

Editors' Introduction

Welcome to the new-look *Australian Humanities Review*, published by the ANU E-Press. This and future issues of *AHR* will be available in PDF and HTML formats online and also in hard-copy as a print-on-demand (POD) book. The entire *AHR* archive remains available and, of course, everything accessed via the web is available free of charge.

Though the journal looks different, the format is essentially the same. Each issue will present a number of target essays, often connected by a common theme. The Eco-Humanities Corner will continue, and each issue will also feature a number of book reviews. From time to time we'll also publish extracts from new books. We have retained 'emuse': please send contributions to ahr@anu.edu.au. Emuse discussions from each issue will be published in subsequent issues. Also, please feel free to give us feedback on the new look and layout: we are keen to hear your views and to improve your experience of reading *AHR* in whatever ways we can.

AHR was launched by Cassandra Pybus in June 1996, a few months after John Howard's election as Australian prime minister. From 1997 under the editorship of Elizabeth McMahon, *AHR* maintained throughout the 11 years of the Howard government a commitment to publishing informed critical debate on contested issues facing our community, reflecting principles of intellectual freedom and a commitment to social justice, in particular for Australia's Indigenous peoples. In March 2008, with the Rudd government newly in office, *AHR* will continue to provide a forum for open and informed intellectual debate on the full range of issues that confront Australia and the region.

We begin 2008 with a special issue dedicated to exploring the idea of 'the South' and its role in Australians' perception of their place in the world. Culturally and politically, Australia is closer to the North than to the southern nations that are its neighbours, while geographically, ecologically and historically it remains part of the South. What are the implications of Australia's global position? What reorientations of our notions of history, culture and knowledge are required for Australia fully to acknowledge its southern status?

In the opening essay, **Shino Konishi** examines a little-known historical event, where sailors of the 1803 Baudin expedition believed they had encountered a fabled race of giants in north-western Australia. She argues that pre-modern ideas of a fantastic Great South Land persisted well into the age of 'scientific' exploration.

Kevin Murray's 'Keys to the South' uses a number of objects as talismans for rethinking the international networks of the global art world, breaking away from the 'axial' relationships mediated by northern metropolitan hubs, towards

direct linkages between countries of the south based on shared geographic, cultural and historical affinities.

In 'Cultural Studies' Networking Strategies in the South', **Stephen Muecke** considers the emerging field of Indian Ocean studies and how its international scholarly networks reconfigure maps and flows of information and knowledge.

We then present two extracts from sociologist **Raewyn Connell's** recent book *Southern Theory*, which explores the global emergence of social science as a discipline with a cartographic (North/South) bias. An extract from Chapter 1, 'Empire and the creation of a social science', elucidates the role of the Northern metropole in producing the South as an object of sociological study. In Chapter 4, 'The Discovery of Australia', Connell acknowledges that the North/South, metropole/colony relation has been formative for Australian sociology, but also reverses the global hierarchy in her exploration of the formative role Australian producers have played in the making of the discipline.

In her essay, 'The South in *Southern Theory*', **Margaret Jolly** responds to Connell's book, considering the role of the 'Asia-Pacific' and 'Oceania' in imagined configurations of knowledge and power *between* Australia and the Pacific. She challenges both a purely textual as well as cartographic imagining of the region through her contention that social theory is embodied not only in scholarly texts but also in visual and performing arts.

The 'Southern' theme continues in Eco Humanities Corner (see below), and also in the book reviews, where **Emily Potter** reviews Tom Griffiths' recent book on voyaging to Antarctica, while **Anne Maxwell** considers the shifting locations of global intellectual production in Laurence Simmons' collection on New Zealand's public intellectuals, and Ned Curthoys and Debjani Ganguly's collection on the legacy of Edward Said. **David Carter** considers Sherman Young's arguments for the digital transformation of book culture, while **Paul Gillen** reviews Melissa Harper's history of bushwalking in Australia.

Producing our first issue of *Australian Humanities Review* has been a steep learning curve for both of us, and it could not have happened without the support of many people. We wish especially to thank the staff of ANU E Press, Lorena Kanellopoulos, Teresa Prowse and especially Duncan Beard for their patience in dealing with novice editors. William Douglas and Cara Foster assisted with the preparation of the *AHR* archive, and Jesse Reynolds and David Vermont provided invaluable advice and technical assistance. We also wish to thank our editorial board for the quality and timeliness of their refereeing. The publication of *Australian Humanities Review* is supported by a grant from the School of Humanities at The Australian National University, for which we are very grateful.

Finally we wish to thank Elizabeth McMahon for her enormous contribution to Australian intellectual life as editor of *Australian Humanities Review* for the past

ten years. We hope that this and future issues of *AHR* will continue the work of rethinking humanities debates outside their traditional conceptual and geographical boundaries.

Russell Smith & Monique Rooney, March 2008

The Eco Humanities Corner

How shall we understand our place in the world in this era of climate change and relentless globalisation? **Emily Potter and Paul Starr** offer an insightful engagement with climate change issues, arguing that now more than ever, as the earth system is changing so rapidly and unpredictably, we need to reorient our relations to place. They pose the prospect of post-national citizens linked by climate, emissions and other factors.

Val Plumwood asks similar questions in the context of globalised consumerism and damage. Her analysis challenges us to consider not only the places where we live and love, but also the shadow places which are disregarded but which make our lives possible. Each of these lively and timely articles challenges us to think about place in terms of connectivities, and thus to consider responsibilities that are both near and distant.

It was with great sadness that we learned shortly before this issue went to press of the death of Val Plumwood at the age of sixty-eight. An obituary tribute follows her essay.

Deborah Rose, March 2008