / Creative Nonfiction

♦ Essays

♦ Departments

♦ Book Reviews

Fiction

Nonfiction

Poetry

Gathering: The Politics of Memory and Contemporary Aboriginal Women's Writing

Jeanine Leane
School of Culture and Communication, University of Melbourne

Remember, it's your job not to forget!
–Aunty Betty Smart (1923–2009)

This article explores stories of rewriting Australian history by Aboriginal women through literature. My focus is on the narrative poetry and prose testimonials by Aboriginal women writers that interact with the archive, using the term *archive* as Derrida defined it: as something that is much broader than but including storehouses of official paperwork and records and that evokes voices from the past that recall and re-member trauma and resilience through "blood memory" (see Allen) and the Aboriginal body—particularly the bodies of Aboriginal women. Our bodies are an archive where memories are etched, stored, and anchored. This is the living archive that I inherit, and my mind and body becomes a repository of my family's Aboriginal history—even before it was told to me and even now as some of it still remains untold or is still missing. Thus, for me, the politics of memory is to re-member a dismembered but still living past as it haunts, pervades, and *lives in* the present.

What Is Memory Politics?

Memory politics is transgenerational—beyond the span of a lifetime; it is the greater body politic of Aboriginal memory. We had ways of gathering and storing, communicating and transmitting our histories long before the invasion and intervention of state and its wide and wavering nets—its infrastructure—the archives, the "History" with a capital "H." National history and the archiving of all things Aboriginal has been just one among many interventions—invasions into the lives of Aboriginal people. The original invasion of 1788 was followed by a series of smaller but no less significant or pernicious interventions into and invasions of Aboriginal lands and bodies and *attempts* to invade our mind.

A recent example of the continuance of the invasion structure is the 2007 "Northern Territory Intervention." Yet the majority of non-Indigenous Australians

Antipodes 31.2 (December 2017), pp. x–x

speak of the events that occurred in 2007 and the ongoing government surveillance and control of welfare payments to communities as "the intervention." This tendency toward "national amnesia" by settler Australians to the ongoing history of Aboriginal oppression and resilience is one of the motivations for this article and the body of writing it discusses.

The living archive of our families and their stories is for the most part a complete contrast to the archives of the state. The three generations of women who raised me never lived outside the control of the state. As the Nunga writer Natalie Harkin puts it, "State acts of surveillance, recording and archiving had the power to place our family stories in the public domain, or obliterate our stories within the broader histories of erasure filed away, silent and hidden, until bidden" (14).

In my experience, the state archive does both—makes public and conceals. What it makes public is the picture of Aboriginal people that it needs to project at any particular historical moment (in the case of my family, these historical moments occurred between the late 1880s, when my grandmother first came onto the state radar, to the late 1960s, when *this* type of surveillance in Aboriginal lives was replaced by a different type of surveillance). What the archive conceals and obliterates are the people behind the paper filed away in cardboard boxes, stored in cold vaults in the basements of buildings. These places are the prisons of Aboriginal history that attempted to incarcerate our memories of blood and Country[1]—just as the official state-operated prison system incarcerates our physical bodies—the dual imprisonment. The official, penal system has a particularly devastating impact on Aboriginal populations; the "cardboard prison" of the state archive has been an active agent in the colonial structure, dispossessing and dismembering family histories, memories, and stories. That the "cardboard prison" has been a significant catalyst in twenty-first-century Aboriginal women's writing is, I argue, because Aboriginal women were and are the gatherers; and this body of work represents the cultural continuation of both the metaphorical and physical gathering practices of women that ensure the material and emotional sustenance of the wider society.

Aboriginal culture is diverse, and Australia is a nation imagined and constructed over many Aboriginal Countries; but common across all Australian Aboriginal societies is the role of women as gatherers. I think most people understand the physical role of gathering. The concept of gathering is conventionally associated with small things—lizards, insects, bugs, berries, fruits, seeds, tubers, eggs, small ground animals, nectar, and wild honey. It is also women's job to weave or craft vessels in which to keep the gatherings. These woven and specially crafted vessels that hold all things gathered are cultural metaphors—which I define as an activity or a process that reflects the underlying values of a culture. So the process of gathering, collecting, and storing in baskets, coolamons, and dillis, for example, is a cultural

metaphor for collective memories that are at the core of the politics of memory.

Listening for and identifying cultural metaphors is central to my methodology in literary analysis. The way a people describe, understand, and represent themselves and the way they are represented in national narratives is particularly significant for understanding cultural contexts, values, and definitions of success and/or failure. Of particular interest are the cultural metaphors used to describe otherness and the shapes of such metaphors in Western literature. Western cultural metaphors have a certain preoccupation with verticalness, angles, and ascent. The biblical theme of the "ladder of ascent" or "Jacob's ladder" is often deployed in Western cultural and literary narratives as a structure through which to view civilizations and cultures "other than" Anglo-European. All those "others" fall on the downside of the ladder.

Herbert Basedow, an anthropologist, geologist, explorer, medical practitioner, protector of Aborigines, and politician, wrote in *The Australian Aboriginal* (1925), "the Australian aboriginal [*sic*] stands somewhere near the bottom rung of the great evolutional ladder we have ascended" (58). Basedow was influenced by the Heidelberg anthropologist Hermann Klaatsch, who spent three years in Australia photographing Aboriginal faces between 1904 and 1907, published widely on the subject, and came to the conclusion that Australian Aborigines are an earlier prototype of Caucasians who became racially and geographically isolated, hence the "primitive features and stone-age society [*sic*]" (926). Klaatsch was adamant that Australian Aboriginal racial development was *totally disassociated from Negroid and Mongoloid* and therefore that there was great potential for "breeding out" and raising Aborigines further *up* the rung of the ladder. Aboriginal protectors such as A. O Neville, Ernst Mitchell, and Walter Baldwin Spencer placed much emphasis on Klaatsch's theories as translated by Basedow, and such theories were the basis for assimilation and child-removal policies and the Stolen Generations.

Basedow is most famous for the phrase "missing links in a land that time forgot"—the gap between the pinnacle of Caucasian and the base element in its most unsophisticated form: the Australian Aborigine. The legacy of the missing link theory is still alive and well and manifests itself in such stock phrases as "close the gap." The politics of memory, then, in Aboriginal women's writing is debunking myths of us as "missing links in a land that time forgot" through excavating, resurfacing, and resurrecting and gathering buried, dormant, or sleeping links in our Countries through our stories, our archives, to re-member and remember.

This leads me back to gathering, storing, and sharing as an important way of archiving and transmitting information, anecdotes, family stories, genealogies, knowledge, and secrets. Gathering, keeping, and storing and restoring are not only important literal activities but also important methods of transmission. The food gathered by women was often the staple of the clan, although it was most often

the hunts of larger game that were celebrated through dance, song, and ceremony. And so, within Aboriginal society, which was organized and structured very tightly around gendered roles, men most often presented the public history, representation, and commemoration of a place and a people, and women were the keepers of the private sphere and certain knowledge(s) that remained secret. This may seem like an all-too-familiar scenario of men in the public spotlight and women behind the scenes and one that is not necessarily unique to Aboriginal society—that is true, but with the invasion and continued incursion of colonialism, this "behind the scenes" role became the strength of us as women in the face of cultural genocide. The colonial government of the day repressed public displays of Aboriginality, "corroborrees," ceremonies, rites of passage, burials, traditional marriages, and in particular language because they were obvious to the colonial gaze. But some of the knowledge, stories, and secrets gathered and stored remained much more elusive to the authorities, as did the intergenerational continuation of the acts of gathering, storing, and secrecy among women, even after traditional Aboriginal societies were dispossessed and dispersed.

I make this point to elicit and speak to continuation of ancient practices in contemporary Aboriginal women's writing and the crucial role our writings have in reshaping the national politics of memory. And, while my observations in settler academies lead me to believe that the physical aspect of gathering is reasonably well understood, what is not so well understood is the spiritual, transcendental role of women as the gatherers and keepers of family histories and knowledge and secrets that come from Country. The politics of memory is to regather and to restore these family histories of trauma and resilience and to restory the nation that sits very shallowly at the surface of Country.

As the acclaimed Waanyi author and literary critic Alexis Wright has put it, "Throughout my life, I have learnt how to piece the mysteries together with gathered facts from historical records that have been revealed through anthropological, historical and family research. I can only now feel I can tell the story of our family revealing the voices of loved ones who never ever told a story that they felt was too shameful to tell" (10). Here, I think Wright speaks very strongly to the role of women as gatherers but also to her engagement with the archive—the historical record and what is gathered there too, to be reclaimed, regathered, restored, and rewritten through the "informed imagination"[2] of the writer, whose hand is informed by story and transgenerational memory to transform and right/write the past in a creative political act.

Memory Politics and Aboriginal Writing

The politics of Aboriginal memory when applied to the state archive of surveillance that has officially defined Aboriginality can examine ways in which the past still haunts us and maintains its influence on the present, particularly how the layers of meaning in events or texts, previously consigned to history's shadows, can be exposed through creative expression. The archive has come into the spotlight and under the microscope of writers, and more importantly, it has been brought into conversation with writers—particularly but not exclusively those who seek to *re-member* a past *dis-membered* by the colonial archive (see Stoler). So the archive is both exposed and brought into the public sphere by Aboriginal writing—that is the spotlight image—but it is also scrutinized, dissected, and examined under the microscope of Aboriginal readers who bring our intergenerational stories and secrets and read for the silences and the cultural metaphors that recaste us in a largely deficit discourse. And what this does is challenge and in this context reverse to *some extent*, at least, the existing power dynamic of the colonial paradigm by putting the white history of Aboriginal Australians on the cutting board, where previously our people have spent too much time and experienced many personal and emotional invasions.

When my sister and I finally entered the archive of a women's home in Paddington, Sydney, where my grandmother spent time from 1907 to 1908 and read the history or part of the history—but not the real history: the history someone else had written and had control of, not my Nanna and Aunties, but a warped version of their lives told through the eyes of the state and filed away in a box for the record—I was overwhelmed and overcome with grief, loss, and anger. My response to the archive prison was the following poem.

Cardboard Incarceration:

This cardboard prison they call an archive
is cold, airless and silent as death.
Floor to ceiling boxes contain voices
no longer heard yet still wailing within
and faces no longer seen yet still missing in a
jail of captured snippets, images and memories
like the severed heads and bleached bones of
dismembered bodies neatly locked away in the vaults
of museums and universities of the world
in the name of science or history or anthropology or
something else so important at the time that

justified the collection of bits and pieces of another—
the Other.
We are the inmates incarcerated within these
cardboard cells where every neatly dotted 'i,'
and symmetrically crossed 't' screams out:
Read this Black angst against
these white pages.

Some of the older archival records and reports, such as the few surviving snippets I found in the NSW State Archive, are handwritten, and reading the mood, tone, sentiment, anger, disgust, angst, and sometimes empathy of the writing itself can also tell so much beyond the words.

Natalie Harkin describes a similar experience when she finally gained access to the 188-page file from Link-Up, South Australia, that had recorded her grandmother's life under the Aboriginal Protection Board and the State Children's Welfare Departments from 1938 to 1947. In trawling through pages of institutionalized abuse and control, strict domestic training, a life lived under threat and punishment, her failed attempts to find her way home reported as "serial absconding," state-issued "dog tags," she came upon a letter to her grandmother dated just before her release from the Aborigines Protection Board, and I quote directly:

Dear Madam Half-Caste Quadroon,

I have the pleasure in advising that the Aborigines Protection Board has granted UNCONDITIONAL EXEMPTION *to you and the members of your Quadroon-Octoroon family, from the provisions of the Aborigines Act.*

You are now regarded in law as citizens of the ordinary white community, and I will trust you will do your best to justify the confidence reposed in you by the Board.

Yours faithfully,
Secretary
ABORIGINES PROTECTION BOARD
May 1941 (Harkin 14)

Harkin speaks of her flag-flying rage as she read of her Nanna's life. She buried the file at the bottom of a wardrobe and *tried to forget*. But like the many other Aboriginal writers—not exclusively but predominantly women writers, myself included—we were driven to find a space where our critical Aboriginal women's voices could be

heard and where our memory politics could be enacted in dialogue with the present. Harkin responds in spectro-poetic form in a piece called *Ode to the Board of Anthropological Research*, an excerpt of which I share here:

> *Tilt her chin up-slightly to the right and shoot her body once again down the barrel of your camera–drag her image through your lens–you will never know her fully. . . . Teach her to scrub, mop, sew remove her three times from her lands document her features bleed her till she bends then examine her brown body through your microscope lens–but you will never know her fully.* (Harkin 40

Similarly, when the Wiradjuri poet Elizabeth Hodgson as a grown woman gained access to psychiatric reports written about her when she was four years old in an institution for light-skinned Aboriginal children in western Sydney—describing her as insubordinate, unstable, ungrateful, and deceitful—she wrote in a poetic response, "My memory is long and dangerous."

And this brings me to the practical application of Aboriginal memory politics and how we express it. Here I am influenced greatly by two things: the relatively recent—I am reticent to call it a genre, category, style, particularly given that the second influence I am going to mention is Derrida, so perhaps I will call it a concept—and that is docu-prose, poetry, docu-responses; and what I am going to call docu-memory, writing to what Derrida called archival fever—the sickness of the archive. Docu-memory writing is the meeting place—meeting places being an important cultural metaphor for Aboriginal people—where memory meets documents or, the other way around, documents and memory collide to break down the force field of history as it has contained us thus far. The records—the written records—are the epicenter of the confinement.

I will offer a definition of docu-poetry, by Joseph Harrington, based on a lengthy list compiled by the American poet Jena Osman in 2000 of docu-poetry emerging in the decade previous—late 1980s / early 1990s to the turn of the century. Usually docu-poetry contains quotations from or reproductions of documents or statements not produced by the writer and relates to historical narratives, whether macro or micro, human or natural, past or present. Marianne Moore described such poetry as "poetry including history by including business documents and schoolbooks." Moore and Harrington spoke of the poetry that engages with and speaks to documents/records as docu-poetry, but such an approach can be and is, in the case of Aboriginal writing, applied to other forms of docu-writing such as extended prose, play- and screenwriting, and visual-docu-poetry and docu-writing of place (see Birch). And docu-writing, from the second half of the twentieth century onward, was the catalyst for an ongoing literary debate about the split between literary and

nonliterary documents—between literature and reportage. It is not my intention to elaborate on that here, although I have engaged with it. I will however, elaborate on one critique, because I think the essence of this critique is the very appeal of what I am going to call the docu-memory writing of Aboriginal women in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

The American poet Nada Gordon, in her denunciation "On Docu-Poetry: Febrile Meditation" (2009), berated docu-poetry as "grasping for mimesis and reportage at the expense of verbal imagination," "a shoehorning of didactic social message into poetic and/or literary form," and "a mismatch between flat reportage and the form of voice itself." Such critique builds to a crescendo as Gordon complains of the oppressive mawkishness of what she considers nonfiction material that "reads or sounds like a lot of interesting information that has been LEFT OUT"—excluded from archives and public records. So what concerns Gordon here—the mismatch and, what she does not actually say but strongly implies, the "mishmash" of genres, styles, fact, and fiction—are the very things that draw me and Aboriginal women writers whom I have spoken to (e.g., Natalie Harkin, Yvette Holt, Elizabeth Hodgson, Ali Cobby-Eckermann, and Kerry-Reed-Gilbert) to this method of writing. For while genre, form, and clear-cut boundaries and borders between fiction and nonfiction reassure a certain reader, critic, scholar, historian, and so on that there is a place for everything and that everything is in its place, docu-memory-writing challenges this—pushes the boundaries and limits of this—and asks, *In what place is everything in its place? Who has the authority to place everything in its place? And whose voice defines what is in and outside of this place? And who names the place/space in the first place? Who names this space and the order within?*

The mishmash harks back to the gatherings of Aboriginal women. This mixture of bits and pieces of writing styles and forms that collapse or at least challenge conventional genre constraints that previously excluded the nonliterary voice anyway and the search for what is left out—the scattered scraps, the rejected, the refuse of and the deficit discourse within the archive, history books, national literature—is how docu-memory writing allows us to confront generations of silencing and racial sexual oppression. As well as what is left out, we are also concerned with engaging with the deficit discourse within and, particularly for Aboriginal feminist writers, a space to destabilize and subvert "white supremacist archons" (Derrida 2) whose dominating violent colonizing narratives have wielded great power and still do leave a legacy.

The very mishmash of our expression—the mixing of sources, forms, styles—its physical material appearance in print, mounts a substantial challenge to the Western order of things (Foucault) and, from my cultural standpoint, the great Western aversion to mixing things; or another way to express that is the great Western attrac-

tion and preference for purity and in this case racial purity. And I referred earlier to blood and memory—there is blood everywhere in the archive too—blood spilt—although such events as massacres are not well recorded in the archive—the blood that drips and oozes through the archive is the British obsession with blood—Aboriginal blood—white blood—full-blood—half-caste—quarter-caste—quadroon—octoroon—the colonial blood dilution scale. So even in its very form—the mishmash—the mixing—docu-memory writing is political as well as creative.

Docu-writing is how I/we write/right our politics of memory, and it occurs at the interface or the meeting place of the public history record and the private interaction with such—this time though engaging with this on our own terms, armed with our memories—intergenerational and immediate, and our anecdotes to read against the grain. Aboriginal writing, particularly that occurring in the post-*Mabo*—postapology—sociopolitical climate, traces a creative movement from being sickened—repulsed—by such records—Derrida's archival fever—to being drawn to the records in what Derrida named the remedy of archival fever—archival desire—a desire to enter the spectral territory that still haunts the present. In this way, the archive, the public record, is approaching me as much as I am approaching it; to speak to the fragments—to gather—fill in the spaces; to engage with the materiality—gather the scattered shards and move it to the emotion, to the voices still screaming to *get out of the box—to be freed from the cardboard prison*. In this way, docu-memory-writing is a rite of passage back into our history, our Countries, and our place.

Notes

1. *Country* for Aboriginal people means more than just land. *Country* means the place to which one belongs through heritage. I am descended from the Wiradjuri people of the Murrumbidgee River; and my Country is Wiradjuri, and it embodies land, language, story, history, and culture. The Wiradjuri Country of the Murrumbidgee is always my Country, irrespective of the geographical region where I may live.

2. *Informed imagination* is a term I use to describe the way Aboriginal writers work with bits and pieces of archival information and snippets of story and memory from loved ones to imagine the gaps missing or left out of the official records, the memories that were too painful to tell, or the historical fictions and untruths that need to be rewritten. The imagination is informed by transgenerational blood memory.

Works Cited

Allen, Chadwick. *Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in North American Indian and Maori Activist Texts*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2002. Print.

Basedow, Herbert. *The Australian Aboriginal*. Adelaide: Peerce, 1925. Print.

Birch, Anthony. *Ghost River*. St. Lucia: U of Queensland P, 2015. Print.

Derrida, Jacques. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996. Print.

Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things: The Archeology of Human Sciences*. New York: Vintage, 1966. Print.

Gordon, Nada. "On Docu-Poetry: Febrile Meditation." *Ululations* (blog) Feb. 2009. Web. 4 June 2018. https://thesoundprincess.wordpress.com/2009/02/20/on-docu-poetry-a-febrile-meditation/ accessed.

Harkin, Natalie. "The Poetics of (Re)Mapping Archives: Memory in the Blood. *JASAL: Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature* 2014: 1–12. Print.

Harrington, Joseph. "Docupoetry and Archive Desire." *Jacket 2* (2002). Web. 4 June 2018. https://jacket2.org/article/docupoetry-and-archive-desire.

Hodgson, Elizabeth. *Skin Paintings*. St. Lucia: U of Queensland P, 2008. Print.

Klaatsch, Hermann. *The Evolution and Progress of Mankind*. London: Fischer Unwin, 1923. Print.

Moore, Marianne. "Interview with Donald Hall, *Paris Review*, 1961." *A Marianne Moore Reader*. New York: Viking, 1961. 253–75. Print.

Stoler, Ann Laura. *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Violence and Colonial Common Sense*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2010. Print.

Wright, Alexis. "The Politics of Writing." *Southerly* 62.2 (2002): 10–20. Print.

Contributors

Keyvan Allahyari is a doctoral candidate at the Australian Centre, the University of Melbourne. His research focuses on the ways that Peter Carey's fiction can be seen as literary systems homologous with the literary world that Carey inhabits as an Australian writer.

Peter Boyle is a Sydney-based poet and translator of poetry. He is the author of seven books of poetry, most recently *Ghostspeaking*, which won the 2017 Kenneth Slessor Prize. As a translator, he has had six books of poetry published, including poetry by Venezuelan Eugenio Montejo and Cuban José Kozer. He is also the 2017 recipient of the Philip Hodgins Memorial Medal for Excellence in Literature.

Michelle Cahill writes poetry and fiction. Her recent books are *The Herring Lass* (Arc) and *Letter to Pessoa*, which was awarded the NSW Premier's Literary Award for New Writing. She is the editor of *Mascara Literary Review*.

Jennifer Compton was born in New Zealand and now lives in Melbourne. She is a poet, playwright, and prose writer. Her recent play *The Goose in the Bottle* was short-listed for the Lysicrates Prize in Australia, and her verse novel *Mr Clean & the Junkie* was long-listed for the Ockham NZ Book Awards.

Sarah Day's seventh book is *Tempo* (Puncher & Wattmann, 2013). It was short-listed for the Prime Minister's Literary Awards and received the Wesley Michelle Wright Prize. Awards for previous books include the Queensland Premier's, Judith Wright ACT, and the Anne Elder Prize. She lives in Hobart, Tasmania.

Anna Denejkina is a writer, freelance journalist, and academic. She is completing a PhD in sociology at the University of Technology Sydney.

Jamie Derkenne is a recent PhD student at Macquarie University, researching how landscape, history, and Indigeneity interact within the Australian narrative, particularly in the works of Richard Flanagan and Alexis Wright. His former career was in newspaper journalism, IT, and corporate communications. He has written and published (in the *Quarry*, the *Swamp*, *Birdsville*, and *Ragnarok*) many short stories centered on the northern NSW town of Bowraville, where he lived for eight years. He has also written several personal history pieces; the latest one, concerning his grandfather, appeared in *Quadrant* in January 2017.

Audrey J. Golden is an assistant professor of English at Coe College. Her research focuses on global Anglophone literatures, postcolonial theory, and international human rights law. Her work has appeared in *Law, Culture and the Humanities*, *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Human Rights*, and the *Wake Forest Law Review*.

John Grey is an Australian poet residing in the United States. His recent work has been published in *New Plains Review*, *Stillwater Review*, and *Big Muddy Review*, with work upcoming in *Louisiana Review*, *Columbia College Literary Review*, and *Spoon River Poetry Review*.

Marie Herbillon holds a license (four-year degree) in Germanic languages and literatures from the University of Liège (ULg), Belgium, where she also gained a master's degree in translation (English-French) and another one in English studies. She completed a PhD titled "Beyond the Line: Murray Bail's Spatial Poetics" and published (in international journals such as *Commonwealth Essays and Studies*) several articles focusing on the writings of this contemporary Australian writer. Her current research project addresses the themes of history and migration in J. M. Coetzee's late fiction. Her most up-to-date bibliography is available online through the institutional repository ORBi (Open Repository and Bibliography) and can be accessed at https://orbi.ulg.ac.be/.

Lyn J. Jacobs is an associate professor (adjunct) in Australian literature and Australian studies at Flinders University. She has published research on Australian poetry, fiction and literary responses to Asia, and the writing of Vincent Buckley, Beverley Farmer, Tim Winton, and Gail Jones.

Virginia Jealous lives in Denmark, Washington. Her poems have appeared previously in *Antipodes* as well as in journals elsewhere. She is currently writing about the life and work of the poet Laurence Hope (aka Violet Nicolson), who died in Madras in 1904.

Jeanine Leane's work has centered on exploring, in both fictional and nonfictional prose, the manifestation of Indigenous Australian stories. Her work includes *Dark Secrets after Dreaming: AD 1887–1961*, winner of the 2010 Scanlon Prize for Indigenous Poetry, and *Purple Threads*, a collection of stories of land and people and the powers that tie people to land. *Purple Threads* won the David Unaipon Award (QLD Premier's Literary Awards) for an unpublished Indigenous story in any genre. She teaches at the University of Melbourne.

Suzette Mayr has published articles in the journals *Horror Studies*, *Canadian Literature: A Quarterly of Criticism and Review*, and *Canada and Beyond* and is coeditor of *The Broadview Anthology of Short Fiction*. She is the author of five novels, including her most recent, *Dr. Edith Vane and the Hares of Crawley Hall*. Her fiction has been awarded the ReLit Award and the

W. O. Mitchell Award, has been nominated for a Commonwealth Prize for Best Novel in the Canada-Caribbean Region, and was long-listed for the Scotiabank Giller Prize. Mayr is an associate professor at the University of Calgary.

Les Murray is the author of thirty-five collections of poetry, two verse novels, and eight collections of prose. His awards include the Gold Medal for Poetry, presented by Queen Elizabeth II; the T. S. Eliot Prize; the Petrarch Prize; and an Order of Australia, for services to Australian literature.

Mark O'Flynn's collection of poems is *Shared Breath* from Hope St. Press. His novel, *The Last Days of Ava Langdon*, was a finalist in the 2017 Miles Franklin Award.

Jan Owen's seventh book of verse, *The Offhand Angel*, was published in 2015, and her translations from Baudelaire's *Les fleurs du mal* was published by Arc Publications in the same year. In 2016, she received the Philip Hodgins Memorial Medal for Excellence in Literature.

Harriette Richards is a PhD candidate at the University of Western Sydney. Her dissertation is "Fashioning Melancholia: A Cultural History of Sartorial Representation in Aotearoa New Zealand."

Geoff Rodoreda is a lecturer in the English Department at the University of Stuttgart, Germany. He has worked as a radio and print journalist in Australia and Germany. In 2011–12, he gave up journalism work to concentrate on academic teaching and on writing a PhD dissertation, which has resulted in a book: *The Mabo Turn in Australian Fiction* (Peter Lang, 2017).

Craig Sherborne is the author of six books including the novels *Tree Palace*, short-listed for the 2015 Miles Franklin Award, and *The Amateur Science of Love*, winner of the 2012 Melbourne Prize for Best Writing. His memoir *Muck* won the Queensland Premier's Literary Award for Nonfiction, and *Hoi Polloi* was short-listed for the Queensland and Victorian Premier's Awards. He has also written two volumes of poetry, and his journalism and poetry have appeared in most of Australia's leading literary journals and anthologies. His new novel, *Off the Record*, will be published by Text in 2018.

Barrie Smillie (age eighty-five) has been teaching French since 1953 including, under the Colombo Plan, English in South Vietnam (1959–60). He is a qualified translator (NAATI Grade III) of French and German and has passed Russian III and Russian A (University of Canberra). He taught in secondary schools for twenty-nine years in all, and for a total of nineteen years he trained teachers of TESL/TEFL (University of Canberra and in the

Language Teaching branch of the Australian Department of Education). He held a Goethe Institut scholarship for study and travel in Germany (1973). His short story "Going after Tomasina" appeared in the *Canberra Times* in 2001.

Edith Speers emigrated to Australia from Canada after completing a B.Sc. (Hon.) in biochemistry. Her writing has won many literary awards; her poetry has been printed in all the major Australian literary magazines, many anthologies, and several Canadian and American journals. She is the author of two published collections of poetry and others awaiting publication. She published other Tasmanian writers as proprietor of Esperance Press before completing a B.Ed. to teach in her local rural school.

Pradeep Trikha is a literary critic and academician. His well-received books are *Delphic Intimations: Interviews with Australian Creative Writers & Critics*, *Frank Moorhouse: Writer as an Artist*, and *Dynamics of Cultural Diversity: Australia & India*. His latest book is *Australian Writers in Conversation*. He is the editor in chief for *International Journal on Art, Culture and Museum Studies*, *Objet-d-Art*, and *Sukhadia University Journal of English Literary Studies*. Presently he is a professor and head of the Department of English and the director of International Students' Affairs at Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur.

Niki Tulk is an ex-pat Australian writer and theatre-maker, and a double PhD student in Theatre and Intermedia Art, Writing and Performance at the University of Colorado Boulder. She has poetry, fiction, and criticism published in *Emergency Index*, the *Saranac Review*, *Rock River Review*, the *Sheepshead Review*, the *Feminist Wire*, and the *West Trade Review*, among others. She is co-editor of *PARtake: The Journal of Performance as Research*, and her novella *Before Rain* was a finalist for the 2017 Miami Book Fair/de Groot prize.

Simon West lives in Melbourne. He is the author of three volumes of poetry and an edition of the Italian poet Guido Cavalcanti. His most recent book, *The Ladder*, published by Puncher & Wattmann, was short-listed for the Prime Minister's Literary Awards in 2016.

Tim Wright has published the poetry collections *The night's live changes* (2014) and *Weekend's end* (2013) and has had poems included in the anthology *Outcrop: Radical Australian Poetry of Land* (2013). He completed a thesis on the poetry of Laurie Duggan, Pam Brown, and Ken Bolton in 2015.