

Editors' Introduction

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Welcome to our November 2010 issue of *Australian Humanities Review*.

Our lead essay is Melinda Hinkson's 'Seeing More than Black and White: Picturing Aboriginality at Australia's National Portrait Gallery'. Here Hinkson investigates the kinds of visual experiences opened to the Australian public via this important cultural institution, and asks whether the gallery can be a place that might transform our understanding of Aboriginal culture. John Tomaney and Margaret Somerville also raise questions about the capacity for community transformation in their essay, 'Climate Change and Regional Identity in the Latrobe Valley, Victoria'. The essay looks at the role of ideas of community identity in responding to shifting climate change policies and the future necessity for economic restructuring. In 'Truth is Not the Seduction: Brian Castro's Autobiographical Space', Jacinta van den Berg draws on Philippe Lejeune's theory of autobiography to analyse the representations and gaps in Australian author Brian Castro's works. Van den Berg shows how Castro's playful evasion of truth claims deflects the reader's desire to find the 'real Castro', but also draws attention to the process of writing itself.

The *Ecological Humanities* section begins with Peter Burdon's innovative essay, 'The Rights of Nature: Reconsidered', which argues that the environmental rights movement would benefit from more strenuous critical engagement with the question of nature's potential legal 'rights'. Challenging nature/culture binaries is also central to 'Encountering Native Grasslands: Matters of Concern in an Urban Park'. Here, Lesley Instone draws on the theory of Bruno Latour to reflect on the importance of native grasses in Melbourne's Royal Park for re-conceptualising human-plant-place relations. The last essay in this section is Jodi Frawley's 'Detouring to Grafton: The Sydney Botanic Gardens and the Making of an Australian Urban Aesthetic'. Frawley analyses the role of Sydney Botanic Gardens as a 'hub' of information on global horticultural and urban design trends in the shaping of the aesthetics of Australian towns, in this case the 'Jacaranda Festival' town of Grafton.

Our book reviews section begins with a focus on Australian theatre. Michael Buhagiar reviews a collection of essays devoted to Australian actor, teacher,

director and playwright, Nick Enright, and Bradley Wells raises questions about the under-theorised topic of masculinity in post 1950s Australian theatre. Wells then turns his attention to the broader question that underpins *Turning Points in Australian History* and asks whether we can understand historical change as a response to specific events. Australian colonial history is the focus of Jo Chipperfield's comparison of two books that take different approaches to everyday life in the colony: *Australia through Women's Eyes* and *An Everyday Transience*. Finally, Greg Lehman provides both a critical and personal perspective on two recent books about the controversial figure from Tasmanian colonial history, George Augustus Robinson.

As always, we welcome submissions to AHR from writers and scholars across the humanities. Please see <http://www.australianhumanitiesreview.org/about.html#submission> for our submission guidelines.